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RSAI Region Meeting NW Region May 4, 2021



RSAI Team

Justin Daggett, NW Region Rep

Brian Johnson, Legislative Rep

Dan Petersen, At-Large Rep to be elected at
Annual Meeting in October

Jen Albers, Administrator

Larry Sigel, ISFIS Partner

Margaret Buckton, Professional Advocate

Dave Daughton, Legislative Advocate



Agenda:

- ❖ Introductions
- ❖ RSAI Overview and Processes
- ❖ Election of Legislative Committee Rep
- ❖ Discussion of RSAI Proposed Bylaws
- ❖ Review of the 2021 Legislative Session
- ❖ NW Region Priorities for 2022 Session

Introductions

Name

District Role

One Sentence: What's the biggest challenge you face in your school district today?

History of RSAI

The Rural School Advocates of Iowa began with a few rural school leaders getting together in 2013 to discuss many things:

- Why were rural school voices not represented in statewide decision-making?
- Why did funding formulas not recognize transportation and sparsity factors?
- Why did state policy always seem to have a “one-size-fits-all” approach that left little flexibility to rural schools?
- What could rural school leaders do to change this situation to benefit students in rural schools?

July 1, 2014



Date: 7/7/2014

Why Should RSAI Exist

- The needs of students in rural Iowa are not being heard specific enough or loud enough
- Provide rural schools with a venue to develop a legislative platform that specifically addresses the unique needs of students in rural Iowa.
- Rural schools have general needs that all schools need, but they also face unique challenges specific to the rural setting.
- The quality of education in rural schools is assumed to be inferior by those who have never set foot in a rural school.
- There is a need to educate legislators and remind the Governor (Lake Mills) that quality education is provided in rural schools.
- RSAI is not about creating divisions. It is about collaboration with like voices on individual issues while distinguishing itself as an organization, focused on advocating for students in rural settings.
- RSAI embraces local control and allowing communities to identify what is needed to provide its students the best possible education experiences.



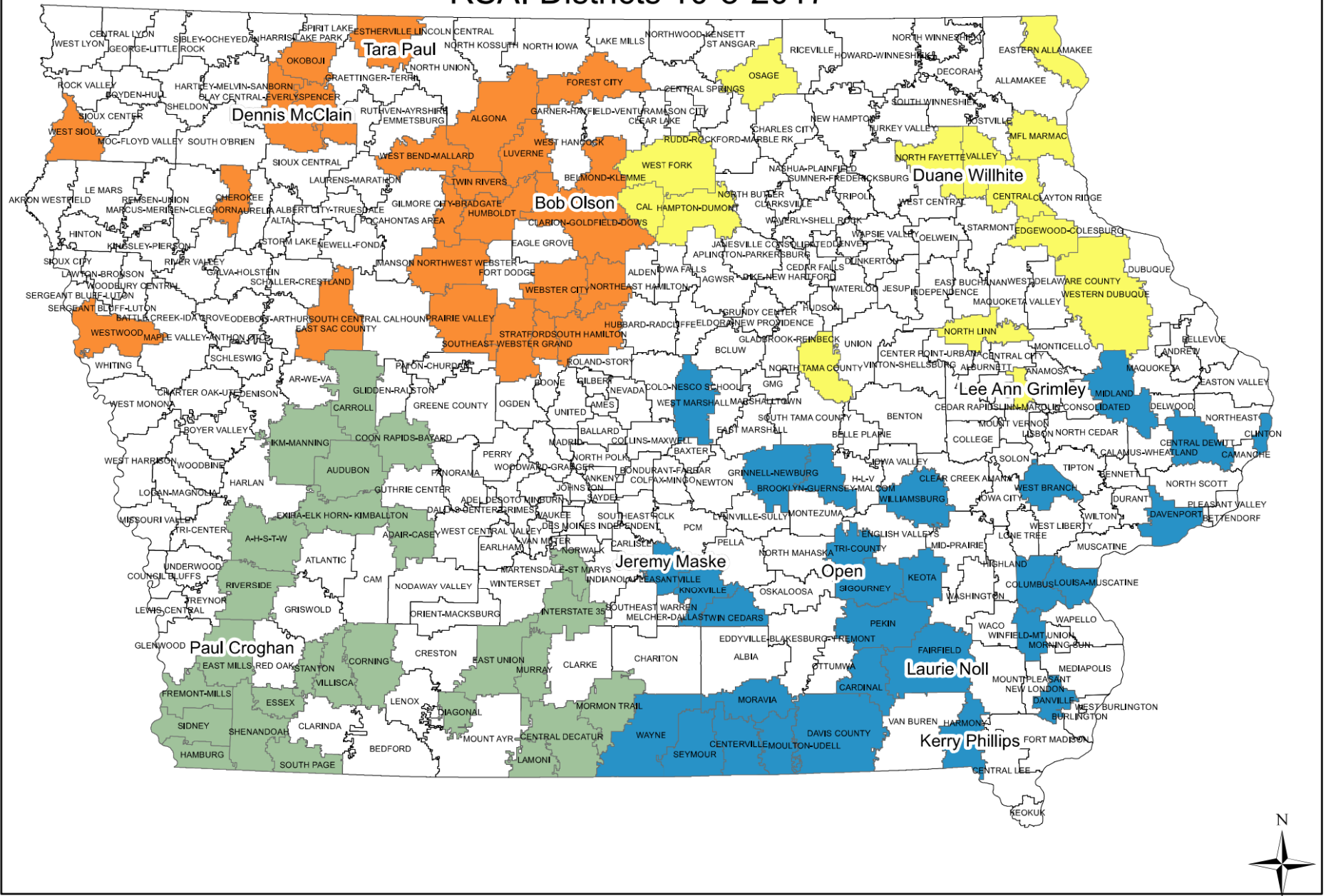
Why RSAI?



Unique Rural Needs

- Expand the use of the PPEL and Capital Projects funds to pay for the repair of school buses
- Remove the age cap from Early Retirement eligibility regulations specific to use of the Management Fund
- Provide funding opportunities to equalize the transportation cost per student and undue pressure on the General Fund
- Establish a three-year budget guarantee to provide rural school districts with funding stability and time to make difficult decisions during times of declining enrollment
- Support sharing incentives between districts to promote efficiency
- Accessible and affordable rural internet
- Allow districts to fund where State has underfunded

RSAl Districts 10-8-2017



RSAI Networking Grows

RSAI is recognized as the Iowa affiliate of the **National Rural Education Association (NREA)** connecting members to rural school leaders nationwide, an annual conference focused on the needs and successes of rural schools



Lends Iowa's voice to a collective effort in our nation's Capitol through membership in the **Rural Schools Collaborative**.

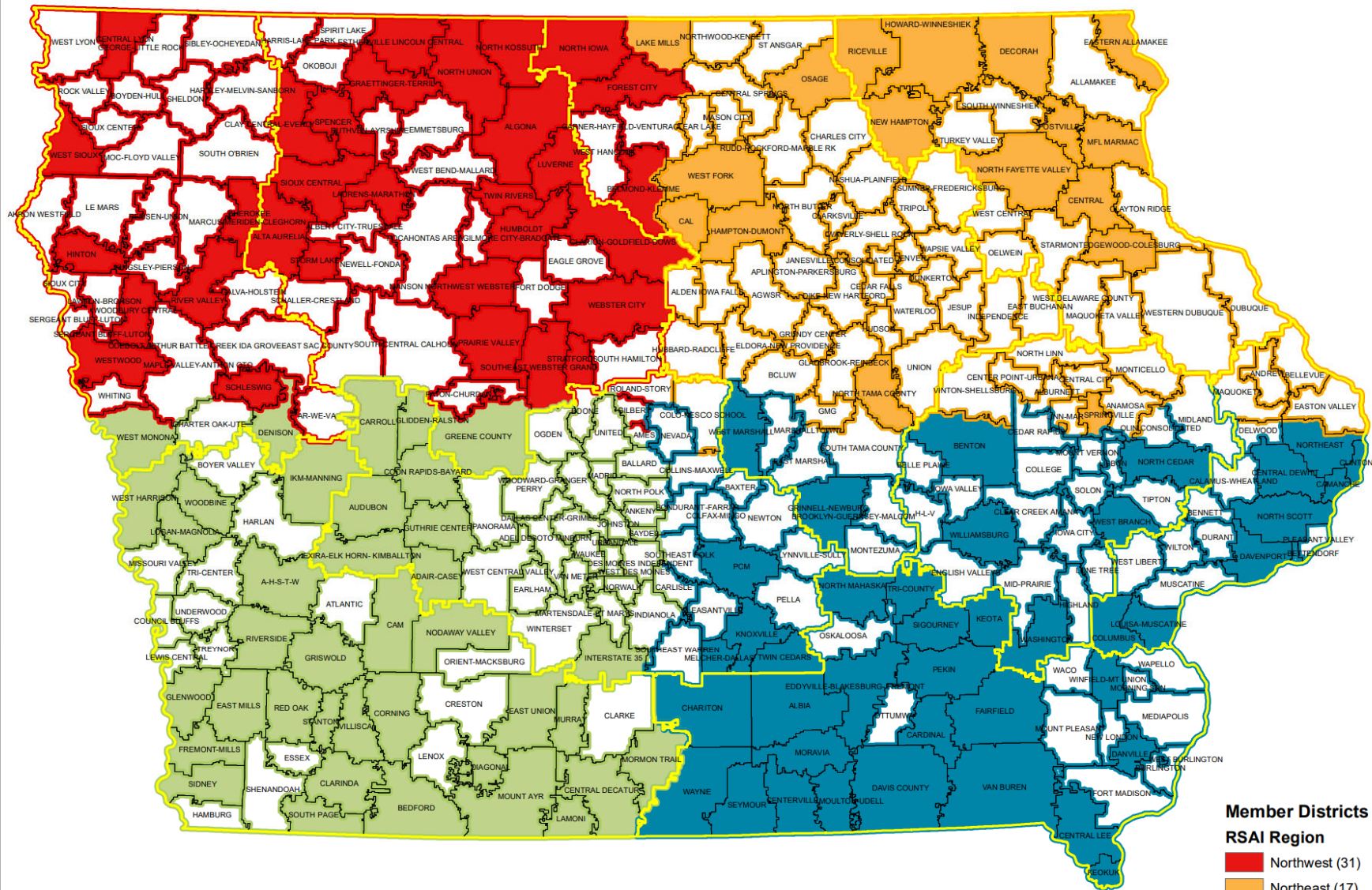


RURAL SCHOOLS
COLLABORATIVE

Joins the **Iowa Rural Development Council** to network and collaborative with rural leaders across all areas of economic development.



RSAI Membership 2020-2021



126 Member Districts plus
AEA partners



Member Benefits

- ✓ Advocacy presence at the Iowa Capitol focused on RSAI priority issues
- ✓ Weekly legislative update reports and recap videos to share the latest news from the statehouse and calls to action when needed
- ✓ A voice to advocate with the executive branch and represent rural schools on various task forces and stakeholder committees convened by DE.
- ✓ Advocacy resources for local leaders to use, including position papers, advocacy tool kits, talking points, maps, and school finance estimates
- ✓ Assistance with communications, letters to the editor or sample letters to legislators
- ✓ Easy to share information, such as RSAI Legislative Priorities Video, to inform school boards, staff, and stakeholders.
- ✓ RSAI is the state affiliate of the National Rural Education Association, which brings access to NREA research, updates about happenings in Washington, networking
- ✓ Free Summer regional meetings and RSAI annual conference in October.
- ✓ Authentic grassroots development of legislative priorities in a one district one vote democratic process.
- ✓ Free access to NASDTEC teacher licensure checks with your RSAI membership. Learn more about the program [here](#).
- ✓ Discount on ISFIS Policy-hosting Service
- ✓ Collective purchasing power as a group, attracting needed supports at discounted prices

***Networking, Sharing, Best Practice
Connections with other like districts***

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2021 RSAI Annual Meeting - October 26, 2021

The 2021 RSAI Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 26, 2021, from 4:30 - 7:30 pm. Attendees had the option of participating virtually via Zoom or in-person at the FFA Enrichment Center, DMACC Campus, in Ankeny, IA. Board members could gather at their local board rooms and connect as a group to the Zoom meeting too. The meeting is complimentary for RSAI members and schools interested in learning more about our organization and legislative platform. Each member district is entitled to one vote, but non-members and others are encouraged to join in the conversation and ask questions.

More information and registration coming soon!

<https://www.rsaia.org/annual-meeting.html>



Election of RSAI Regional Representative to the Leadership Group.

Ongoing office is a 3-year term.

No election this year for NW Region.

Thanks to Justin Daggett!

Justin's term expires in 2023



Election of RSAI Regional Representative to the Legislative Committee.

Office is a 1-year appointment.

Thanks to Brian Johnson, Prairie Valley & Southeast Webster Grand, for serving during the 2021 Session!

Representative attends Legislative Committee Meeting in Des Moines during August (date TBD), attends the Annual Meeting in Ankeny, October 26, and supports legislative advocacy efforts during the 2022 Session.



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Summary of 2021 Legislative Session (so far) RSAI Priority Action

Themes of Rural School Needs

☐ **Resources:**

- ☐ \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$; state, local, federal, other
- ☐ STAFF; recruiting, retaining, certification, economies of scale for accreditation
- ☐ Rural economic development investments or rural decay impact community capacity

☐ **Flexibility:** One size does not fit all. Especially in rural schools, staff wear many hats. Strict expenditure and legal requirements do not always work with very small economies of scale. School board authority to decide what's best for students.

☐ **Connections:** to Internet, Services, Partnerships and Internships, connecting students and staff to content and supports. Distance to experiences and relevant connections for students (and staff).

☐ **Student needs:** Changing demographics; poverty, mental health, immigration and aging resident population, transportation and other barriers to participation, population sparsity

Recent Accomplishments Benefiting Rural Districts



Before 2018:

- Management fund authority to pay for retirements over age 65 and costs of arbitration
- PPEL flexibility to pay for repairs over \$1,500
- DoP Flexibility
- Home Rule Statute
- Categorical Fund Flexibility

In 2018 Session

- Even more DoP Flexibility
- Even more Categorical Fund Flexibility
- Staff Flexibility – CTE options for hard-to-staff content and local offerings of on-line learning
- Progress on Transportation (grants) and Formula Equality
- Extension of Operational Sharing Incentives

Recent Accomplishments Benefiting Rural Districts



In 2019 Session

- Transportation in the Formula
- Formula Equity
- Extension of WGS/reorganization Incentives
- State Penny Extension
- Teacher shortage flexibility: Praxis waiver, concurrent enrollment STEM offer and teach, online learning flexibility

In 2020 Session

- Transportation in the Formula Continued (all the state average)
- Formula Equity – another \$10 per pupil
- 2.3% SSA (highest in 10 years)
- Mental Health: Telehealth services at school, Therapeutic Classroom Pilots, \$2.1 million AEA funding for MH First Aid Training
- Staffing Flexibility: Online allowed for financial literacy, world languages and computer science to meet O&T, Praxis eliminated as entrance test to teaching, AA degrees for some CTE teachers, Licensure reciprocity with other states.
- Poverty: bill through House Education to study poverty weightings did not advance further



RSAI 2021

Legislative Digest

Pending Summer 2021 after Governor's Action

2021 Priority Language

Adequate School Resources:

the increase in SSA should be no lower than anticipated growth in state revenue, not lower than 3.75% in FY 2022 due to abundant FY 2020 state surplus, maintain balanced state and local resources, be predictable, and assure adequate time for budget planning and staffing.



Adequate School Resources

SF 269 School Funding

- SSA rate set at 2.4%, for both regular program district cost and categorical supplements (second highest in 12 years)
- increases the base to promote formula equity by \$10 per student,
- includes property tax replacement by which the state assumes what would otherwise be a property tax increase due to the state cost per pupil increase
- appropriates additional funds for transportation equity to reimburse all school districts for transportation costs above the state average.

House passed the bill 56-36, Senate passed it 31-18.
Governor signed it on Feb. 23, 2021.



Adequate School Resources

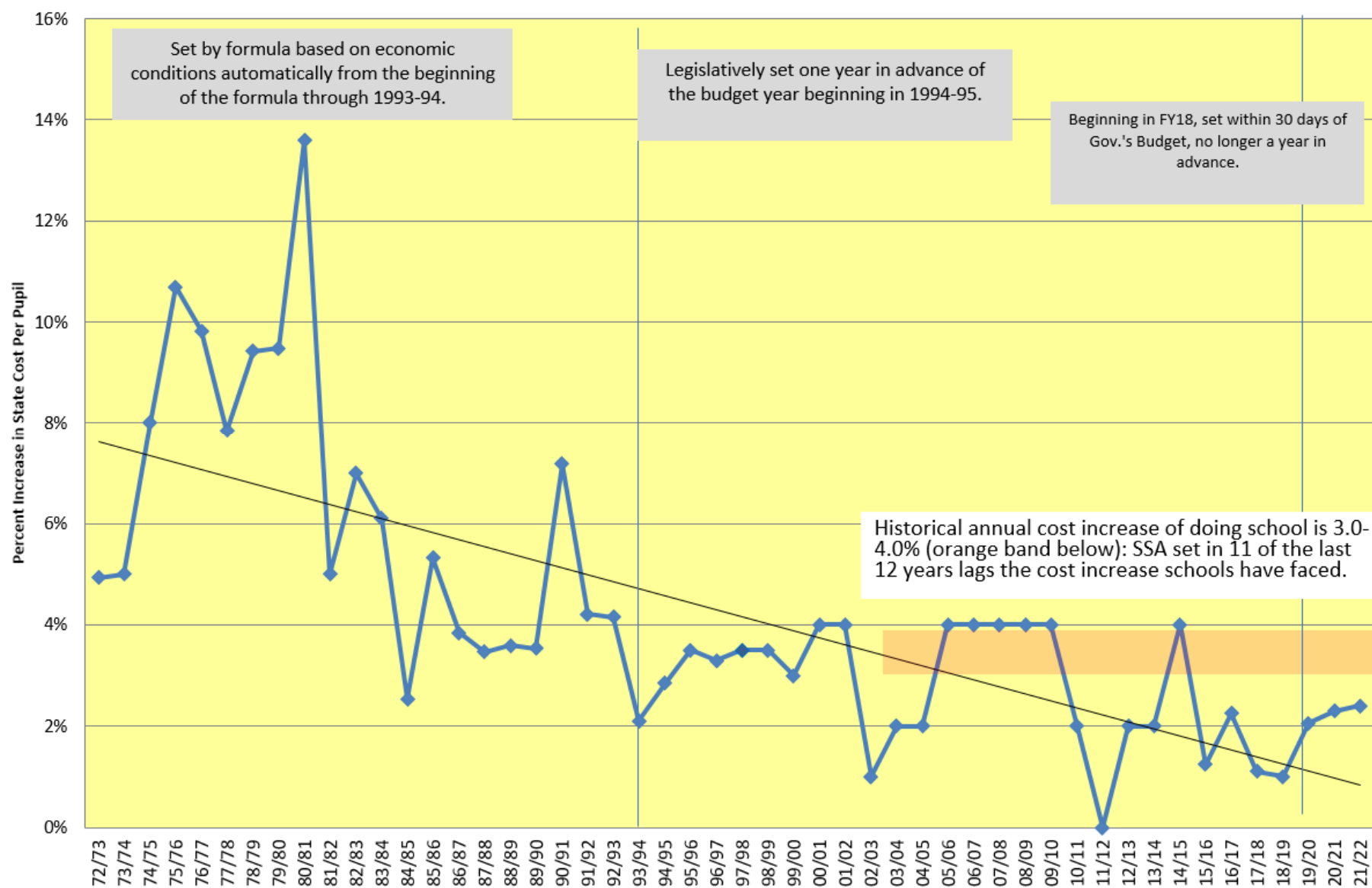
\$36.5 M SSA
-15.0 M AEA cut
+ 5.8 M Formula Equity
+ 0.7 M Transportation
\$28.0 Million

- Due to nearly 6,000 student enrollment decline, SSA increase doesn't cost the state much.
- Concerns about PK: no on-time funding or budget guarantee.

HF 532 Qualified Instructional Supplement and PK Growth Funding (Senate Amendment) still on the Senate Calendar

- still pending, \$27.2 million
- Includes federal funds for PK enrollment growth for Fall 2021
- Total \$55 million, still well short of the \$95 million annual state funding average for public schools over the last decade.

Iowa State Cost Per Pupil Funding History



Question of the day:

How many of our other RSAI legislative priorities would fall off the list if schools had been adequately funded in the past or were adequately funded going forward?

Student Mental Health



2021 Priority Language

Assessing and Addressing Staff/Student Social, Emotional and Behavioral Health: access to funded mental health services for children and supports for staff. Address the shortage of mental health professionals and provide resources over the next two years for local districts to train school staff based on a local needs and community capacity to collaborate for a collective solution.

Action



[SF 2360](#) in 2020 Classroom Management/Therapeutic Classrooms mirrors federal law in Least Restrictive Environment and sets up a grant process for additional therapeutic classrooms.

Funding to start the pilots is pending in Education Appropriations bill.

Continuation of \$2.1 million to the AEAs mental health training and possibly services is pending in the Education Appropriations bill.

Comments

Proposals in the Senate to convert Iowa's mental health system from property tax to state funding have not advanced in the House.

Speaker Grassley has stated his caucus' concerns with also reforming mental health services, not just the funding mechanism.

Little has been discussed regarding child mental health during this process.

Federal ARP and ESSER Funds may diminish urgency in the short term, but will not meet the needs of students over the long term.

2021 Session:

- How did COVID closure impact mental health needs of students?
- How about staff?
- What about resources?
- Do systems set up collaborative process for education, mental health, family and community stakeholders to assess and address mental health needs?
- Can our federal investments in mental health show some success, to build upon the urgency for state action?

2021 Priority Language

Educator Shortage and Quality

Instruction: maximum flexibility to hire staff to provide great instruction, including several strategies to attract and retain quality staff; flexibility to meet offer and teach requirements, loan forgiveness programs, a special education generalist credential, creation of a Public Service CTE strand, hire retirees without IPERS impact, and elimination of barriers to licensure.

Educator Shortage and Quality Instruction



HF 2627 in 2020 required licensure reciprocity with other states with 1 year of experience. BOEE rules process for implementation.

SF 466 Occupational Therapists can provide concussion services for extracurricular events – signed by Governor

SF 532 Licensed Behavior Therapists and Mental Health Professional Statement of Professional Recognition by BOEE. Pending Governor's Signature.

HF 770 PD counts for ½ CEUs, either work on individual PD plan or courses offered by BOEE approved provider (AEAs, MISIC, etc.)

Table 3-11

Average Total Salaries of Iowa Full-Time Public School Teachers by Enrollment Category 2000-2001, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020					
Enrollment Category	Average Total Salary			Percent Salary	
	2000-2001	2018-2019	2019-2020	2000-2001 to 2019-2020	2018-2019 to 2019-2020
<300	\$28,811	\$47,658	\$48,395	68.0%	1.5%
300-599	\$31,557	\$51,857	\$52,708	67.0%	1.6%
600-999	\$33,809	\$54,175	\$54,729	61.9%	1.0%
1,000-2,499	\$35,912	\$58,230	\$58,820	63.8%	1.0%
2,500-7,499	\$38,266	\$61,359	\$62,247	62.7%	1.4%
7,500+	\$40,452	\$63,874	\$64,915	60.5%	1.6%
AEA	\$36,196	\$67,427	\$68,500	89.2%	1.6%
State	\$36,479	\$59,220	\$60,050	64.6%	1.4%

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis, Basic Educational Data Survey, Staff files.

Notes: Includes AEA teachers.

Teacher figures for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 represent average salaries for full-time public school staff with teaching position codes. There were approximately 6,000 full-time public staff in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 with teaching position codes who also reported that they served in the capacity of administrator (superintendent, principal, etc.) and/or student support personnel (Curriculum Consultant, Teacher Leader, etc.). Average salaries for these staff include salaries for these additional responsibilities.

DE's Annual Condition of Education Report shows average salary by school size (which is a good but not perfect predictor of rural districts), showing a growing difference in pay between the averages of the smallest and largest category of school size, now at \$16,520, and more than \$12,000 below the state average.

Rural schools tend to have younger teachers and lower class sizes, both of which can contribute to lower pay.

Geography and Sparsity Impacts Recruitment and Retention

- Young teachers are not always willing to locate in a community with long commutes to amenities, so something has to make up for the lack of access to entertainment, housing, and other services.
- Recent college graduate debt requires a high enough starting pay or other resource to help offset young teachers' student loan payments.
- Multiple preps and wearing many hats (teaching, coaching, etc.) may make it hard to keep young teachers drawn to other districts by higher salaries and fewer responsibilities.
- Need for multiple certifications may require additional coursework, which can be a heavy lift for a new teacher/administrator



Transportation and Formula Equity

2021 Priority Language

**Formula and
Transportation Equity:**
formula equity, closing
the state and district per
pupil gap within ten
years and continued
transportation equity
support without
burdensome reporting
requirements.

Transportation and Formula Equity



- Included in the SSA bill this year, so done earlier and adequately funded.
- Will grow by SSA rate annually (unless the legislature votes otherwise)
- Another \$10 drop in the equity gap – now moves to \$145 per pupil statewide.
- Set up for 2022: How does COVID interruption impact the annual transportation expenditures and report for the 2020-21 school year?

Opportunity Equity for At-risk Students/Poverty



2021 Priority Language

Opportunity Equity:

resources based on at-risk need, in addition to enrollment. All school boards should have 5% dropout prevention funding. School districts should be granted spending authority for FRPL waived fees and Iowa should study the impact of poverty on educational outcomes.

Student Inequities and At-risk Needs

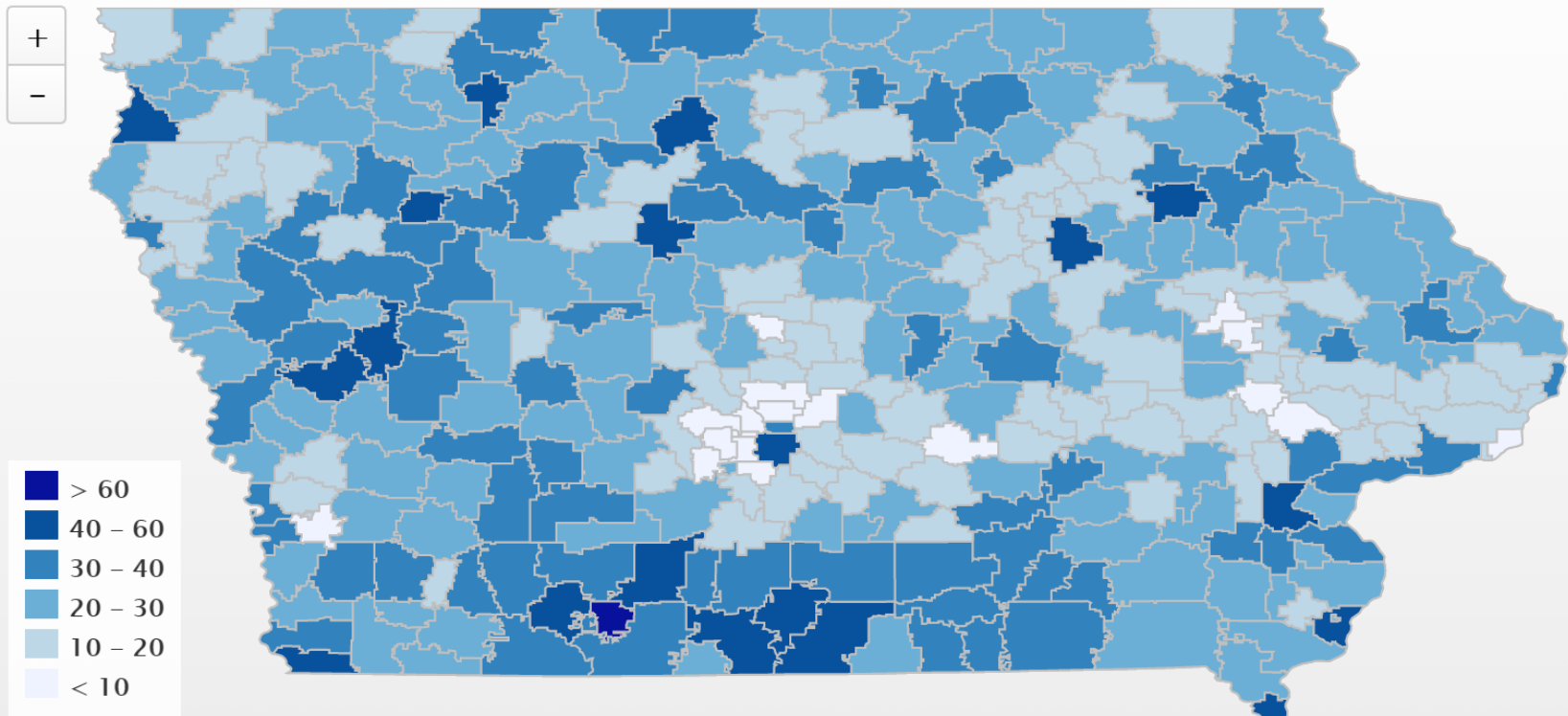


Despite the School Finance Interim Committee recommending and the House Education Committee approving a bill, [HF 2490](#), the study of the impact of poverty on education and funding formula options to meet the needs of students did not advance out of House Appropriations Committee in 2020.

No bill was moved forward in either the House or Senate in 2021, taking a step backwards in the policy discussions.

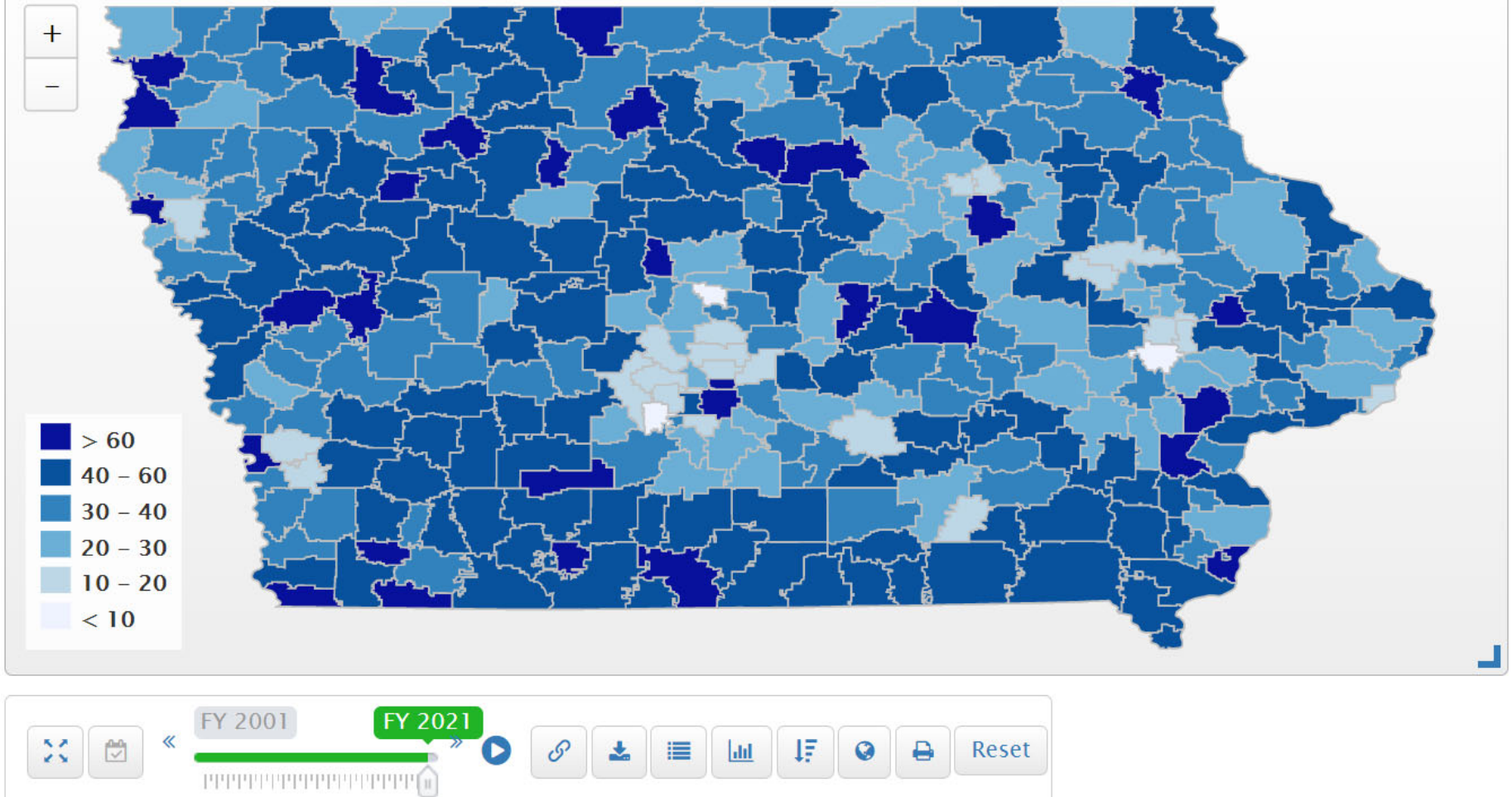
FYI: Children from families with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level are eligible for free lunch those 130-185% eligible for reduced lunch.

Free and Reduced Pct (FY 2001)



In 2001, only 4 districts had more than 50% of students eligible for FRPL (Waterloo, Keokuk, Wayne and Diagonal. Diagonal was the state high at 60.2% and the only district above 60%)

Free and Reduced Pct (FY 2021)



In FY 2021, of the 78 districts with more than half of their student on FRPL, 69 are rural. 30 districts have more than 60% of students eligible for FRPL. Those above 70% include Stratford, Postville, Rock Valley, LuVerne, Des Moines, Waterloo, Marshalltown, Denison, Clay Central-Everyly, Storm Lake, Hamburg, South Page, Sioux City and Council Bluffs.

Table 1-7

K-12 Public School Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch by Enrollment Category
2000-2001, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020

Enrollment Category	2000-2001			2018-2019			2019-2020			
	K-12 (BEDS) Enrollment	# Free/ Reduced Eligible	% Free/ Reduced Eligible	K-12 (BEDS) Enrollment	# Free/ Reduced Eligible	% Free/ Reduced Eligible	K-12 (BEDS) Enrollment	# Free/ Reduced Eligible	% Free/ Reduced Eligible	
<300	6,711	2,256	33.6	6,670	3,319	49.8	7,255	3,621	49.9	★
300-599	50,933	13,511	26.5	50,037	19,263	38.5	46,237	17,884	38.7	
600-999	77,327	17,966	23.2	59,486	22,068	37.1	61,074	22,590	37.0	
1,000-2,499	122,830	29,876	24.3	116,853	47,503	40.7	116,067	45,389	39.1	
2,500-7,499	93,322	21,433	23.0	92,474	35,094	38.0	95,791	35,411	37.0	
7,500+	125,804	43,874	34.9	158,071	80,588	51.0	159,430	81,052	50.8	★
State	476,927	128,916	27.0	483,591	207,835	43.0	485,854	205,947	42.4	

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis Services, Basic Educational Data Survey and Student Reporting in Iowa.

Districts in the largest and smallest enrollment categories had the highest percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch (Table 1-7).

Poverty Concentration & \$\$

The McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown, FutureEd, [State Education Funding; The Poverty Equation](#), March 2020, states,

- “What’s more, when poverty is concentrated in a school—that is, when a significant portion of students in a school come from low-income households—the impact on performance is compounded.
- [A body of research](#) suggests that there is a ‘tipping point,’ somewhere between 50 to 60 percent of a school’s students living in poverty, where performance for all students there drastically declines.”

Nevada Study in Oct. 2018 studied successful school systems and costed out the staffing models of instruction and other services to determine the appropriate weighting commensurate with the programs needed at around .35 (would equate to \$2,467 per low-income student in Iowa’s 2021 formula)

Nevada School Finance Study, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, Education Commission of the States, Picus Odden and Associates October 22, 2018

Funding Formulas in Iowa and Other States

Iowa's formula provides a total of \$148.9 million in 2020-21 for at-risk and dropout prevention programs

- Dropout Prevention MSA: \$131.8 million
- At-risk weighting in the formula: \$17.1 million

Total funding equates to \$743 per Iowa low income student, except that funding is distributed to all districts with little weighting for low income.

- Dropout Prevention is between 2.5% and 5% of regular program district cost, based on enrollment and history.
- At-risk funding is partially based on FRPL percentage of the state's total FRPL enrollment and partially based on total enrollment.
- If it were all allocated to low income students, it would equate to 10.6% weighting, less than half of the 26 state's average commitment to at-risk students in 2012.
- By 2018, 47 states now provide at-risk funding based on poverty or other metrics, for a national average weighting of .22.

Iowa's Resources are Enrollment Driven

Comparison of Cardinal and Van Meter funding for at-risk and dropout prevention per low income student exemplifies the formula:

School District	2020-21 Enrollment	% FRPL eligible	FRPL Eligible Students	At-risk \$\$	DoP\$\$	Total \$\$	\$ per Low Income Student
Van Meter	929	7.16%	71	\$ 13,445	\$100,500	\$ 113,945	\$ 1,605
Cardinal	949	55.22%	522	\$ 22,215	\$146,132	\$ 168,347	\$ 323

Weighting of .35 = \$2,467 in 2021, so even Van Meter's funding is below the experts' recommendations of resources to close the gap.

2021 Priority Language

Sharing

Incentives/Efficiencies:

extension of Whole
Grade Sharing,
Reorganization and
Operational Sharing
Incentives. The 21-
student cap should
expand to allow access
to any new flexibility.

Reorganization and Whole Grade Sharing Incentives Extension



HF 847 Flexibility/Education Provisions adds a work-based learning coordinator position for operational sharing at 3 student weighting and adds a special education director position at 3 student weighting.

The bill lowers all 3-student weighted positions to 2 and all 5 student-weighted positions to 4, for the remaining three years of the program (FY 2022-24). This bill was amended in the Senate and sent back to the House.

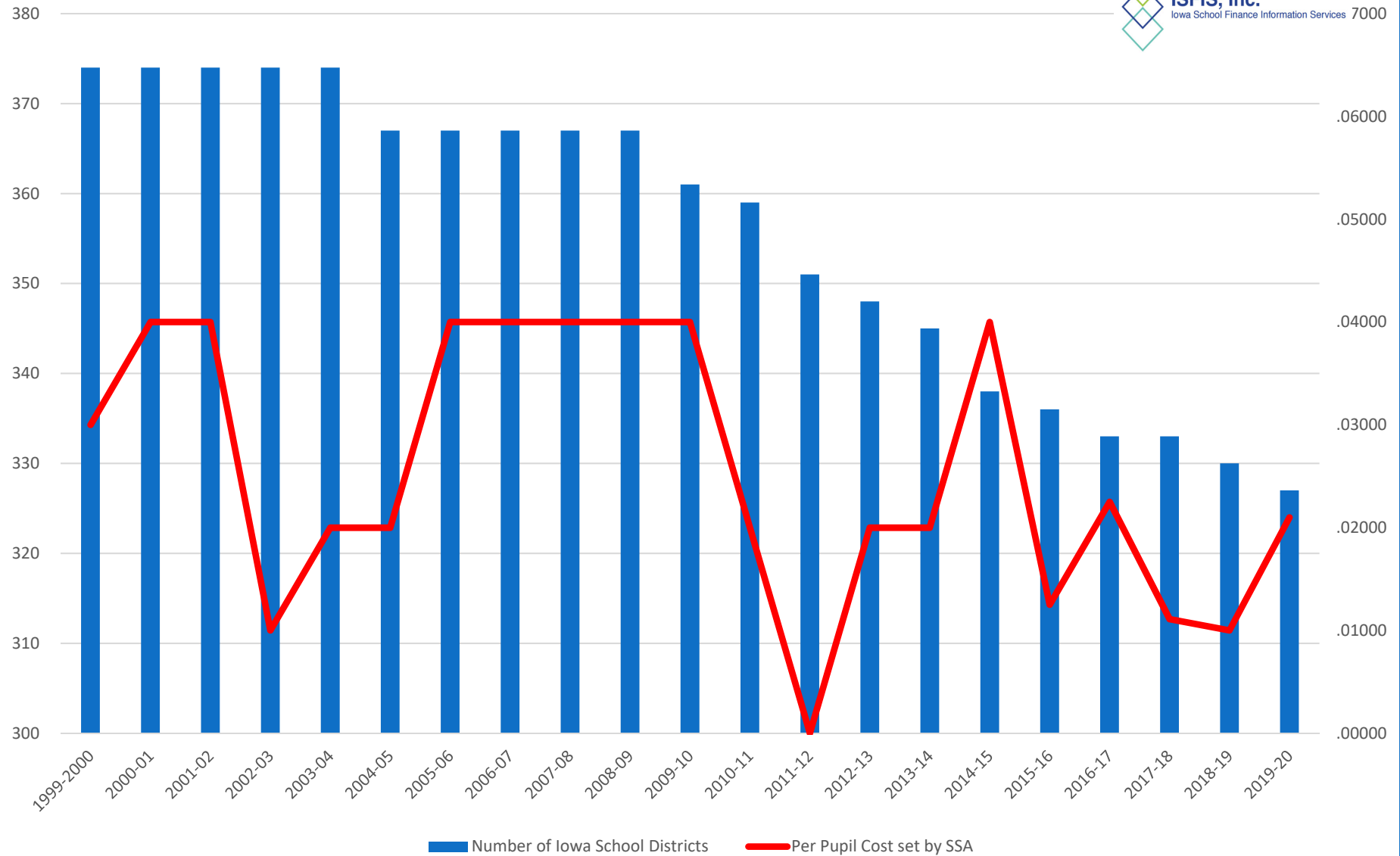
SF 156 would have added an information technology position to operational sharing, but did not advance out of the Senate Education Committee.

SF 74 would have added a School Resources Officer position to operational sharing, but did not advance out of the Senate Education Committee.

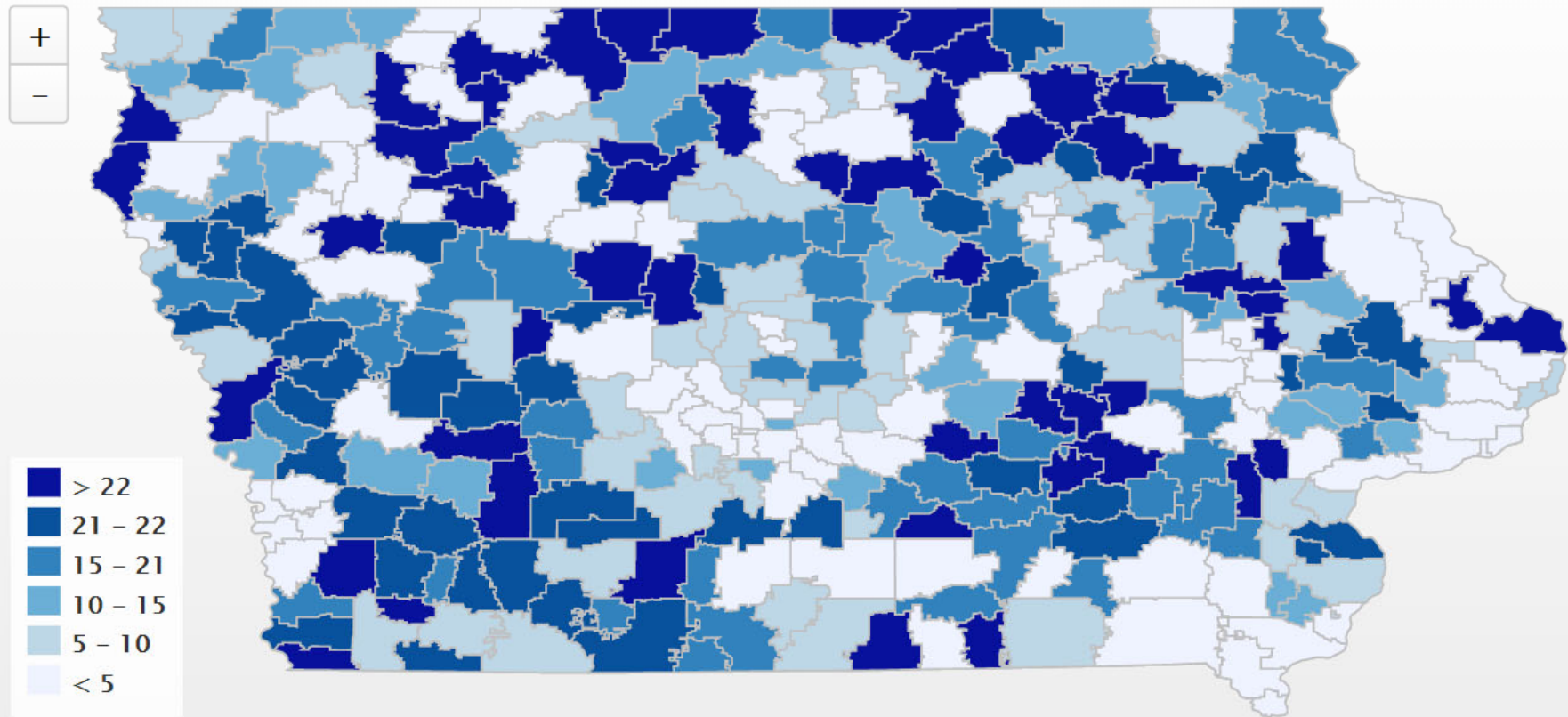
Reorganization and Whole Grade Sharing Incentives Extension

- 2018: Extension of Operational Sharing Incentives through budget year beginning July 1, 2024
- 2019: Extension of WGS and Reorganization Incentives for reorgs effective no later than July 1, 2024
- Incentives provide an impetus for districts to work together to deliver greater educational opportunities for students through WGS, either one-way, which 43 districts used in the 2019-20 school year or with two-way agreements, which 14 districts used. Three districts that previously participated in whole grade sharing were reorganized effective July 1, 2019, lowering the total number of school districts in Iowa to 327.
- In the 2020-21 school year, 255 districts also received operational sharing supplementary weighting. Of those, 101 districts qualified for the full 21 student weighting, or \$148,008 per district.

Number of Iowa Public School Districts
1999-00 through 2018-19

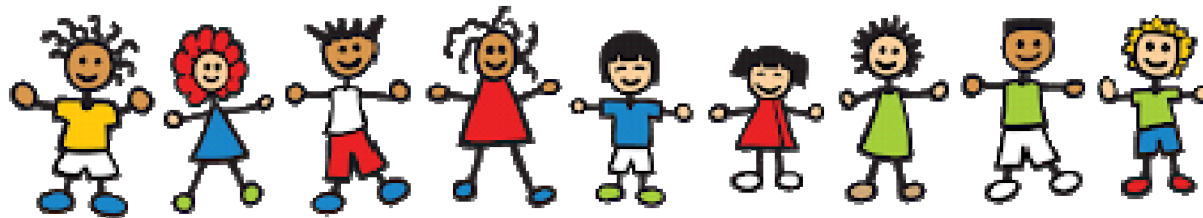


Total Op Sharing (FY 2021)



255 districts receive operational sharing incentives in the 2021 fiscal year. \$26.9 million total.

Quality Preschool

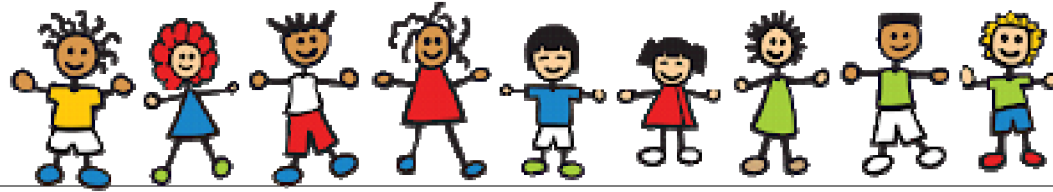


2021 Priority Language

Quality Preschool:

funding of quality PK at
the 1.0 per pupil cost
and formula protections
against budget and
program impacts of PK
enrollment swings
(budget guarantee/on-
time spending
authority).

Quality Preschool



- HF 318 would allow districts to serve and count young 5-year-olds in PK, was approved by the full House, Senate Education Committee and Senate Appropriations Committee, is now on the Senate Calendar. This will first apply in the Fall of 2022.
- COVID-19 Impact: PK enrollments lower in Fall 2020. PK does not have an on-time funding component or budget guarantee, so next year's PK budget will be based on this Fall's enrollment count. Also, DE guidance prohibits school districts from using general fund for PK expansion.
- HF 532 Senate Amendment allows districts with increased PK enrollment to apply to SBRC for MSA. Will grant automatically if the PK ending balance for the prior year is less than 25%. Will allow a request and appearance to explain why it's necessary if the balance is greater than 25%.
- On the Senate Calendar.
- President Biden's American Family Plan announced last week of April includes \$200 billion universal 3- and 4-year-old PK. Details to be forthcoming but two things of import: \$15 an hour minimum pay and state commitment for a portion of the cost will both be part of the deal.

2021 Priority Language

School Safety: school safety investments, including additional funding for security personnel and training to protect against emergency situations.

Bonding Capacity: a simple majority, 50% plus 1, voter approval for school bond issues and calculation of debt limit excluding debt backed by the SAVE.

School Safety



- [SF 74](#) would have added a School Resources Officer position to operational sharing, but did not advance out of the Senate Education Committee.
- [SF 258](#) would have allowed an increase in ISL funding for the costs of a School Resource Officer (SRO) position, was approved by Senate Education Committee, but did not move forward out of the Ways and Means Committee.
- There were no school safety bills in the Iowa House.

Bonding Capacity/Simple Majority



- No bills proposed to lower vote requirement for school bond issue from 60% supermajority to a simple majority (50% +1)
- [HF 568](#) Elections Omnibus: requires entities requesting the public measure on a special election date (not the school board election in November) to mail notifications to all households that include a registered voter eligible to vote on the public measure. This bill has been approved by the House and is on the Senate Calendar.

2021 Priority Language

Internet Connectivity and Access: expanded access to high-speed Internet for all Iowans including incentives, investments, and creative solutions to close the technology gap for students, businesses and community members in rural Iowa. Low income should not be a barrier to internet access.

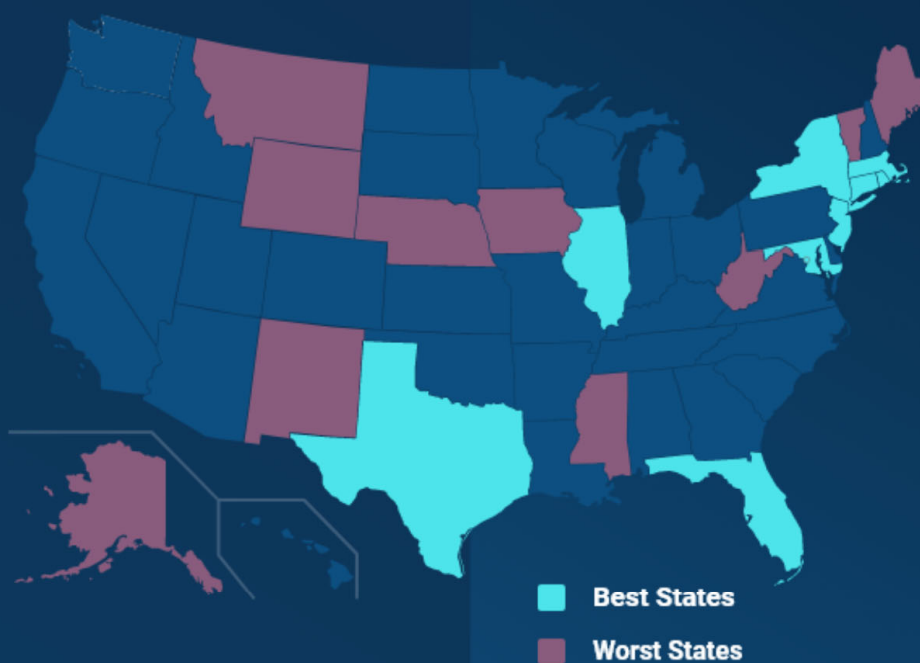


The Best and Worst States Scored by Internet Coverage, Speed, and Price Access

Top 10 States



1. New Jersey
2. New York
3. Maryland
4. Rhode Island
5. Florida
6. Illinois
7. District of Columbia
8. Texas
9. Massachusetts
10. Connecticut



Bottom 10 States



42. Mississippi
43. Maine
44. West Virginia
45. Iowa ★
46. Wyoming
47. Vermont
48. Nebraska
49. New Mexico
50. Montana
51. Alaska

<https://broadbandnow.com/research/best-states-with-internet-coverage-and-speed>

New Jersey

#1

 Terrestrial Broadband Access:	98.1%
 Wired Low-Priced Plan Access:	78.4%
 Average Speed Test:	174.3 Mbps

Wisconsin

#30

 Terrestrial Broadband Access:	82.6%
 Wired Low-Priced Plan Access:	44.0%
 Average Speed Test:	126.0 Mbps

Iowa

#45

 Terrestrial Broadband Access:	81.3%
 Wired Low-Priced Plan Access:	18.5%
 Average Speed Test:	78.9 Mbps

Access
Price
Speed



High-Speed Internet

ABC News, 4/28/21 <https://khqa.com/news/local/governor-reynolds-bill-signing>

Iowa has the second slowest broadband speed in the nation.

On Wednesday lawmakers committed \$100M to expanding broadband access.

Broadband internet access has proven valuable for tele-health services, first responders and education.

16% of Iowa households do not have an internet subscription and more than 60% of Iowans live in areas with only one provider.

Governor Kim Reynolds says the goal is for providers to increase download and upload speeds to 100 megabits per second in area most in need.

Reynolds says, "In any case, areas of the least connectivity will soon experience a significant improvement in high speed internet and gain access to high tech and high touch services that come with it."

2021 Priority Language

Remote Learning and Instructional Time: local authority to determine when school should close, for emergency situations/safety, counting instructional time toward minimum instructional days or hours as long as engagement in virtual learning is required and needs of all students are anticipated and met.

2021 Priority Language

Local School Board Authority:

locally elected leaders closest to the community are in the best position to determine the interest of students, staff and stakeholders. District leaders need maximum flexibility to provide a great education to all students. The Legislature, the Executive Branch and the courts should follow Iowa Code 274.3 and liberally construe statute to effectuate local control.



2021 Action

Governor's interpretation of SF 2310 was the opposite of respecting local control. It inserted a step for DE approval rather than allowing school boards to make the best decision for their districts.

SF 160 Instructional Time was signed by the Governor Jan. 29. Required schools to offer parents a 100% in-person option beginning Feb. 15. 100% virtual or hybrid less than 50% only allowed by waiver from the DE due to COVID outbreak.

SF 467 On line Learning and Snow Days, was approved in the Senate but remains in the House Education Committee

Many bills were stopped from moving forward due to unfunded mandates and intrusion on local control. However, RSAI has a long way to go before we operate under a system of belief that the legislature believes school leaders know best for their communities.

Time to Discuss Legislative Priorities

On your agenda see the 2021 list or on the RSAI website

<https://www.rsaia.org/2021-legislative-session.html>

1. Are there any that need to be removed?
2. Any that need to be added?
3. Any significant (or suggested) wording changes on those already on the list?

We can go through them one at a time or consider the whole list with one vote. It's completely up to the attendees to decide how to proceed.

RSAI 2022 Legislative Priorities

See the RSAI website meeting tab for more information such as RSAI Legislative Digest, Position Papers which will be updated after language is finalized during the process, Legislative Priorities, and this PPT and meeting minutes on the Regional Meeting tab. More information about the Oct. 26 Annual Meeting Coming later this Summer!

<http://www.rsaia.org/>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VOICE on behalf of rural students!

Watch for RSAI Legislative Digest
RSAI Priority Survey later this Summer
Stay connected through the Interim
Let us know what you need to beef up your advocacy
efforts.

See you at the Oct. 26 Annual Meeting!

Professional Advocate

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