



## RSAI Legislative Update February 20, 2025

This RSAI Weekly Report from the 2025 Legislative Session includes:

- School Funding/SSA Status and Resources
- Governors Bill on Childcare Continuum and Preschool Subcommittees
- Governor's TSS and Education Policy Subcommittee in the House
- Governor's Math Initiative Subcommittees in Both Chambers
- Floor Action, Committee Action and other Subcommittees of interest
- Advocacy Actions for the Week and Resources

### School Funding / SSA Status

**SF 167** SSA by the Senate sets increase per pupil cost at 2%. The [Fiscal Note](#) has all of the details. The House amended SF 167 with H-3004. The House Amendment [S-3004](#) is attached to SF 167, which the Senate received from the House on Feb. 17, placing it on the Senate Calendar. Find here the [Fiscal Note](#) on the 2.25% plus the other House investments. The additional investments include: 1) \$10 per pupil applied to the minimum state cost per pupil, to close the district cost per pupil equity gap to \$130, 2) an increase in the transportation equity fund sufficient to reimburse all districts with transportation costs per pupil above the state average, 3) increase in the operational sharing student weighting cap from 21 to 25, and 4) supplemental appropriation of \$23.6 million distributed per students, estimated at \$47 per pupil, in the 2025-26 fiscal year (one-time appropriation). RSAI is registered in support of the House proposal and opposed to the Senate proposal.

*Please Note: Both Fiscal Notes overstate the state investment because the fiscal note assumes restoration of \$25 million from the prior year's AEA cuts, which would be nice but is unlikely. The Governor's budget recommendation continued to \$25 million reduction, and at least for the last several years, the legislature has deappropriated those funds through the Standings Appropriations bill. The total increased state general fund cost of 2.25% SSA is \$123.5 million. The Senate's 2% costs, if the AEA cuts continue, is estimated to be \$105.2 million.*

Next steps: The Senate could agree with the House changes, insist on their own 2% SSA, or find a compromise. Use this weekend to thank House members for a higher investment in public schools and encourage Senators to agree with the House's action. See specific advocacy actions below. The 30-day statutory requirement to set SSA within 30 days of the Governor's budget announcement, Feb. 13, has passed. School districts must certify their property tax rates to the county by March 5.

## **Governor's Bill on Childcare Continuum and Preschool Subcommittees move the bills forward**

A subcommittee of the House Health and Human Services Committee met on Wednesday this week to consider [HSB 145](#). The bill includes the following provisions:

Division I: Community-Based Provider Program (Preschool). See the RSAI Weekly report from Feb. 13 for the complete details of the bill. Here are some key provisions:

- Creates a “community-based provider program” for entities to directly provide Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP) without partnering with public schools
- Goes into Iowa Code 256C, which requires High-Quality (certified teachers, at least 10 hours, quality standards, Gold assessment, etc.) *The Governor's office has stated their intent for licensed teachers and application of the other SVPP standards for all new community-based providers.*
- Provides 0.5 weighting directly to Community-Based Providers based on eligible students enrolled in the initial year of operation (on-time funding) and requires State BOE to determine by rule the date for counting initial year eligible students for Community-Based Provider PK budget
- Specifies that 0.5 weighting for public PK students is based on eligible enrollment (count from prior year) which is current law. *(Public school PK and community partner PK new programs should also qualify for on-time funding in the initial year of operation.)*

Division II: Elimination of Child Development Coordinating Council

- Strikes the Child Development Coordinating Council (CDCC) and requires DE to take over their duties (includes encouraging all potential providers of SVPP to participate and processing grant requests for early childhood funding) and removes CDCC from the Center for Early Development Education. Removes parenting programs, including for birth-3 at-risk families from Early Childhood (transfers to the Department of Health and Human Services, or HHS). Strikes requirement for districts to appoint an advisory committee for each Family Support Program

Division III: DE Responsibilities

- Review and research effective programs, including evidence-based or promising practices in preschools which shall include a review of curricula and instructional materials used by PK programs in Iowa, PK programs serving students with IEPs and PK programs created in early childhood chapters.
- Develop and post a list of most effective curriculum and materials.
- Develop a PK accountability system and identify developmental and learning outcomes.
- Continuous implementation of high-quality program standards for school districts, nonpublic schools, programs serving students with IEPs and Community-Based Providers. Requires the system to use, at a minimum, data from child performance and growth measures (279.60), continuous improvement activities (256A and 256C) and other measures and activities defined by the DE.
- Develop, in coordination with HHS, an alignment of an outcomes-based accountability system for all PKs. Requires the system to take into account the voluntary quality rating system established in 237A.30 (Voluntary child care quality rating system).

- Review and revise state early learning standards related to PK programs serving students with IEPs.
- Provide PD to school districts, nonpublics, and Community-Based Providers offering PK programs to assist with implementing revised early learning standards, PK assessments, high-quality program standards, and standards related to PK programs.

Division VI Child Care Continuum Partnership Grants – Combo PK and Childcare Pilot Program

- Requires HHS, in collaboration with ECI Area Boards and DE, to create and administer a child care continuum partnership grant pilot program.
- Competitive grants to partnerships between providers of SVPP and child care centers licensed under chapter 237A to provide full-day early childhood education and care.

RSAI is registered as undecided on the bills. See advocacy messages below.

**Governor’s TSS and Education Policy Bills through Subcommittee**

[SSB 1100](#) and [HSB 147](#) both received subcommittee consideration and were recommended to move forward. RSAI is registered in support. The bill improves several areas of education policy, including:

**TSS Calculation and Process:** Strikes last year’s formula to calculate TSS and requires DOM to determine what districts need to meet new minimums based on reported staffing data. Requires DOM to include the employer’s share of FICA and IPERS. Applies the SSA increase in the state TSS cost per pupil and adds that dollar per pupil amount to districts’ TSS per pupil amounts. The bill also sets a process to correct errors on Oct. 2023 BEDS that impacted July 1, 2024 distributions. *(RSAI has suggested also allowing districts to submit information to DOM regarding any vacant positions hired since the Oct. 1 BEDS submission last fall.)*

**Student Teaching Requirements:** Exempts new teachers with substitute teaching experience or a substitute teaching license from current code student teaching requirements and changes the teacher intern program student teaching experience to say interns MAY (not shall) have 50 hours of student teaching.

**Out-of-State Reimbursement:** Provides reimbursement to districts for costs of medically necessary out-of-state placements that exceed weighting, if the placement includes required instruction. The difference between the weighting generated for the student and the actual expenditures will be reimbursed the next fall through state aid. The bill directs that the total of these reimbursements statewide be subtracted from state aid paid to all districts prorated based on budget enrollment.

**Other provisions:** Reinstates DE’s online jobs posting (doesn’t explicitly say Teach Iowa, but that’s it) and allows districts to pay IPERS eligible returning teachers \$50,000 minimum salary, even if they have 12 years or more experience.

### **Governor's Math Initiative Subcommittees**

HSB 137 and SSB 1092 Governor's Math Instruction bills were both approved by Subcommittees this week. Both the House and Senate floor managers explained their intent to remove the civics test provisions from these bills, since other bills on the civics test were already moving through the process. The bills have requirements for the DE and for school districts:

- Requires DE to provide professional development to teachers in districts and schools that are identified as in need of support for math proficiency. DE is also required to publish a list of approved screeners, provide family-centered resources, and create a state math plan
- Requires school districts to screen K-6 students three times annually, identify students at-risk of not achieving in math, progress monitor identified students every two weeks, develop an individual math plan in consultation with parents, and specify mandated interventions.

RSAI is registered as undecided on these bills. We support removing the civics test from this bill. We have requested that DE provide professional development to districts who are then responsible for working with teachers on improving math instruction, to include a process for districts to request a math screener they are currently using be approved, and for flexibility in determining which interventions are appropriate for students. We have also asked for district flexibility in determining what regular progress monitoring might look like in district schools.

### **Floor Action, Committee Action and other Subcommittees of interest**

**Floor Action this Week** (see bill descriptions and status in the bill tracker or contact us with questions).

- **SF 175 Pregnancy Education** was approved on a 31-13 vote. Senator Taylor, who managed the bill, offered an amendment to limit the application of the bill to grades 4-12. RSAI is opposed.
- **SF 278 Robotics Activities**, which allows high schools to sponsor robotics competitions, passed on a 46-0 vote. RSAI supports.
- **SF 171 School Dissolutions** Changes the effective date for a school district dissolution retroactively for Orient-Macksburg School District. The Senate PASSED the bill 44-0. The House also approved **SF 171 Dissolution Timelines**, 91:0, sending it to the Governor. RSAI supports.
- **HF 392 Year-Round High School Calendar Waiver**: authorizes school districts and accredited nonpublic schools to apply to DE for authority to maintain a year-round school calendar at an attendance center or school for students enrolled in grades 9-12. Passed on a 91:1 vote. RSAI supports.

**Committee Action This Week** (see bill descriptions and status in the bill tracker or contact us with questions)

### House Education Committee

- **HF 114 Therapeutic Classroom Mandates:** requires programs meet nutritional needs of students. Includes requirements for the foods used. Authorizes the use of such funds to increase student exposure to natural light and full-spectrum lighting fixtures. Amended and passed, 17-5; FM: Shipley RSAI is opposed.
- **HF 122 SRO Operational Sharing:** Increases the weighting for a shared school resource officer to four pupils. Passed 22:0. FM: Behn RSAI supports.
- **HF 204 Robotics:** Requires DE to include technical education assistance to schools on how to charter technical and career education student organizations. Allows a high school athletic organization to sponsor robotics competitions. Passed 22-0; FM: T Moore RSAI supports.
- **HF 220 8TH Graders in High School Sports:** Requires public and private schools to allow 8th-graders to compete in High School sports if the 8th grader meets academic standards. Passed 22-0; FM: Wheeler RSAI is undecided.
- **HF 236 High School Government Graduation Requirement:** Increases the amount of instruction in US government for high school students from 1/2 unit to 1 unit. Amended to delay the requirement to the 2026-2027 school year. Includes the expanded requirement within the current social studies graduation courses required for graduation. Amended and passed, 20-2; FM: T Moore RSAI is undecided
- **HF 274 Striking Library Exemptions:** Strikes the obscenity exemption for public libraries and schools. Passed 14-8; FM: Hayes RSAI is monitoring this bill.
- **HSB 157 Dropout Prevention:** Increases the maximum modified supplement for dropout prevention programs from 2.5% to a maximum of 5%. Gradually allows an increase of no more than .25% annually. Includes provisions on approving the amount at an election. Passed 22-0; FM: Ingels RSAI supports.

### Senate Education Committee

- **SF 64 School Budget Adjustment:** Allows school districts in a major disaster area who received a budget adjustment eligible for a second budget adjustment. Passed 16-0 FM: Evans RSAI supports.
- **SF 111 School Seizure Action Plans and Training Mandate:** Requires school boards and private schools to have at least one employee trained to administer seizure rescue medication. Deems that a school nurse who can administer such medications to meet the requirements of the plan. Establishes requirements for training for all school employees on recognizing seizures and on first aid training for seizures. Includes requirements for training to meet guidelines developed by the Epilepsy Foundation. Authorizes additional training. Requires schools to collaborate with parents on the development of individual health plans. Includes requirements on authorizations to allow seizure assistance. Requires the state BOE to adopt rules. Establishes civil immunity for school employees for good-faith actions. Makes definitions. Amended to require DE to convene a mandatory trainings working group to study mandatory trainings, consider frequency and find efficiencies, to minimize the burden of such trainings on teacher time. Passed 15-1 FM: Evans RSAI opposes.

- **SSB 1030 Civics Test for Graduation:** Requires a high school student to score at least 60% of the US Citizenship exam in order to graduate from high school or receive a GED. Allows the student to take the test as many times as needed and prohibits schools from charging for the test. Requires annual reporting to DE of test scores. Amended to require the DE to distribute the 100-question multiple choice test, allows districts to offer the test on paper or electronically and allows districts to give accommodations for students with disabilities and students served in EL programs. Amended and approved 14-2 FM: Green RSAI opposes.
- **SSB 1065 Cell Phone Restrictions Governor’s Bill:** makes the following changes: **Social Media:** Requires instruction on social media in the health curriculum for grades 6-8. Requires the DE consult with the HHS on social media and offer PD support to teachers. **Restricted Use Policies:** Requires public school boards to adopt policies to restrict the use of electronic devices during class time. Requires the DE to develop model policies districts may use that would be compliant (amended in committee to require those model policies be available this Spring). Makes definitions regarding electronic devices. **Safety:** Requires the Department of Public Safety to consult on revisions to safety plans and requires school boards to update safety plans if needed based on their electronic devices restriction policy. **Effective date:** Effective for 2025-2026 school year for instruction and restrictions but requires revision to emergency safety plans by July 2025. **Costs:** Deems any costs be paid out of current funding from the state (specifies that it is not an unfunded mandate). Passed 16-0 FM: Evans RSAI is undecided.

#### Other Committees

- **House Human Resources Committee passed HSB 86 Concussion Management.** The bill includes persons holding a doctorate in psychology with training in neuropsychology or concussion management as a licensed healthcare provider for concussion management for HS sports. Approved 19-0; FM: T Moore RSAI is undecided.
- **House Economic Growth and Development Committee passed HF 133 School Building Demolition Fund,** which creates a competitive grant fund, contingent on appropriation, to help with demolition costs. Requires grants to prioritize those schools and cities with lowest population and limits recipients to those 88 least population counties. Does not require sale of property after demolition, but if sold, requires proceeds to repay the fund. Approved 13:3. FM: Barker RSAI supports.
- **Senate State Government Committee:**
  - **SSB 1085 Complaint Timeline:** lengthened from 60 to 90 days. Koelker (C) Passed 17:0 RSAI is undecided.
  - **SSB 1086 Public Records Requests:** notification of estimate and time to fulfill the request: Koelker (C) Passed 17:0 RSAI is undecided.
  - **SSB 1087 Public Meeting Notices:** requires posting in an accessible, prominent place: Koelker (C) Passed 17:0 RSAI is undecided.

**Other Subcommittees. In addition to the many Governor’s proposals discussed above:** (see bill descriptions and status in the bill tracker or contact us with questions):

- SSB 1099 School Threat Assessment Teams RSAI Supports

- HF 331 and SF 265 Athletic Conference Realignment Process RSAI is undecided
- HF 261 Teacher Preps to prepare new teachers re Artificial Intelligence RSAI is undecided
- SF 253 Computer Science Graduation Requirement (5-year phase-in and ability to count as math, science or CTE credit) RSAI is undecided
- HSB 156 School Instructional Materials: Requires teachers and district staff to have a database/software tool to post links to and information about all instructional materials, videos, worksheets, etc., within 10 days of use in the classroom. RSAI is opposed.
- SSB 1161 School Bus Driver Training Flexibility RSAI is undecided

### **RSAI Advocacy Resources**

Check out the updated 2025 Session Advocacy Handbook, with everything advocacy beginners and experienced pros can use to advocate with legislators, at the statehouse or back in your district. Find the handbook on the RSAI Advocacy Website at: <https://www.rsaia.org/2025-legislative-session.html>

### **Advocacy Actions This Week:**

**Adequate School Funding:** Contact legislators regarding SSA. The House's 2.25%+ is a preferable policy and RSAI is registered in support. The teacher salary investment last year was a really good start, but SSA has to keep pace or our staff and programs for students will be compromised. See the [RSAI 2025 Adequate School Resources Position Paper](#) for additional information. Reach out to Senators and ask them to support the House amendment. Reach out to House members and thank them for voting to invest more.

**Preschool:** Encourage both Representatives and Senators to not forget public schools when considering the Governor's Child Care Continuum bills. Public schools need funding for initial preschool programs to expand access to preschool. Research shows that quality preschool for enough hours has great benefits (Perry Preschool Project, with \$17 returned benefit for every \$1 invested, had a minimum of 15 hours a week, which is 50% more time than Iowa's current SVPP funds). Iowa's neediest students not currently accessing either PK or child care might be best served in an all-day PK program. Serving these neediest students well will go far in improving state priorities, including literacy and math outcomes. The Governor's grants and 1.0 weighting for most at-risk 4-year-olds are compatible policies and both are probably necessary to establish a full continuum of care and instruction. See the [RSAI 2025 Quality Preschool Position Paper](#) for additional information.

Additional Supports:

- [ISFIS New Authority Calculator](#) allows users to set the SSA rate and calculate the impact for your district for FY 2026 on your regular program (not including special education or other supplemental weightings or categoricals). Enter the SSA percentage increase and you can compare to the new money you'd receive if the SSA rate matched inflation

(either 2.9% for CPI and 3.2% for Core Inflation) compared to the Governor's Recommendation of 2.0%.

**Unfunded mandates and Implementation Timelines:** remind legislators that any bill requiring staff training or rewriting curriculum costs districts time and money. Unfunded mandates such as the mandatory Civics Test and Career Education curriculum in middle school require resources that take away from math, literacy or other key issues of district focus. Each mandate should bring with it the funding to implement or at least an increase in SSA so school districts do not have to make tough choices. So many new requirements are on our curriculum directors' and teacher plates. State BOE has approved new standards (ELA, Science, Math) and the new literacy initiative is currently being implemented. Any additional mandates for changing instruction that require training need thoughtful time and compliance expectations. Recent examples include cell phone policy/social media instruction, adding career exposure, planning and experience to middle school grades, a new math initiative or civics initiative, seizure disorder training and plans, and the list goes on with every new bill. Please stress the time it takes to do good work, to benefit students.

**Connecting with Legislators:** 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. You can also ask them what's the best way to contact them during session. They may prefer email or text message or phone call based on their personal preferences.

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>

**Other RSAI Advocacy Resources:**

Check out the RSAI Website at <https://www.rsaia.org/2025-legislative-session.html> to find Advocacy Resources such as Position Papers, RSAI Weekly Legislative Recap Reports and Videos, 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. Be sure to review the 2025 RSAI Advocacy Handbook.

**Bill Action This Week**

Check out our separate Bill Tracker for all the bill actions and details for the week.



**Contact Us**

Keep in touch with your questions, comments, and let us know about your advocacy actions.

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