



RSAI 2022 Legislative Priorities & Status

The following **2022 Legislative Priorities** originated as key priority issues during the 2021 Summer RSAI Regional Meetings. The Legislative Group reviewed and refined the Regional Meeting activity, then submitted this language to the RSAI membership at the Annual Meeting. The members at the Annual Meeting approved the following slate of priorities on October 26, 2021. The RSAI 2022 Annual Meeting is scheduled for October 25, 2022, at the FFA Enrichment Center, DMACC Ankeny Campus, 4:30 p.m., including a working dinner. See the RSAI website for more information: <http://www.rsaia.org/>

Key:  Mission Accomplished  Some Action, but More is Needed
 No Progress Made

Historic Tax Cuts Enacted: HF 2317 was signed by the Governor on March 1. RSAI opposed the bill, which will reduce general fund revenue significantly, hindering the ability of the state to adequately fund schools and other essential state services. During the debate, there was strong difference of opinion, with the Republicans stating that these tax cuts will stimulate Iowa's economic growth and the Democrats stating that other states' experiences have not delivered such growth. This chart from the [LSA Fiscal Note](#) shows the total estimated reduction of taxes:

Figure 2

Projected Change in Tax Liability and State General Fund Revenue							
In Millions							
Division	Item	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
I	Qualified Stock Exemption	\$ 0.0	\$ -4.0	\$ -7.6	\$ -10.3	\$ -9.0	\$ -9.5
II	Farm Lease Income Exemption	0.0	-2.1	-2.0	-1.8	-1.5	-1.6
III	Farm Capital Gains Exemption	0.0	-7.2	-6.9	-6.1	-5.4	-5.7
IV and V	Tax Rate Reduction	-37.3	-135.7	-352.1	-948.2	-1,397.1	-1,413.4
VI	Retirement Income Exemption	-179.6	-353.3	-340.6	-359.8	-363.9	-376.4
IV, V, and VI	Rate Reduction and Exemption Interaction *	0.2	7.0	25.9	80.6	109.8	99.5
	Individual Income Tax Total	\$ -216.7	\$ -495.3	\$ -683.3	\$ -1,245.6	\$ -1,667.1	\$ -1,707.1
IX and X	Corporate Income Tax Rate Reduction	\$ -19.6	\$ -79.6	\$ -109.8	\$ -135.3	\$ -182.1	\$ -229.4
VII	Research Activities Tax Credit	\$ 0.0	\$ 13.1	\$ 23.7	\$ 30.0	\$ 36.6	\$ 44.8
VIII	Assistive Device Tax Credit	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
VIII	Historic Preservation Tax Credit	0.0	0.3	1.2	2.3	3.3	4.4
VIII	Redevelopment Tax Credit	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
VII	Research Activities Tax Credit (Supplemental)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2
VIII	Third-Party Developer Tax Credit	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
	Tax Credits Total	\$ 0.0	\$ 13.5	\$ 25.0	\$ 32.5	\$ 40.2	\$ 49.7
	Total Projected Change Compared to Current Law	\$ -236.3	\$ -561.4	\$ -768.1	\$ -1,348.4	\$ -1,809.0	\$ -1,886.8

* The tax reduction and retirement income components were estimated separately and in combination. This table presents the fiscal impacts separately, and the final line of the table adjusts for the interaction of the two tax reductions.

Status of this year's activity is summarized for each priority below:

Adequate School Resources: the increase in SSA should be no lower than 3.75% in FY 2023 due to abundant state surplus, maintain balanced state and local resources, be predictable, and assure adequate time for budget planning and staffing.

Formula and Transportation Equity: formula equity, closing the state/district per pupil gap within ten years and continued transportation equity support without burdensome reporting requirements.



Priority Action: [HF 2316](#) State Supplementary Assistance (SSA). The bill was signed by the Governor on Feb. 17. The bill does the following:

- Establishes a 2.50% growth rate to be applied to the State cost per pupil (SCPP) for FY 2023, for an SSA of \$181 per pupil.
- Establishes a 2.50% growth rate to be applied to each of the State categorical per pupil amounts for FY 2023 (TLC, PD, TSS, EICS, and Transportation Equity).
- Provides an additional increase of \$5 to the FY 2023 regular program SCPP, separate from the SSA, to reduce the difference between the SCPP and district cost per pupil to \$140.
- Freezes the additional levy portion of the FY 2023 SCPP at \$685 per pupil, regardless of the per pupil increase for FY 2023 (property tax relief)
- Increases the appropriation to the Transportation Equity Program to equal the amount necessary to make all transportation equity aid payments.
- RSAI opposed HF 2416, Historic Tax Cuts, under consideration at the same time as HF 2316 School Funding. The Legislature and Governor could have set the SSA rate at 3.75% and funded other RSAI priorities and still cut taxes significantly.

[HF 2315](#), Supplemental Education Funding, would have provided \$19.2 million in supplemental funding to help schools with inflationary costs. The bill was approved in the House, 94:1, but died in the Senate Appropriations Committee with no further action.

RSAI opposed the lower Senate recommendation and registered as undecided on HF 2316 and in support of HF 2315. The 2.5% per pupil increase was below RSAI's request for 3.75%, however, the bill also increased transportation equity appropriations and closed the formula equity gap by another \$5 per pupil, now to \$140. The total funding provided to public schools was below what was requested by Rural School Advocates of Iowa members.

Educator Shortage and Quality Instruction: maximum flexibility to hire staff to provide great instruction, including several strategies to attract and retain quality staff; flexibility to meet offer and teach requirements, loan forgiveness programs, a special education generalist credential, creation of a Public Service CTE strand, hire retirees without IPERS impact, and elimination of barriers to licensure.



Priority Action: Many bills to address the teacher shortage and increase flexibility were introduced and discussed in the 2022 Session. Here's a list of bills RSAI was following, their status and RSAI registration.

Bill Number	Bills to Address Teacher/Substitute Shortage/ Alternative Licensure	2022 Legislative Action
HF 2493	Para-educators may substitute in any classroom except Drivers' Education with a waiver from BOEE 2021-22 school year (ARRC). Requires the individual be paid the higher of the substitute per diem or their para wage. Approved in the House 99:0 and in the Senate 47:0, sending it to the Governor. RSAI supports.	Governor Veto. BOEE admin rules are addressing it.
SF 2296	IPERS Income Threshold for Re-employment is increased to \$50,000 and the school board member conflict of interest threshold is increased to \$20,000. RSAI supports.	Signed by the Governor
SF 2377	Teach Iowa scholar program eligibility, Teacher Intern license for grades 6-12 issued by the BOEE, and the use of revenues from the district management levy for teacher recruitment costs (limited to 10% of minimum teacher pay per teacher, no more than 5 years, and either early retirement or teacher recruitment each 5-year period. RSAI is registered in support.	Died on the House Calendar
SF 2356	Allows school boards to engage certain specified individuals to serve without compensation as substitute teachers. Approved in the Senate 38:7, on 2.28.22. RSAI is registered as undecided.	Died on the House Calendar
HF 2083	Changes eligibility for Teach Iowa Scholar Program (no longer must be in top 25% of class) and specifies that half of the grants go to teachers in districts, charter and private school below 1,200 enrollment and half above. RSAI is registered in support.	Also in Gov.'s School Choice SF 2369. Both bills died.
HF 2081	Eliminates requirement for PRAXIS test for entry to college education program and requires higher education institutions to notify graduates with PRAXIS scores below the cutoff that they may apply for an initial license. Passed the House 94:0 on 2.28.22. RSAI is registered in support.	Signed by the Governor
HF 2165	Last Dollar Scholars: makes part-time student eligible for Last Dollar Scholars financial support. Approved 99:0 in the House on 3.2.22. Attached to companion SF 2129 on the Senate Calendar. RSAI is registered in support.	Signed by the Governor
HF 2398	Permanent Teacher License for master's or doctoral degree educators (no CEU's required.) Requires charter schools and private schools to conduct background checks, adds a minimum ten-year work requirement for these teachers before waiving future licensure renewals, requires the BOEE to do a background check on these permanent teachers every 5 years and allows BOEE to charge a reasonable fee for the background check. Approved 99:0 in the House. RSAI is registered as undecided.	Died on Senate Calendar (Was also School Choice SF 2369 which died in House Appropriations Committee.
SF 2383	Work-based Learning Governor's Bill: Strikes a requirement for any licensee to have been licensed for at least one year in another jurisdiction to receive a reciprocity license in Iowa without an examination. (This provision is not specific to military or spouses.) RSAI supported this provision but registered undecided on the bill.	Signed by the Governor

Local School Board Authority: locally elected leaders closest to the community are in the best position to determine the interest of students, staff and stakeholders. District leaders need maximum flexibility to provide a great education to all students. The Legislature, the Executive Branch and the courts should follow Iowa Code 274.3 and liberally construe statute to effectuate local control.



Priority Actions: several bills either promoted or inhibited local control. Most of those promoting flexibility involve teacher recruitment flexibility noted above.

HF 2412 Radon Testing and Mitigation: pending Governor's Signature. Requires testing every 5 years, mitigation under certain circumstances. Allows school employees to do the testing and mitigation if trained appropriately. Allows use of SAVE at board discretion to pay for testing and mitigation. RSAI undecided. Signed by the Governor.

SF 2383 Governor's Workforce Development: requires school districts to report to the DE about work-based learning, internships, and apprenticeships, etc., annually. Also allows school districts to hire applicants with other state licenses without any requirement for one year of experience. *Approved in the House 4/26/22.* RSAI undecided. During the debate in the Senate, a provision was added to require the BOEE to waive licensure fees for any applicant whose income is below 200% of the FPL (\$27,180 for a single individual in 2023.) We believe this income level would have exempted most new college graduates who are teachers, leaving the BOEE with a significant revenue reduction. The [Fiscal Note](#) explains: Division IV is estimated to decrease revenue to the BOEE \$205,000 FY23 and \$390,000 FY24 and beyond. *This provision was amended by the Education Appropriations bill, excluding the BOEE from the fee waiver, so will not go into effect.* RSAI was registered as undecided. Signed by the Governor.

SF 2369 Governor's School Choice Omnibus: mandates high stakes civics test for graduation, transparency provisions regarding parents' and community access to materials (unfunded mandate) and several appeals steps for library book decision-making process (overrides local district and school board determinations.) Senate improved the transparency provision with a parents' rights bill that is more flexible for school compliance and does not include appeals. **HF 2577** Transparency removes the high stakes test but still requires annual reporting of test scores and allows compliance by providing parents' access to instructional management system. Still requires posting of core materials. *This bill is currently assigned to the House Appropriations Committee at the time of this writing.* RSAI opposed to Governor's bill and original provisions in House. Undecided on HF 2577 (which died in the Senate) and Parent's Rights **SF 2205** which alone died in the House, but was also part of SF 2369 School Choice. *Died in House Appropriations Committee.*

HF 2254 Online Learning: would have allowed school board to use up to 5 virtual days to make up snow days. The bill did not progress out of the House Education Committee. RSAI supported this bill.

HSB 574 Start Date: would have allowed schools to start school as determined by the school board, but did not progress out of the subcommittee. RSAI supported this bill.

Quality Preschool: funding of quality PK at the 1.0 per pupil cost for full time or prorated proportionally and formula protections against budget and program impacts of PK enrollment swings (budget guarantee/on-time spending authority).



Priority Action: note about COVID-19 Impact: PK enrollments fell in the Fall 2020. PK does not have an on-time funding component or budget guarantee, so the 2021-22 PK budgets were based on the Oct. 1, 2020 enrollment count. FY 2022-23 PK budgets will be based on this Oct. 1 PK head count. PK enrollment bounced up last October, but Iowa was still 2,000 preschool students below pre-pandemic levels. DE guidance prohibits school districts from using general fund for PK expansion. Federal ESSER or ARP funds could be used for PK. Funds transferred to the Flexibility Account and Title I funds could also be used for PK expansion. However, there were no bills that moved forward out of a subcommittee and no process for spending authority or direct state appropriation for the FY 2022-23 school year.



HF 318 PK for Young 5s: would have allowed districts to serve and count young 5-year-olds in PK, was approved by the full House, Senate Education Committee and Senate Appropriations Committee, but died on the Senate Calendar in the 2021 Session. Although the bill remained alive for consideration this year, did not survive the second funnel deadline. RSAI supports this bill.

Opportunity Equity: resources based on at-risk need, in addition to enrollment. All school boards should have 5% dropout prevention funding. School districts should be granted spending authority for FRPL waived fees and Iowa should study the impact of poverty on educational outcomes.

Priority Action Poverty Weighting: despite the School Finance Interim Committee recommending in 2019 and the House Education Committee approving a bill, [HF 2490](#), the study of the impact of poverty on education and funding formula options to meet the needs of students did not advance out of House Appropriations Committee in 2020. No bill was moved forward in either the House or Senate in 2021 or 2022, taking a step backwards in the policy discussions. FYI: Children from families with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level are eligible for free lunch and those with income from 130-185% are eligible for reduced lunch.

Priority Action Dropout Prevention: [HF 2008](#) and [SF 2003](#) were both introduced and approved by subcommittees 2:0. The bill(s) would have phased all districts up to the full DoP capacity (5% of regular program district cost) over several years. The bills were not approved by either the House or Senate Education Committee.

Sharing Incentives/Efficiencies: extension of Whole Grade Sharing, Reorganization and Operational Sharing Incentives. The 21-student cap should expand to allow access to any new flexibility. Weightings should be sufficient to encourage and support sharing opportunities. Note: Sharing incentives are currently authorized for submission with the Fall BEDS enrollment Oct. 1, 2023 which provides funding for the 2024-25 school year.



Priority Action: [HF 2080 Superintendent Weighting](#) –increases the shared superintendent weighting to the equivalent of 9 students. Adds the new position of SRO for districts to share, equivalent to weighting of 3 students (which is lowered in statute to 2 students). Also allows one individual to serve in multiple shared weighting roles. RSAI supports this bill. ([HF 2589](#) Standings Appropriations Bill also added a new position, a

college and career transition counselor or coordinator, at a weighting of 3 students which is lowered to 2 students in statute.) The Governor signed both bills.



SF 2369 Governor's School Choice Omnibus: would have created a new Students First Operational Sharing Fund. Extended incentives for 10 years (through 2034), added SRO as a position which qualifies for weighting of 3 students (which is really 2) and created a new process to go before the SBRC to expand the cap to 24 students. District must justify the need for the position. Although RSAI supports the extension, we do not support the bureaucratic process of SBRC approval and really do not support tying this program's extension to a voucher program. *The bill died in the House Appropriations Committee.*

Assessing and Addressing Staff/Student Social, Emotional and Behavioral Health: access to funded mental health services for children and supports for staff. Address the shortage of mental health professionals and provide resources over the next two years for local districts to train school staff based on a local needs and community capacity to collaborate for a collective solution.



Priority Actions HF 2549 MH Loan Repayment Program: creates a new student loan forgiveness program for mental health professionals working in Iowa. Signed by the Governor.



HF 2575 Education Appropriations: Provides a new \$520,000 appropriation to the College Student Aid Commission for the purpose of supporting a newly created Mental Health Practitioner Loan Repayment Program. Also appropriates \$3.4 million, an increase of \$200,000 to AEAs to provide mental health awareness training for educators and support mental health needs of students. Requires \$200,000 to be used to implement a children's grief and loss rural pilot program to serve Iowa children in rural school districts or accredited nonpublic schools. The pilot program will be administered by, and \$200,000 allocated to, an existing statewide not-for-profit health care organization that provides grief and loss services to children. In collaboration with the organization, requires DE to prepare a report detailing expenditures of the program and its outcomes to the General Assembly by Sep. 30, 2023. Also appropriates \$500,000 to DE for therapeutic classroom transportation reimbursements and \$2.4 million for the therapeutic classroom incentive fund (an increase of \$725,000). RSAI was registered as undecided on the bill. The Governor signed it.



HF 2245 Telehealth Insurance Coverage/Out of State Providers: approved 94:0 in the House. *Did not make it out of the Senate Human Resources Committee. RSAI supported this bill.*

Internet Connectivity and Access: expanded access to high-speed Internet for all Iowans including incentives, investments, and creative solutions to close technology gaps for students, businesses and community members in rural Iowa. Low income should not be a barrier to access.



Priority Action: No additional action has been taken this year, but last year's investment of state and federal resources was significant. RSAI is currently monitoring status as broadband Internet expands across the state with significant federal funding.