**RSAI Legislative Update   
Feb. 24 2017**

**Big Week for Rural Schools:** transportation bills considered in both chambers, formula equity in the Senate and Operational Sharing incentives extension is approved 23:0 in the House Education Committee. Special thanks to all who stopped by the statehouse this week! It was great to see students and visitors from Davis County, Alburnett, Lisbon, Springville and Davenport, learning about civics and reminding legislators of the importance of Iowa’s future.

[**HF 291**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=HF291) **Collective Bargaining:** signed by the Governor; See last week’s update for bill details. PERB has issued emergency rules, the CPI-U Midwest calculation for arbitrators to consider and guidance for the transition, all posted on their website here: <https://iowaperb.iowa.gov/>

[**HF 29**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=hf29) **Operational Sharing Incentives:** this bill removes the sunset of the operational sharing incentives and removes the 5-year limitation on the positions used to generated supplementary weighting. The 21-student cap on the weighting is not adjusted and no additional positions are added in the form of the bill approved in Committee. The bill will move to the House Calendar unless it is assigned to the House Appropriations Committee. RSAI is registered in support. Thanks to Rep. Fisher for introducing the bill and to Reps. Moore, Dolecheck and Breckinridge for their bi-partisan subcommittee support and the entire House Education Committee for the 23:0 unanimous approval!

[**SSB 1124**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=ssb1124) **Formula and Transportation Equity:** the bill includes a 10-year phase-in to eliminate the $175 difference in the district and state costs per pupil (RSAI Priority):

* $5 per pupil beginning July 1, 2017
* $10 per pupil beginning July 1, 2018
* $20 per pupil beginning July 1, 2019 and annually until the gap is closed (by July 1, 2027, all districts will be at the same cost per pupil.)

Sen. Bowman attended the subcommittee meeting and specifically requested an advance of the per pupil amounts in the first two years. The LSA was asked to run the estimates at $10 or $20 per pupil for 2017 and 2018.

The bill also includes a transportation formula recommended by IASB that creates a supplementary weighting to generate funds for all net operating costs for transportation (RSAI Priority):

* Sets up a transportation supplement per pupil based on three factors:
  + 90% based on prior 3-year net operating transportation costs of getting students to and from school (excluding PPEL/SAVE expenditures)
  + 5% based on enrollment
  + 5% based on route miles per pupil
  + Phases in over 10 years, at 10% per year, essentially providing $12.8 million in the first year and eventually covering $128 million in FY 2016 dollars when complete
* Requires funds to be spent on transportation (but RASI has asked to amend the bill so funds are treated as miscellaneous income)
* RSAI has also requested an amendment to allow the department of management to estimate impact of reorganization on district transportation costs for purposes of calculating the supplement rather than a 3-year history.
* The AEA’s have requested a similar commitment to per pupil equity to be included in the bill, with impact estimated at about $7 million when fully phased in.

Students from Davis County attended the subcommittee meeting and testified about the impact of both inequities on their school district. All three subcommittee members signed the report to move the bill forward with amendment, so thanks are in order to Sens. Sinclair, Greene and Quirmbach. RSAI is registered in favor.

[**HF 221**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=hf221) **Transportation Weighting:** this bill creates a very complicated formula with ranges of transportation supplement phased in over time. For all districts with average transportation costs per pupil that exceed the state average by $40, there would be a $20 per pupil supplement beginning July 1, 2017. In year two, districts with costs that exceed the state average between $40 and $80 per pupil would receive a $20 per pupil supplement and those with expenditures $80 or more above the state average would receive a $40 supplement per pupil. The phase in continues gradually until July 1, 2021 when the final range is determined, with the districts that have expenditures more than $200 above the state average receiving $100 per pupil supplement. RSAI registered in favor of the bi-partisan sponsored bill to keep the conversation alive, but expressed concerns at the subcommittee that the disparity in transportation expenditures, now varying from $43 per pupil enrolled to nearly $1,000 per pupil enrolled, would only be minimized by $100 and it takes five years to accomplish minimal impact. Check to bill link to see if one of your legislators is among the republicans and democrats who sponsored this bill and send them a note of thanks.

[**HF 217**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=hf217) **Reporting of Disciplinary Actions**: this bill requires school administrators to report to the Board of Education Examiners disciplinary actions taken against a licensed school employee for being on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event while consuming, possessing or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The bill was approved by the House, 94 in favor and 5 opposed and now goes to the Senate. RSAI is registered as undecided on the bill.

[**SSB 1137**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=ssb1137) **Education Matters** by Sinclair/Education Committee: this bill is extensive so required two subcommittee meetings this week. The bill includes the following divisions:

**Division I Online Education:** The bill strikes the current prohibition of open enrollment for only the two online academies and allows all districts to offer online coursework. The bill requires that school districts that provide instruction and course content delivered primarily over the Internet report annually to the DE several things, including student achievement, retention, academic growth, state-required assessments, academic mobility and student reasons for choosing or terminating enrollment. The bill also prescribes several things which must be done by districts offering online course work including proctored assessments and parent-teacher conferences. The bill strikes requirements regarding teacher licensure for the existing online academies, but retains code language that an Iowa licensed teacher must teach the online coursework.

The bill allows the DE to waive at its discretion the offer and teach requirements if a school district makes every reasonable effort to hire a teacher but was not able to hire one or if fewer than ten students typically register for instruction in a specified subject at the, school district or school, allowing the course to be delivered electronically through the Iowa Learning Online Initative.

The bill in Section 10 expands school district authority to work with private providers to deliver courses primarily over the internet via open enrollment. RSAI requested that districts be able to work with others, not necessarily private providers, to offer such content. The subcommittee members stated intent that courses taught align to Iowa teacher standards and the Code already requires they be taught by Iowa licensed teachers.

**Division II:** Concurrent Enrollment: CTE Exception: The bill allows up to two courses delivered via community college sharing/dual enrollment be may supplant rather than supplement the offer and teach requirements in 256.11, subsection 5.

**Division III:** Eliminates the mandate that school districts administer dental and vision screening authorizations and requirements, but Sen. Sinclair stated her intent during the subcommittee to amend the bill to allow districts authority to continue to administer vision and dental screening requirements including provision of dental health clinics.

**Division IV:** Task force on AEA Essential Services: Requires DE to convene a task force to identify and review the essential functions and services AEAs are mandated or authorized to provide to school districts, accredited nonpublic schools and others, and requires the task force to compile a list and assign a rank to each function/service offered. Members of the task force are defined in the bill, requiring representation from several stakeholder groups and specifically ensuring representation from rural and urban areas and large, medium and small school districts. The task force is required to submit a report by November 17, 2017 (but the legislature and governor are not required to follow the recommendations.)

**Division V:** Open Enrollment Extracurricular Activity Fee: Allows a student to participate in district of residence extracurricular activities, under the same conditions and requirements as the pupils enrolled in the district of residences. The district of residence is allowed to withhold a fee from payment to the receiving district, not exceeding the lower of 15% of the state cost per pupil or actual costs of providing the activity. A clarification amendment on student code of conduct and more about the fee is expected.

**Division VI:** Exempts independently accredited nonpublic schools from any rules adopted by the state board of education that are not specifically required by 256.11.

**Division VII:** Allows a district to have a year-round school, via DE waiver, to also include high school grades.

**Division VIII:** Bi-literacy Seal: Requires DE to develop and administer a program recognizing students who have demonstrated proficiency in a foreign language and requires the DE to produce a seal of bi-literacy. Allows the DE to charge a nominal fee to cover printing and postage of the seal. DE requested authority to charge fees of districts wishing to participate to cover the full costs of the program. Testimony from school groups suggested the seal could be printed locally to avoid fees paid to DE for participation.

**Division IX**: Limitation on DE Guidance; Requires the DE to go through administrative rules rather than issuing informal guidance in administering education programs, stating that such guidance, if issued, is not legally binding, and is solely advisory in nature.

Sen. Sinclair stated her intent to amend and move the bill forward to the Senate Education Committee with Sen. Chelgren in agreement. Sen Hart is awaiting the amendment before agreeing to sign on. RSAI is registered as undecided, in favor of some provisions and opposed to others.

**RSAI Website:** Legislative tab contains weekly reports, position papers, and other information to assist your advocacy efforts.

Senate Switchboard # 515.281.3371

House Switchboard # 515.281.3221

From links above or the legislative page <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators> , find email addresses, home mailing address and home/work phone numbers for your legislators.

[**http://www.rsaia.org/**](http://www.rsaia.org/)

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