**RSAI Legislative Update   
April 14, 2017**

**Highlights of this week’s action:** Education Appropriations bills move in committees in both chambers, including elimination of mentoring and induction funds and repeal of 3rd Grade Retention and Summer School mandates. A public hearing is scheduled for Monday on the budget bills (read the full report for suggested talking points to provide written comment.) Flexibility bills are amended and sent back to the House. State Assessment bill is sent to the Governor. Operational Sharing Incentives finally moves, is approved unanimously in House Appropriations, and assigned a new bill number of HF 633. The final day of per diem payments for legislators is April 18th, after which they are responsible for their own expenses. Although they have the whole budget yet to be done, they could finish up next week if everything comes together efficiently.

**Advocacy Opportunities:**

* Public Hearing on the budget Monday, is accepting written comments electronically. See Public Hearing below for suggestions.
* Home Rule HF 573 is still on the Senate Calendar. Talk to senators, including leadership, about getting it done.
* Operational Sharing Incentives is now on the House Calendar. Ask Representatives to move it quickly and let Senators know it’s coming, so be ready to work fast and get it to the governor. It has no fiscal impact in FY 2018, so this is a good time to do it.
* Keep talking to House Way and Means Committee members and all legislative leaders regarding extension of the State Penny. See HF 230 below.
* House Appropriations Committee members and all legislative leaders need reminders of the impact of transportation/formula equality stuck in House Appropriations Committee. SF 455 will cost money, so is not likely to get movement this session. Ask for commitment to move it forward in 2018 if they can’t fund it this year.
* This 2017 Session is the first of two in the biennium, so bills introduced this year remain alive for consideration next year. Think of advocacy today as keeping up the urgency for eventual consideration, whether these bills get approved this year or remain viable for next Session action.

**RSAI Website:** Legislative tab contains weekly reports, position papers, and other information to assist your advocacy efforts. [**http://www.rsaia.org/**](http://www.rsaia.org/)

**HSB 200 / SSB 1191 Education Appropriations:** Here’s the link to the annotated Notes on Bills and Amendments [**https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/NOBA/857187.pdf**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/NOBA/857187.pdf)which reports:

* “FY 2018: Appropriates a total of $908.4 million from the General Fund and 12,285.3 FTE positions for FY 2018 to the Department for the Blind, the College Student Aid Commission, the DE, and the Board of Regents. This is a decrease of $70.1 million and 454.9 FTE positions compared to estimated net FY 2017.”

Of the $70.1 million decrease, $52 million is due to elimination of Teacher Leadership and Compensation grants that are now funded in the formula (standings appropriations bill) beginning in FY 2018 and over $10 million is decrease to regents’ institutions (universities).

There are both significant funding and policy changes included in this bill which also provides resources for the Iowa Department of Education and Community Colleges. Individual line items of interest to PK-12 school leaders with significant changes include:

* Early Childhood:
  + Changes to Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) funding, which includes an increase of $17.0 million for the Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) general aid and elimination of the individual appropriations for the ECI Preschool Tuition Assistance and ECI Family Support and Parent Education, combining all three into a single appropriation. Total funding change for FY 2018 is a **decrease of $143,000**.
  + A **decrease of $26,000** for Early Head Start Projects.
  + A **decrease of $1.4 million** for the Child Development Program (funds Shared Visions Preschool and Shared Visions Parent Support).
* A **decrease of $52.0 million** in the appropriation for Student Achievement/ Teacher Quality. This reflects the end of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation Grants and other changes. Beginning in FY 2018, the TLC program is funded entirely through the school aid formula. TQ Allocations changes also include:
  + Allocates a new $25,000 for Fine Arts mentoring program (eliminates the line-item appropriation of $25,000 for the program)
  + Allocates of up to $774,316 funding level for career development and evaluator training. This is a decrease of $12,500 from the previous allocation.
  + Allocates up to $1,123,910 for Teacher Development Academies. This is a decrease of $12,500 from the previous allocation.
  + Delays the allocation of $10,000,000 to high needs schools until FY 2019.
  + Elimination of the Mentoring and Induction allocation is a reduction of $4.0 million.
* A decrease of $175,000for Early Literacy - Successful Progression for Early Readers.
* An **increase of $1.7 million** for Community Colleges General Aid (although this seems like a large increase when other items are reduced, it does not fully restore the FY 2017 deappropriations impacting Community Colleges earlier in the session.)

The following programs were completely eliminated:

* Regional Telecommunications Councils.
* Attendance Center/Website and Data System – the bill includes language that makes the requirements of this program subject to appropriation and then doesn’t appropriate any money.
* English Language Literacy Grant Program.
* Competency-Based Education.
* Area Education Agency Support System for TLC implementation.
* Area Education Agency Distribution for support in implementing the Iowa Core.
* Community College Salary Support.

The following policy changes are included in the bill:

* **Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness Program:** Specifies that, beginning in FY 2018, the Program will not accept new applications but may continue renewing loan forgiveness for previous recipients who remain eligible. Funding is lowered from $392,452 to $200,000 for FY 2018. (Note: Teach Iowa Scholars loan payment program is funded at $400,000, same as FY 2017)
* **3rd Grade Retention and Summer School:** Rescinds statutory requirements regarding summer reading programs and the requirements for 3rd grade retention. Also rescinds the requirement that districts with 15% of more of students not proficient in reading by the end of 3rd grade include strategies in their CSIP to address the problem. Requires that school districts continue interventions for students not proficient in 5th grade and beyond.
* **New Teacher Mentoring and Induction:** Rescinds statutory requirements for teacher mentoring and induction programs and creates a voluntary teacher mentoring and induction option, which may be paid for by professional development funds at the school district level. (May also be funded with TLC funds if included in the district’s application for TLC.) Removes code sections requiring completion of mentoring in order to receive a career teacher license.

**Public Hearing:** A public hearing is scheduled for Monday, April 17, 10:00 A.M. to Noon, on the budget bills, in RM 103, Sup. Ct. Chamber. Speaking time is limited to 3 minutes per individual alternating pro/con for as long as it is possible (written testimony is encouraged but not required). Persons wishing to speak or leave comments available to the public via the legislative website may sign up electronically at [Public Hearing](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/publicHearings?action=viewOnlineSignup&meetingID=25619). Budget Bills Sponsored by the Appropriations Committee Public Hearing for discussion: HSB 200- Education HSB 201- Judicial HSB 202- Justice Systems HSB 203- Agriculture & Natural Resources HSB 204- Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF), Waiting for numbers on Health & Human Services & Economic Development.

Suggested areas of comments:

* Thanks for setting SSA early in the Session and keeping the commitment to fund it.
* HSB 200 eliminates the 3rd Grade Retention and /unfunded Summer School. Good decision for students and for school districts!
* It’s unfortunate that early childhood programs are being reduced. Shared Visions and other preschool opportunities pay dividends down the road for student achievement and economic development.
* Iowa’s Mentoring and Induction has been a great program respected around the nation. Schools will miss the $4.0 million that was invested in this program to support teachers and improve teacher retention. To continue this program locally, schools will likely divert funds from teacher leadership, further stressing the implementation of the Governor’s priority.
* These budgets are full of tough decisions and school leaders can respect the difficulty of setting priorities. Our legislature and governor need to carefully consider reigning in tax credits and growing state revenues proportionate to economic growth in order to meet the needs of all Iowans.

**This week’s Legislative Action:**

[**HF 633**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=hf633) **Operational Sharing Incentives:** Formerly HF 508: This bill was approved unanimously by the House Appropriations Committee and is on the House Appropriations Calendar. The bill:

* Repeals the sunset of the operational sharing incentives
* Repeals the limitation of 5-year of sharing any one position
* Makes no changes to the positions eligible for sharing or their weightings
* Retains the maximum amount of weighting per district at the equivalent of 21 students. Retains the AEA maximum of $200,000.

This bill is a priority for RSAI and we are registered in favor.

[**SF 240**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF240&ga=87) **Assessments:** The Senate agreed with the House Amendments (see last week’s report for bill details), sending the bill to the governor. RSAI was previously undecided on the bill, but has changed registration to support given the amendment to eliminate the requirement that the State Board of Education make a recommendation on the state assessment to the legislature. This action restores the authority to the State Board, where it should be.

[**HF 564**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=HF%20564) **Categorical Flexibility**, was amended in the Senate. The amendment:

* allows districts to offer PK to a younger or older child, if space and funding are available, including funding from another school district account or fund from which PK program expenditures are authorized by law, but the student isn’t counted for state funding purposes.
* adds safety equipment as an allowable expense for PK program
* strikes the division of the bill that expanded PPEL flexibility for transportation equipment repair (House version had repealed the $2,500 threshold for use of PPEL to repair transportation equipment)

The bill was amended and approved in the Senate 49 in favor, 0 opposed. Back to the House. RSAI is registered in favor of the bill.

[**HF 565**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF565&ga=87) **Education Flex Account**, was amended in the Senate. The amendment includes standards to prove that original intent of the categorical fund was met:

* For PK, must have provided PK in the year in which a balance is carried forward to all eligible students for whom a timely application for enrollment was submitted
* For PD: states that all PD requirements of Chapter 284 are met
* For HSAP: must meet the statutory requirements for HSAP funding, including funding all purposes listed in subsections 2 and 3 and funding all requests for services and materials from parents of HSAP students

The bill requires a school board resolution and public hearing: Resolution must state the original source and use of funds, the amount of the proposed expenditures, the fiscal year from which the transfer of such funds is to occur. Must also include a certification that the statutory requirements of the original purpose have been met or are no longer required. DE is required to prescribe the form for public notices. A copy of the resolution must be sent to DE and made available for any audit.

The bill was amended and approved in the Senate 49 in favor, 0 opposed. Back to the House. RSAI is registered in favor.

**New Bill Introduced:** [**SSB 1188**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=ssb1188) **School Tuition Organization Tax Credits.** This bill changes the eligibility requirement for private school scholarships paid by school tuition organizations from 300% to 400% of the federal poverty level. The bill doesn’t change the limit of the tax credit, currently capped at $12 million. The change in eligibility would mean that a family of four who makes $98,400 could receive the funds for tuition to private school. Current law is 300% of the federal poverty level, or $73,800 for a family of four. See <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines> for the poverty guidelines for other family sizes. The bill is a Senate Ways and Means committee bill but has not been assigned a subcommittee. RSAI is opposed.

**Remaining RSAI Priorities:** Although this week saw no action on the following bills, they are all alive and pending action anticipated before the end of the 2017 Session:

* [**HF 573**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=hf573) **Home Rule** ison the Senate Calendar. RSAI is registered in favor.
* [**SF 475**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=sSF475) **Education Omnibus Bill** is on the House Calendar. RSAI was registered as undecided, but is now registered in favor pending positive changes to the bill. RSAI requested the provisions to allow CTE concurrent enrollment/community college courses to meet the requirements in two areas of career and technical education to meet accreditation.
* [**HF 230**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=HF230) **SAVE Extension still holding in House Ways and Means:**  this bill extends the SAVE sunset from 2029 to Jan. 1, 2050. See the RSAI web site for a position statement regarding the priority of extending the sunset and talk to House Ways and Means Committee members about moving this bill forward. Position Paper is found here: [Position paper found here](http://nebula.wsimg.com/c6f25fa52d9da14421dfe628662fe880?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1).
* [**SF 455**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=sf455) **Formula and Transportation Equity:** the bill includes a 10-year phase-in to eliminate the $175 difference in the district and state costs per pupil and 10-year phase in to fund school transportation supplementary weighting, also over 10 years. Formula Equality  [Position paper found here.](http://nebula.wsimg.com/24a0782c18a63aa6bad9f17f7d35ed4d?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1) Transportation  [Position paper found here.](http://nebula.wsimg.com/52c2d2006addab7f4b2beced93116fe5?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1)

This RSAI priority is still in the House Appropriations Committee, stalled by the REC estimate and budget constraints. Please reach out to your representatives on this committee and reiterate the urgency of beginning the work of closing these equity gaps in the formula and in transportation funding now.

House Appropriations Members: **find links to email addresses here.** <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/committee?ga=87&groupID=695>

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From links above or the legislative page <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators> , find email addresses, home mailing address and home/work phone numbers for your legislators.

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