

**Legislative Update:** [HF 2612 AEA Reform/Teacher Pay/SSA](#) was signed by the Governor on March 17. See the [March 22 RSAI Weekly Report](#) for a breakdown of each division and the requirements in the bill. Hopefully, districts have TSS numbers from DOM by April 2. We are amassing unanswered questions.

The most significant changes in the bill since its introduction in January as [SSB 3073](#) and [HSB 542](#) follow:

- **Media and Educational Services:** The bill keeps that \$68 million in place, flows 40% through to AEAs, and lets districts retain up to 60% this first year. Changes to 100% under school district control beginning July 1, 2025. Districts will work with AEAs for up to all of the district amount, or could use the funds for special education services or for any general fund purpose.
- **Special Educational Services:** No changes for July 1, 2024, requiring all special education funding going to AEAs. Allows districts to keep up to 10% in the year beginning July 1, 2025. Requires districts to work with AEAs for the 90% and requires the remaining 10% must be spent on special education services, which could be, but is not required to be, with AEAs. There are no changes to Early Access, Child Find, or IDEA federally-funded services.
- **Task Force:** Task Force of stakeholders and policymakers will review all AEA services, programs and processes and make recommendations and make recommendations by Dec. 31, 2024. Several parts of the bill are not effective until July 1, 2025, so the Task Force could recommend intervening changes. Expect continued learning about the services that AEAs provide and how school districts and AEA will work together moving forward.
- **DE Division of Special Education:** specifies 13 FTEs in the DE's Des Moines office and up to 40 staffed regionally, apportioned to AEAs by enrollment for compliance (less than half of original bill.)
- **Changes to AEA Staff:** Various versions required mandatory removal of some AEA staff. This final version does not. (However, reduced funding means fewer AEA staff is inevitable.)
- **Minimum Teacher Pay Increase:** HF 2612 phases in the Governor's teacher pay increase over two years but gets up to the \$96 million for teacher pay by FY 2026, which disproportionately provides funding for rural teachers. We do not see funding specifically included for resolving compaction of the salary schedule. Please send us your questions and we'll do our best to answer them or find out who can.
- **School Funding:** HF 2612 sets the SSA rate of per pupil increase of 2.5% for FY 2025.

#### Remaining Work for the Session:

- **The State Budget:** The legislature must pass the state budget. House budget targets released last Friday set the budget goal at \$8.955 Billion, Senate \$82 Billion lower, at \$8.872 Billion. The Governor's Recommendation was \$8.919 Billion. There is typically not much in appropriations bills impacting PK-12, but we are watching for the \$14 million for education support professionals (hourly staff) in either the education appropriations or standings appropriations bills.
- **Policy Bills:** the Governor's Literacy Bill and Charter Schools Bill, and others are on unfinished business calendars in the House and Senate. Watch you inbox for calls to action if we spot things that need some advocacy attention. We are continuing to talk about teacher shortage and possible solutions.

### **RSAI Advocacy Resources:**

Check out the RSAI Website at <https://www.rsaia.org/2024-legislative-session.html> to find Advocacy Resources such as Position Papers, RSAI Weekly Legislative Recap Reports and Videos, RSAI Calls to Action and more. Contact us with any questions, feedback or suggestions to better prepare your advocacy work.

### **RSAI Regional Meetings Coming Soon:**

Mark your calendars for the upcoming RSAI Regional Meetings **during April and May**. Whether you are an RSAI member district there to express your voice about rural school matters, or are not a member district but interested in listening and learning more about legislative issues and RSAI, we'd love to have you attend. These Regional Meetings are an important step in the work of advocating for rural school districts and the students we serve across Iowa. Registration and more details will be coming soon at: <https://www.rsaia.org/region-meetings.html>

<b>RSAI Region</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Meeting Location</b>	<b>Meeting Start Time</b>	<b>Regional Meeting Host</b>
NE Region	April 2, 2024	Elkader	Follows Keystone AEA Supts Meeting	Nick Trenkamp Central
SW Region	April 3, 2024	Red Oak	Follows Green Hills AEA Supts Meeting	Paul Croghan CAM/Nodaway Valley
SE Region	May 1, 2024	Fairfield	Follows Great Prairie AEA Supts Meeting	Dan Maeder Davis County/Moulton Udell
NW Region	May 7, 2024	Pocahontas	Follows Prairie Lakes AEA Supts Meeting	Justin Daggett Manson NW Webster

At each Regional Meeting, RSAI Legislative Committee liaison(s) are elected by the members for the upcoming year. At the NE Regional Meeting, there will also be an election for the RSAI Leadership Group representative, as this region's three-year term is up this year. We will let everyone know the official start times and meeting locations very soon so those of you attending the RSAI meeting but not the AEA Superintendent's meeting will know when and where to arrive. Generally, the meetings include lunch and begin around the noon hour. More details to come.

### **RSAI Annual Meeting:**

Save the date for the RSAI Annual Meeting, which will be held on **Tuesday, October 15, 2024**, at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny. More details are coming soon!

**Thanks to all of you for your energy and voice on behalf of the students in your schools!**