

RSAI Legislative Update Feb. 20, 2015

These updates are posted on the RSAI legislative web page at <http://www.rsaia.org/legislative.html>.

The following provides analysis of this week's happenings. Thanks for all you do to advocate for Iowa's children! margaret.buckton@isfis.net

House Education Committee moves Senate's 4% for FY 2016 down to 1.25% and doesn't address FY 2017

See the Feb. 20 RSAI call to action on School Funding for additional details and talking points posted [here](#).

Virtual petition on adequate school funding: let the legislature know that education funding is Iowa's priority and share this link with others in your school district or other Iowans you know supportive of funding education. <https://www.change.org/p/the-iowa-legislature-provide-adequate-funding-for-iowa-s-public-schools?>

These bills were amended and approved by the House Education Committee, with all republicans in favor and all democrats opposed. Bill numbers follow (RSAI is registered as indicated):

- [SF 171](#) Sets state cost per pupil increase at 4% for FY2016 (RSAI supports Senate position)
- [SF 172](#) Sets categorical increase at 4% for FY 2016 (RSAI supports Senate position)
- [SF 174](#) Sets state cost per pupil increase at 4% for FY 2017 (RSAI supports Senate position and House has not yet begun the process for FY 2017)
- [SF 175](#) Sets categorical increase at 4% for FY 2017 (RSAI supports Senate position and House has not yet begun the process for FY 2017)

The House Ways and Means committee passed [SF 173](#) to replace property tax associated with the 4% increase with state aid in FY 2016. RSAI is registered as undecided. See Feb. 6 RSAI report for cost per pupil and budget guarantee impacts at various levels of growth.

Other Action: Subcommittee action will continue over the coming weeks as we get closer to the March 6 funnel date, so we will keep you posted. Continue to connect with all legislators about funding Iowa schools adequately. Here are some bills we think might interest you:

[HSB 131](#) PPEL Flexibility: Approved by a subcommittee, this bill is now in the House Education Committee and would allow transportation or technology repairs to come out of the PPEL levy. RSAI supports this bill.

[HF 156](#) PK Flexibility: Approved by the House, now in the Senate Education Committee. Would allow transportation costs to be prorated, allows up to 10% of PK funds for administrative costs and includes the expenses of rent and outreach in administrative costs. RSAI supports this bill.

[HF 204](#) On-Line Learning Program Extension: This bill extends the sunset of the two online virtual academies at Clayton Ridge and CAM-Anita, although does not change the cap dictating the maximum number of students served. The Code section authorizing the two virtual academies would otherwise sunset June 30, 2015. The bill was approved by the House and is now assigned to the Senate Education Committee. The DE report of the program showed a 30% withdrawal or drop rate. Since these experiences required open enrollment out of the district, with the money following the student, RSAI opposes the bill.

RSAI Legislative Update Feb. 20, 2015

[HF 247 Child Care programs:](#) this bill would require child care programs provided at school to be regulated by DHS. The Education Committee did amend the background provision of the child care statute to allow programs on school property to follow the 5-year background check rotation to which schools are subject. There is a request for another amendment to allow schools flexibility for use of space. RSAI was initially opposed to the bill, but with these two amendments, will likely change the registration to undecided.

[HF 346 At-risk and DoP:](#) This bill by the DE allows school districts to use either funding sources for either purpose, blending uses, which gives flexibility and relief from the Dropout Prevention very strict criteria. RSAI is registered as supportive and grateful to the DE for authoring this bill.

[HF 274 All Day Kindergarten:](#) Subcommittee Assigned Dolecheck, Hanusa, Hansen. This bill was introduced and assigned to the House Education Committee. It requires 180, 6-hour instructional days (or hours equivalent) for kindergarten. The bill doesn't allow proration of funding for a half day program. This issue was discussed at the Dec. 19th School Finance Interim Committee. If you still have any half-day K programs and this would be harmful to you, let us know. There might also be an impact on transitional kindergarten programs. RSAI is registered opposed to this bill.

[HF 122 Principal in Shared Operational Functions:](#) this bill is on the House Calendar, and would assign a supplementary weighting equal to 5 students (same as business management, human resources, transportation or operation and maintenance positions.)

[SF 247 Low Income Weighting Supplement:](#) This bill was approved by the Senate Education Committee and would establish a 4% supplementary weighting, or about \$250 per free and reduced lunch eligible student. The bill specifies a wide range of services, from summer school to before and after school, individualized instructional assistance, tutoring and mentoring, programs to reduce or waive fees or other programs or assistance approved by the DE. The programs could be offered to other students not in low-income families, but other funds would have to cover those costs. The bill is on the Senate Calendar and RSAI supports it.

[SF 246 PK Expansion Incentive:](#) This bill was approved by the Senate Education Committee and would establish a preschool expansion incentive for 3 years, weighting for growth in PK student enrollment compared to base year, and allows outreach, transportation, and rent as allowable expenses, and increases the administrative ceiling to 10%. RSAI supports the bill, now on the Senate Calendar.

[SF 245 LEP Weighting:](#) This bill was approved by the Senate Education Committee and increases the English Language Learner weighting from .22 to .30 and increases the time during which ELL student programs are paid by the state from 5 to 7 years. RSAI supports the bill, now on the Senate Calendar.

[SF 259 Filling School Board Vacancy:](#) This allows voters to challenge a school board appointment made to fill a vacancy, with a petition to take instead call for a special election. RSAI is opposed to the bill.

[SF 280 PPEL Transportation Repair:](#) Approved by the Senate Education Committee unanimously, this bill is now in the Senate Calendar. It would allow transportation repairs to come out of the PPEL levy. RSAI supports this bill.

[SF 279 TAG consultant FTE at DE:](#) This bill specifies that the Talented and Gifted consultant at the DE be a full time equivalent consultant. RSAI is registered as undecided on this bill.

RSAI Legislative Update Feb. 20, 2015

This week's Advocacy Plan: Generate contacts from grassroots networks, staff and school leaders and recruit petition signatures on adequate school funding: go [here](#) to let the legislature know that education funding should be the priority and share this link with others.

Request that the Legislature set the state cost per pupil for FY 2016 ASAP in the 2015 Session. Target contacts to local legislators in both parties and chambers, legislative leadership, and the Governor and Lt. Governor. Find resources on the RSAI web site, including the most recent call to action, the weekly Education Fact from the Education Coalition, contact information and talking points. <http://www.rsaia.org/legislative.html>. These weekly updates are also posted on this page.

Let legislators know about extending the sunset of the state penny and extending PPEL to repairs are both measures to save district resources. See the RSAI web site for position papers and supporting information.

Let us know how we can help with your advocacy efforts,
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