

---

## Governor Reynolds' Condition of the State Highlights

---

Margaret Buckton <jen@iowaschoolfinance.com>

Wed, Jan 11, 2023 at 7:46 AM



# RSAI Legislative Update

Greetings Rural School Leaders,

In Governor Reynolds' Condition of the State speech last night, she described her education reform plans, including a bigger Education Savings Account (ESA) concept. We will analyze her budget proposals and draft legislation for Thursday's weekly update, but wanted to share the highlights of her FY 2024 Education Budget and Policy Recommendations, as described in her speech, in her [budget report](#), or on her [Vision for Education Webpage](#):

- **State supplemental Assistance:** Recommendation of a 2.5% increase in the SSA per pupil, to \$7,598 per student.
- **Additional flexibility:** Iowa code dictates numerous requirements that schools must meet. Eliminating those that are burdensome, trivial and provide little or no value to the educational experience will eliminate redundant reporting, allow greater flexibility in course credits, and encourage schools to offer options best suited to their students.
- **Teacher Pay.** Allow use of categorical balances for teacher pay (mentioned \$100 million ending balances, with the Governor's vision for Iowa webpage indicating that TLC, PD and TAG fund balances could be utilized).
- **Broader ESA Proposal:** Require \$7,598 per student enrolled in private school to be deposited into the parent's education savings account. The proposal intends to phase in support for all kindergarten students, all public school students and private school students with income below 300% of the FPL in year 1. The income threshold increases to 400% of FPL in year 2, then no income limit in year 3. There are 36,535 students enrolled in private schools in Iowa in the

2022-23 school year. The cost to provide an ESA for all of these students would be \$278.4 million. The Governor's website also states: "Other student funding generated by categorical funding formulas will remain with public school districts. This will include funding for students who choose to leave their public school, and private school students living in the district – even though they won't be educated there. It's estimated that Iowa's public schools will retain approximately \$1,202 per pupil in categorical funding for each student who attends private school." We will look into how private school students would be counted for other categorical purposes.

- **Parent Empowerment:** Governor Reynolds proposes to define parent rights in law, require transparency, and set boundaries to protect Iowa's children.
- **Literacy Support:** A new program of DE and AEA targeted support with training on improving literacy based on the science of reading instruction and proven curriculum for districts/schools consistently in the bottom 5% of performance in Iowa. (Mentioned in the Governor's speech but not indicated on her Vision for Education website.)

We will dig into the Governor's budget as analyzed by the Legislative Services Agency, as soon as it is posted, and provide a summary of the ESA and Education Reform Legislation when a draft is available. Watch your inboxes for the Weekly Report and Video later this week.

Margaret Buckton, Professional Advocate  
RSAI  
Office: (515) 251-5970 ext. 1  
Cell: (515) 201-3755  
Email: [margaret.buckton@rsaia.org](mailto:margaret.buckton@rsaia.org)



RSAI - 1201 63rd St. - Des Moines, IA 50311 - (515) 251-5970 - [www.rsaia.org](http://www.rsaia.org)