**RSAI Legislative Update   
March 5, 2021**

In this RSAI Weekly Report from the 2021 Legislative Session, find information about:

* Charter Schools and Education/Open Enrollment Bills Survive the Funnel; Voucher bill dies.
* Other Legislative Funnel Deadline Victims and Survivors
* School Choice Advocacy Focus: Charter Schools
* One-time Funding for Pandemic Instructional Costs Still Pending

**Legislative Funnel Deadlines**   
The first funnel deadline of March 5, by which time bills must be approved by a committee in their chamber of origin (House Files out of the House Education Committee, for example,) impacted bills at the statehouse this week. Of the 1,850 pieces of legislation introduced in the 2021 Session, just over 230 bills survived this funnel. The second funnel, requiring bills out of a committee in the other chamber, is April 2. There are some exceptions, including appropriations bills, ways and mean (tax policy) bills, leadership bills and oversight committee bills. The funnels winnow down the mass volume of proposals to those that have a chance to move forward, allowing legislators, their staff, and lobby groups to focus their attention on priorities. Of last week’s three School Choice bills, new in the House, only two cleared the House Education Committee Wednesday evening in order to move forward.

[**HSB 240**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hsb240) **Education Practices and Open Enrollment:** the bill was amended in the House Education Committee and then passed on to the Calendar. A detailed description of the bill in included in the Feb. 26 Weekly Report. Here are the changes made in the Committee:

**Statewide SIS:** The Amendment strikes the Statewide single student information system from the bill. RSAI was opposed to this division and support this part of the amendment.

**Flexibility:** The Amendment removed the provision which would have allowed school boards to transfer ending Teacher Salary Supplement (TSS) balances to the Flexibility Account. Since Iowa Code 284 requires those balances to be completely distributed to teachers, and the bill required school boards to meet the requirements of Chapter 284, we did not see much value in writing this flexibility into law in the first place. The bill, as amended, does maintain the ability to transfer TLC ending balances to the Flexibility Account once the provisions of Chapter 284 are met. RSAI supports this provision.

**Education Tax Credits and Deductions:** The amendment peeled back the expansion of the tuition and textbook tax credits, originally estimated at $51 million. The amendment has a more modest approach, limiting the tax credit to 25% of the first $2,000, removes the provision that would have made it refundable, but still expands the eligibility to claim the credit to home school families. RSAI was opposed to this provision. Our registration may change once we have a chance to review the revised fiscal note

**School District Enrollment Working Group:** The amendment strikes this provision. RSAI supported the workgroup but does not see it as necessary to move this legislation forward.

**Open Enrollment:** The amendment changes the varsity athletic eligibility wait period for students open enrolled from 90 school days to 90 calendar days, strikes that requirement that summer school days do not count toward the waiting period, and allows a student’s eligibility waiting period to be waived if agreed to by

both the sending and receiving district. RSAI is undecided on both of these provisions. The amendment also adds to good cause for a late open enrollment that a student’s district of residence has a voluntary diversity plan in effect on January 1, 2021 and the open enrollment out of the district is for the school year beginning July 1, 2021. RSAI is opposed to this provision.

**Division V:** school board responsibility for improving student achievement and **Division VI** which adds a work-based learning coordinator to shared operational functions were unchanged by the amendment. RSAI is neutral on these provisions.

[**HSB 242**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hsb242) **Charter Schools.** RSAI is opposed to this bill. If the second chartering option of charters founded by outside entities without school board approval is removed, RSAI would register in support. See the February 26 Weekly Report for details of the bill. The Bill was not amended in the House Education Committee and will likely be debated next week in the House.

See the RSAI Legislative Website for an updated [Call to Action on Charter Schools](https://nebula.wsimg.com/cbc9b2eaebcd4f5f9c4a2c84612ee89f?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1) with talking points and directions to reach out to House of Representative members now through when the bill is debated.

See [ISFIS Analysis of NAPCS Report](https://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/system/files/members/Public/ISFIS%20-%20NEPC%20Review%20of%20NAPCS%20Report%20Summary%20-%20Feb%202021.docx) linked here, which includes additional information about the impact of charter schools across the country.

[**HSB 243**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hsb243) **Students First Education Scholarships (Vouchers).** RSAI is opposed to this bill. A subcommittee of Reps. Wills, Stone and R. Smith voted to move the bill forward to the House Education Committee (2:1) but the bill was not debated in the Committee, so it dies due to the funnel deadline.

**Bills That Did Not Survive the Funnel**

* HSB 243 Vouchers (but still in SF 159 and other Ways & Means Bills are exempt)
* SSB 1213 Removal from Office
* HF 373 Low-income Weighting
* HF 105 Open Enrollment Busing
* HF 222 Budget Penalty for Using 1619 Curriculum
* HF 420 American Culture/Monuments Curriculum
* SF 224 Toilet Assigned to sex at birth
* SF 167 Parent Permission for Gender Identity content
* SF 271 Dropout Prevention Equity
* SF 168 Special Education Service at Private School
* SF 74 SRO Operational Sharing

**Bills on the Governor’s Desk or Signed (Enrolled) So Far**

* SF 160 100% in-person Learning Option (Signed 1/29/21)
* SF 269 SSA at 2.4% (Signed 2/23/21)
* HF 308 Eligibility for Senior Year Plus
* HF 386 Strikes School Reporting of Nonprofit Organizational membership
* SF 130 Temporary Exemption to Income Limit for Board Member Conflict of Interest
* SF 231 Special Minor’s Drivers’ License
* SF 285 All Iowa Opportunity Scholarships – suspension or delay of participation

**Bills Surviving (Senate and House Education Committee)**

* SF 159 Governor’s School Choice Omnibus Bill
* SF 258 SRO’s from additional ISL authority (in Ways and Means Committee)
* SF 260 Receiving District Medicaid Claiming
* SF 265 Temporary Parent Discretion to Retain
* SF 289 School Board Powers
* SF 466 Providers for Concussion Management
* SF 467 Online Learning/Virtual Snow Days
* SF 478 First Amendment Rights and Prohibitions (HF 744 on House Calendar)
* SF 532 Statement of Professional Recognition for Behavior Analysts
* SF 544 Tiered ELL Weighting (.21 and .25)
* SF 545 Learning Recovery Task Force
* SF 546 Private Instruction/Drivers’ Education
* SF 547 Teach Iowa Scholar Program Increased Amount and Target Minorities
* SSB 1243 Education Appropriations
* SR 3 Resolution Urging Iowa Girls Athletic Union to Recognize Girls Wrestling
* HF 167 Seizure Disorder Health Plans (will get a new #)
* HF 315 At-risk Student Programs
* HF 316 Open Enrollment District of Residence
* HF 317 Calculating Funding for Students in Facilities
* HF 318 Preschool for young 5-year-olds
* HF 228 Voluntary Diversity Plans
* HF 385 Open Enrollment Technical Corrections
* HF 388 Duties of the Child Development Coordinating Council
* HF 415 Administer the Pledge (flag present)
* HF 507 School Presumption in Custody Hearing
* HF 532 Qualified Instructional Supplement for In-Person Instruction
* HF 602 Transfers from the General Fund to the Student Activity Fund
* HF 604 Language and Literacy Development for Deaf and Hard of Hearing
* HF 605 Tiered ELL Weighting (.21 and .25 funding)
* HF 622 School Board Powers
* HF 642 Sped Director Operational Sharing
* HF 660 Teacher PD counts for CEUs
* HF 675 Substitute certification flexibility
* HF 706 Telehealth
* HF 722 Transfer of Teach Iowa Scholar Funds and Deposit of Loan Payments
* HF 724 Adoptive Parents Benefits
* HF 731 Out-of-state Telehealth Providers
* HF 734 Iowa Reading Research Center Appropriation for Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement
* HSB 240 Governor’s Education Practices/Open Enrollment (new # pending)
* HSB 242 Charter Schools (new # pending)

**Bills Surviving (Other Committees)**

* SF 183 Construction Manager At-risk
* SF 233 Minor’s Drivers’ License
* SF 317 Distracted Driving in Drivers’ Ed (HF 380 on House Calendar)
* SF 362 Adoptive Parent Employees (HF 724 on House Calendar)
* SF 390 Broadband Service (HSB 133 on House Calendar)
* SF 402 Banning Social Media Censorship/Political Subdivision Contracts (HF 633 on House Calendar)
* SF 409 IPIB Lengthened Complaint Timelines
* SF 425 Meeting/Public Notice Requirements
* SF 535 Gun Acquisition and Possession (HSB 254 on House Calendar)
* SF 555 COVID-19 Vaccine Status for Employment Prohibited
* HF 216 Demolition Grants
* HF 294 Telehealth Reimbursement
* HF 346 Lobbying by Political Subdivisions
* HF 431 Audio Only Telehealth
* HF 482 Department of Agriculture Appropriations (Includes local food sourcing school nutrition reimbursement program)

**Connecting with Legislators:** Find biographical information about legislators gleaned from their election web sites on the ISFIS site here: <http://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/legislative_bios> Learn about your new representatives and senators or find out something you don’t know about incumbents.

Find out who your legislators are through the interactive map or address search posted on the Legislative Website here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>

To call and leave a message at the Statehouse during the legislative session, the House switchboard operator number is 515.281.3221 and the Senate switchboard operator number is 515.281.3371. You can ask if they are available or leave a message for them to call you back.

**Advocacy Resources** To find Advocacy Resources such as Position Papers, RSAI Weekly Legislative Reports and video updates, RSAI Calls to Action when immediate advocacy action is required, testimony presented to the State Board of Education, the DE or any legislative committee or public hearing, and links to fiscal information that may inform your work, visit the RSAI legislative web page here: <http://www.rsaia.org/legislative.html>. Also, check out the new [RSAI Advocacy Handbook linked here](https://nebula.wsimg.com/4ea19def77546da168e8c2a7d2194fee?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1), and also available on the legislative page of the RSAI website

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Contact us with any questions, feedback or suggestions to better prepare your advocacy work:   
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