



2024 List of Legislative Successes

Despite funding/policy challenges of the 2024 Legislative Session and inattention to some RSAI priorities, some notable successes are worthy of mention. In some cases, the ability to stop or neutralize legislation's negative impacts are important wins accomplished with member outreach and persistence. The following are significant enough to include when thanking Legislators and the Governor for their service:

Funding

- **HF 2612 AEs, SSA and TSS**
 - Set a 2.5% SSA rate (although still below inflation, this rate ties for the third highest in 15 years).
 - Increased teacher salary supplement sufficient to meet new teacher salary minimums. Many rural schools benefitted from the calculation of TSS based on the cost of meeting the minimums compared to a per pupil distribution. RSAI leaders are hopeful these new salary minimums will encourage more college students to go into teaching, encourage teachers from other states to come to Iowa, help rural schools compete with larger school districts and the private sector, and allow schools to hire back retirees who still have the passion and skills to teach our students. This provision of HF 2612 was a key priority for RSAI.
 - To sum it up, with the increase in teacher salary supplement and considering all investments in public schools, combined district cost grew by over \$192 million, which is a 3.6% increase compared to FY 2024.
 - Provided \$14 million statewide for hourly staff supplemental pay.
 - To sum it up, with the increase in teacher pay and considering all investments in public schools, combined district cost grew by over \$192 million, which is a 3.6% increase.
- Legislative changes to HF 2612 AEA Overhaul from the original bill introduced by the Governor were critical, including restoration of media and services funding, keeping AEA's ability to provide media and education services as well as school improvement supports, slower implementation timelines, and creation of a task force to study impacts on students including analyzing how this bill impacts student services. RSAI worked with legislators to improve this bill and minimize negative impacts on students and school staff. Although RSAI opposed the original and earlier versions of the bill, final changes moved the RSAI position to undecided (along with most of the other public education lobbying entities.)
- Student Equity: SF 2368 Charter Schools directed categorical funds to follow students, including PD and EICS, as well as current year SCPP. This action applied to students enrolled in a charter school or in another district through open enrollment. Depending on the school district's open enrollment experience, these actions are either positive or negative. RSAI lobbied to keep TSS out of this bill. TSS was calculated in HF 2612 based on funds needed to get to teacher pay minimums, not based on a per pupil distribution. As such, there would be further significant inequities to address if TSS followed students. RSAI also lobbied to remove the mandatory statewide student information system and a March 1 second enrollment count from legislative consideration in 2024, unsure of the DE's ability to implement smoothly and significant transitional costs to both of those.

Teacher, Administrator, Staff Shortage Policies and Flexibility:

- **SF 2411 Work-based Learning** allows a student participating in a 14-week student teaching experience to be credited between 1 week and 10 weeks for prior work experience as a substitute teacher or a para-educator, including prior experience under the TPRA grant program, under specific conditions.
- **HF 2612 IPERS provisions** allow teachers whose first month of retirement benefits is July 2024 or later, but before July 1, 2027, to return to covered employment as a teacher after receiving one month of retirement benefits.
- **HF 2618 Iowa Literacy Initiative** requires new teachers to take the Foundations in Literacy exam, and requires colleges to report scores, but does not condition the teaching license on successfully passing a target score.
- **HF 255 Teacher Intern License/Program** creates a new pathway to teaching with an on-the-job completion component.
- **SF 2443 Standings Appropriations Teacher Minimums:** more clearly defined 12-years of teaching experience for teacher pay minimums, effectively adding \$5 million to the TSS distribution method.

Literacy: RSAI lobbied to remove the high stakes of literacy competency testing for teachers and mandatory retention for students as initially proposed in [HF 2618](#) Iowa Literacy Initiative. RSAI welcomes the emphasis on good literacy instruction based on the science of reading, and school districts were already providing individualized instruction and plans for nonproficient readers.

High School Programming: two bills were passed to expand the flexibility of counting courses for accreditation and providing credit for students.

- **HF 2465 AG Classes Offer and Teach Flexibility** for math, science, and CTE courses in areas teaching Agriculture.
- **SF 2411 Work-Based Learning** allows students to receive high school credit for work-based learning, even when school is not in session.

Mental Health Services: [HF 2515](#) Therapist, Counselor or Social Worker Authorization Reciprocity expanded the pool of professionals to provide services to all Iowans, including students and [SF 2435](#) Education Appropriations continued several significant appropriations for school mental health including the following:

- Transfer of unused Therapeutic Classroom Transportation Claims Reimbursement to the Therapeutic Classroom Incentive Fund and maintained \$500,000 appropriation for transportation and \$2,351,382 for more therapeutic classroom incentive grants.
- Maintained \$3,383,936 appropriation for AEAs to provide for children's mental health school-based training and support to be used for mental health awareness training for educators and provide mental health services and support for students.
- Maintained \$520,000 appropriation for deposit in the Mental Health Professional Loan Repayment Program fund.