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 statehouse action, primarily status of school funding, appropriations bill status, and report of the final week of this 2015 Legislative Session. We will report the Governor’s approval and veto action as it happens in the next 30 days. We look forward to seeing you in July at a RSAI regional meeting in your area and at the annual meeting on Wed. Oct. 6, at 5:30 PM at the FAA Enrichment Center on the DMACC Campus in Ankeny. Thanks for all you do to advocate for Iowa’s children! [margaret.buckton@isfis.net](mailto:margaret.buckton@isfis.net)

**School Funding: SSA at 1.25% in** [**SF 171**](http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&frame=1&GA=86&hbill=SF171) **&** [**SF 172**](http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&frame=1&GA=86&hbill=SF172)**, One-Time Funding with Expenditure Limitations in** [**HF 666**](http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&menu=false&hbill=hf666) **and No Action on FY 2017**

**One-Time Funding with Limitations:**  [HF 666](http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&menu=false&hbill=hf666), approved in both the House and Senate this morning, appropriates $55.7 million to the DE, to be distributed as one-time funding of $53.6 million to school districts and $2.1 million to AEAs. For school districts, the money is distributed based on budget enrollment for the FY 2015-16 school year, which is an estimated $109 per pupil. The bill specifies that the funds are intended to be used for two purposes: to fund the budget guarantee authorized under 257.14 for the 2015-16 school year (in which case, the additional property tax levy is to be lowered accordingly) or for instructional expenses. The bill also states that the funds are intended to supplement, not supplant, existing school district funding for instructional expenditures. The bill defines instructional expenses to include textbooks, library books, other instructional materials and equipment used directly by students, transportation costs of the school district, and education initiatives proven to increase student achievement in mathematics, literacy, or science in PK-grade 12. The bill specifies that the funds are miscellaneous income and paid in the same manner as state foundation aid.

**SSA:**  [SF 171](http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&frame=1&GA=86&hbill=SF171) and [SF 172](http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&frame=1&GA=86&hbill=SF172) establish the state supplemental aid increase as 1.25% per pupil for FY 2016 and 1.25% for categorical fund increases (TSS, PD Supplement and Early intervention/Class Size) for FY 2016. The Senate and House approved the Conference Committee reports this afternoon, sending the bills to the Governor. There has not been further discussion of a percentage increase for FY 2017.

[SF 510](http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&menu=false&ga=86&hbill=SF510)  **Standing Appropriations** was amended by the Conference Committee report and approved by Senate, approved in the House just moments ago (3:30 PM). In its final form, the Conference Committee Report includes:

* Cuts the AEAs by $15 million (maintains the current level of deappropriation to the AEAs.)
* Extends the repeal of the online learning academies, which would have otherwise expired June 30, 2015 to June 30, 2018. This would allow the online academies at CAM-Anita and Clayton Ridge to accept open enrolled students for an online learning curriculum, but does not alter the enrollment limitations in current law, other than allowing additional open enrollment if the resident district agrees the program is best for the student or there are siblings. The bill specifies data collection, reporting and oversight required by the DE.
* Appropriates $8.5 million for nonpublic school transportation (same level of funding as FY 2015).
* Notwithstands the Code requirement to fund Instructional Support and sets the state match of ISL at zero for FY 2016 and FY 2017.
* Allows remaining funds for Iowa Learning On-Line to not revert to the general fund and remain with ILO for expenditure prior to the close of the next fiscal year.
* Requires the Revenue Estimating Conference to meet at least four times annually, with one of those meetings in March, and requires the REC to set an estimate for the current fiscal year, the upcoming fiscal year, and the following fiscal year.
* Requires the DE dedicate at least ½ of one FTE as a fine arts consultant to provide guidance and assistance, including but not limited to professional development, strategies, and materials to the DE, school districts, and accredited nonpublic schools relating to music, visual art, drama and theater, and other fine arts applied programs and coursework.

[HF 658](http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&menu=false&hbill=HF658) **Education Appropriations: Conference Committee Report approved in both chambers this week.** In short, this bill primarily funds regents institutions and community colleges, but includes many line-item appropriations impacting PK-12. The bill appropriates at total of $992.2 million for FY 2016 from the state General Fund, which is an increase of $6.1 million. The bill also appropriates $40.3 million from the Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund, which is the same as current year. All FY 2017 appropriations are exactly one half of the FY 2016 level, except for the High Needs Schools Grants which aren’t funded in FY 2016, but received a full $10 million for FY 2017. The NOBA detail provided to the conference committee members with the House and Senate comparison is found [here](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/NOBA/HF%20658%20-%20Education%20CCR.pdf). Specific items of interest to school leaders include:

* $392,452 for Teacher Shortage Forgiveness (no change compared to FY 2015) and $400,000 for Teacher Iowa Scholars (a reduction of $900,000 compared to FY 2015). Both of these programs are available to eligible new teachers.
* DE Administration appropriation of $6.3 million, which is a reduction of $2.0 million compared to FY 2015. However, there was $2.0 million appropriated for the Early Literacy Warning System which was included in the DE’s administrative line-item budget, so in essence, no change in funding compared to FY 2015.
* All of the Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) line items received the same funding as last year ($5.4 million for general aid, $5.4 million for PK Tuition Assistance, $12.4 million for Family Support and Parent Education and $1.7 million for special education services Birth to 3.)
* $57.4 million to the DE for Student Achievement Teacher Quality which includes $50 million for the new Teacher Leadership and Compensation participating districts beginning July 1, 2015.
* $1.0 million to AEAs for AEA support system (TLC implementation support)
* $8.0 million for DE to send to school districts for Successful Progression for Early Readers (same as FY 2015)
* $1.0 million to the Iowa Reading Research Center (same as last year)
* $1.0 million to AEAs (same as last year) presumably for support to districts of Iowa Core Implementation
* $1.5 million for Iowa Learning Online Initiative (same as last year)
* $1.0 million for Administrator Mentoring/Coaching Support (same as last year)
* $500,000 to continue the English Language Learner Grant Program
* $250,000, which is a decrease of $250,000 for the Attendance Center/Website & Data System
* There was no appropriation for Bullying Prevention, Iowa Reading Corps, Principal Leadership Institute, or OECD test for schools, all initiatives in the Governor’s recommendation.

Additionally, the following policy language was included in the bill:

* Preschool Flexibility: allows school districts to transport PK students along with students not in the PK program and permits the cost of the transportation to be prorated. Allows administrative funds to be used for outreach activities and rent for facilities not owned by the school district. Lastly, permits up to 10.0% of the amount of PK foundation aid passed through to a community-based provider to be used for administrative costs (but maintains the current law of 5% for public PK at the school.)
* Requires DE to use carryforward funds from FY 2015 TLC to fund FY 2016 teacher leadership supplemental aid payments to school districts and allows DE to prorate TLC payments if funds available for FY 2016 are insufficient to pay them in full.
* At-risk and Dropout Prevention Program Flexibility:
  + Permits a school district to use funding received through at-risk supplementary weighting and dropout prevention for serving at-risk pupils (a broader term than “dropout prevention eligible students”.)
  + Permits up to 5.0% of the total amount (at-risk and dropout prevention combined) to be used for district-wide or building-wide at-risk and dropout prevention programming targeted to pupils that are not deemed at-risk.
  + Permits a school district to use these funds to pay for the instructional costs necessary to address a pupil’s behavior if determined by the school district to be likely to inflict self-harm or likely to harm another pupil.
  + Removes the requirement that the DE submit an annual report that includes the ways school districts used dropout prevention funds in the previous school year.
* Requires the DE to employ a 1.0 FTE position for a consultant for gifted and talented children programs.
* Transfers $600,000 from BOEE licensing revenues that are unencumbered or unobligated at the end of FY 0215 to the DE for purposes of continuing the career planning program required for students in 8th grade.
* Requires local school boards to publish notice of its intent to fill a vacancy on the school board by appointment and that the electors of the school district have the right to file a petition requiring that the vacancy be filled by special election. The bill specifies the requirements for the petition.

[**HF 550**](http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?category=billinfo&service=billbook&GA=86&hbill=HF550) **School Board Member Contacts:** This bill was approved by both chambers this week. It requires, within 30 days of taking the oath of office:

* Government agency (General Assembly, County Boards of Supervisors, City Councils and School Boards) shall provide the board member with designated contact information with the government entity
* If the school maintains an internet site, its required to publish the contact information for elected officials on the web site
* Board member may provide additional contact information
* Defines contact information minimally as telephone number or email address
* Applies to General Assembly, County Boards of Supervisors, City Council members and School Board members.

[**SF 485**](http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&frame=1&GA=86&hbill=SF485) **PPEL Bonds:** this bill was approved by the House, sending it to the Governor. It allows a school district to exceed the statutory limitation on the rate of their PPEL levy, but does not allow the rate to be higher than in the previous year when it exceeded the statutory levy due to valuation decline, and only if refinancing the bonds would ultimately save the district interest on the bonds.

**Thanks for the opportunity to work with you all this year!** We will have an RSAI Digest of all legislation enacted this year, after the governor has had his 30 days to review everything sent to his desk in these closing days! This will inform your work at the RSAI regional meetings to craft a platform of priorities to support the education of students in your school districts.

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