**RSAI Call to Action: School Funding Adequacy and Timing**

**Jan. 31, 2017**

**Education Funding Proposal:** [HSB](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=%24selectedGa.generalAssemblyID&ba=SSB1001) 55 and [SSB 1028](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=SSB1028) were entered into the legislative system late last week, described as “bill shells”, to which amendments would be applied. The House and Senate had identical amendments, presented in committees Monday afternoon/evening. Rep. Rodgers, in the House Appropriations Subcommittee, described the assumptions of what were amended onto the bill shell in Appropriations Committee:

* Sets the cost per pupil increase at 1.11%, which is estimated to cost a net $40 million in state commitment once the TLC cost in the formula of $54 million is offset by the elimination of TLC grant funds in the education appropriations budget.
* Majority caucus intent to continue to absorb what would otherwise be a property tax impact to increasing the state cost per pupil.
* Continuation of $15 million cut to AEAs (that will be in the Standings appropriations bill, not in this one.)
* Change in the timing of the decision, requiring the legislature to set the cost per pupil within 30 days of the release of the Governor’s budget in the base year (for the upcoming school year beginning July 1 of the state school year but not for the subsequent year.)
* Given these assumptions, the LSA staff estimates a $73 increase in the cost per pupil, for a new state cost per pupil of $6,664 for FY 2018.
* The bills, as approved by committee, are now [SF 166](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%20166&ga=87) and [HF 136](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=HF136).
* RSAI is registered opposed to both bills.

**Talking Points:**

* **Start with thanks**: Thank you for not cutting PK-12 education in the deappropriations for FY 2017. Thank you for working on education funding now to meet the 30-day deadline for FY 2018. Thank you for working on inequities in the system, including transportation, inequality in the formula and local flexibility to meet the needs of students.
* **It’s not just this year**: FY 2018 will be the 7th out of 8 years in which the cost per pupil was set lower than the continued cost of doing business.
* **Schools are being asked to do more**: students have greater needs than ever before, increasing poverty, more language challenges, mental health challenges, yet increasing expectations for success in Career and Technical Education, preparation for workforce or post secondary success.
* **Return on Investment:** every dollar invested in education **nets a return on investment bigger than investing in the stock market1,** for Iowa taxpayers.

**Contact all Representatives and Senators, regarding the importance of investing in public education and the success of Iowa students.** From the link below, you can access individual pages to get email, phone and home address. They can also be reached when in Session. Call the Senate switchboard at (515) 281-3371 or the House switchboard at (515) 281-3221 and ask to speak with them or leave a message. Find your legislators’ contact information here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>

You may also wish to contact Senate and House Leadership: Their contact information is found here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/leadership>

**Engage Parents:** Share this information with parents and explain what happens in your school district with 1.1% increase in the cost per pupil. Encourage them to call, write letters or email their legislators.

***Business Leaders:*** *if you know a member of the business community who has been supportive of local education issues and your schools, encourage them to call or email as well.*

**RSAI Priority on State Supplemental Assistance:** Due to non-educational priorities of the legislature, the education of students in rural districts has been disadvantaged by many years of low per pupil increases.  Formula funding is especially critical to rural Iowa due to transportation costs, economies of scale, unique needs of students, mandates and compliance, the need for quality AEA services, and the ability to attract and retain quality staff in rural Iowa. The survival of rural schools depends on the return of education as the state’s top priority with an investment of meaningful new resources to improve opportunities for students.  The resurrection of this priority will take several years of significant investment, thus RSAI supports a minimum of 6% non-categorical funding, as long as new mandates are funded outside of the formula and not instead of it.​​ The return to the legal and historical practice of setting the state cost per pupil as required by Iowa law exemplifies the prioritization of education. If the General Assembly does not set SSA in according with statutory timelines, the percent of SSA immediately reverts to the percent of state revenue growth predicted by the Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) for the year of the school budget being set, based on the March REC estimate for the out year, prior to any state general fund revenue reductions imposed by the legislature. The RSAI Position Paper: *State Supplemental Assistance: 2017* is found on the RSAI legislative web page here: <http://www.rsaia.org/legislative.html>

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1National Bureau of Economic Research, *The Effects of School Spending on Educational and Economic Outcomes: Evidence from School Finance Reforms*, written by C. Kirabo Jackson (Northwestern University), Rucker C. Johnson (Northwestern University) and Claudia Persico (University of California-Berkeley), <http://www.nber.org/papers/w20847>