**RSAI Legislative Update   
Feb. 16, 2017**

These updates are posted on the RSAI legislative web page at <http://www.rsaia.org/legislative.html>.

Most of this week was dedicated to collective bargaining changes. HF 219 is approved Thursday afternoon in both the House and Senate. Rumor has it that an Education Savings Accounts/Voucher bill be introduced next week. Some advocacy supports and sources detailed below. Assessment bill in the Senate has a new bill number and the Governor’s computer science initiative is approved in Senate Education. Thanks for all you do to advocate for staff and students in your school district! [margaret.buckton@isfis.net](mailto:margaret.buckton@isfis.net)

**Collective Bargaining:** [HF 291](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=%24selectedGa.generalAssemblyID&ba=hf291) and [SF 213](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=%24selectedGa.generalAssemblyID&ba=sf213) were debated at length, including an overnight stay in the Iowa Senate Wednesday night, a rare call of Senate and House, and another rare move to set a time certain for debate to cease, after which votes are recorded on amendments and bills without debate or comment. The bills overhaul Chapter 20 collective bargaining and make sweeping changes to teacher termination in Chapters 279 and 284. An amendment slightly softened the bill, making the following changes, although the bill sent to the Governor today is still an overhaul of labor law in Iowa. In the House, 6 Republican joined with Democrats to vote no, meaning the bill passed by 53 to 47. The Senate vote was 29 Republicans in favor, 20 Democrats and 1 Independent opposed. Details of the amendment:

* Fixes several typos and other technical corrections
* In section 4, adds “proper cause” back into suspension/discharge process
* In section 6, changes the following from prohibited subjects of bargaining to permissive subjects of bargaining:
  + Release time, grievance procedures for resolving any questions arising under the agreement, seniority and any wage increases, employment benefit or other employment advantage based on seniority.
* Strikes section 12 of the bill which effectively puts grievance procedures back within the arbitration process.
* Adds a new section requiring collective bargaining agreements be in writing/signed by both parties, then requires the employer to file the agreement with PERB.
* In section 29, restores the appeal of termination to adjudicator.
* In section 30, puts grievance procedures back into Chapter 20
* In section 67, modifies the requirement that the public employer offer health insurance to apply to permanent, full-time employees. Still doesn’t specify who pays.

**See last week’s report for a complete description of the bill.** A summary of the bills is found on the RSAI web site [here](http://nebula.wsimg.com/f84eb88840782daf4e9d919eb12e14e9?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1). RSAI was registered as undecided on the bill.

**Parents for Great Iowa Schools:** This new organization is working to generate parent understanding regarding the needs of public schools and encourage parent advocacy. They have undergone a thorough effort to educate parents about the impact that vouchers/ESA’s will have on public schools. See their web site <http://parentsforgreatiowaschools.com/> for possible advocacy actions, including a short video on the impact of vouchers and possible actions to advocate for public schools. The group is interested in recruiting parents from all over Iowa, especially rural districts, as steering committee members.

**Voucher/Educational Savings Account bill expected next week. Do not wait to begin talking with legislators about this policy that negatively impacts public education:**

* In the current state budget climate, any funds dedicated to ESAs are funds not available to public schools.
* Public money should first support public needs.
* Competition only works when there is a level playing field. Public schools are required to comply with many laws not forced on private schools and public schools provide needed services for all children without exception.
* State and local funding already supports private and home school education to the tune of $52 million annually.
* ESA’s do not support rural families who live too far away from nonpublic schools to take advantage of the choice.
* What accountability measures will insure that public dollars are used wisely in nonpublic and home school environments?
* Tax analysis of other states shows that Iowa is one of 17 states that already use tax policy to support nonpublic and home school families and one of only 5 states that use both deductions and tax credits. See ***State Tax Subsidies for Private K-12 Education***, by the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy Oct. 2016, which shares other concerns regarding expansion of taxpayer funded school choice. [http://itep.org/itep\_reports/2016/10/state-tax-subsidies-for-private-k-12-education.php#.WG-a9hsrJ3g](http://itep.org/itep_reports/2016/10/state-tax-subsidies-for-private-k-12-education.php)

**Other Bills Receiving Consideration**

[**SF 240**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=SF%20240) **State Assessments** by Senate Education; formerly SSB 1001. This bill requires DE to issue a new RFP process by April 30, 2017, with state tests first used in 2018-19 school year. Requires the test to measure individual student growth, be aligned to the Iowa core academic standards for grades 3-8 and at least one HS grade. The test must be capable of measuring student performance in ELA, including reading and writing; mathematics; and science, must be available in both paper-and-pencil and computer-based formats. Proposals incapable of assessing performance in ELA, including reading and writing, mathematics, and science shall not be considered. Potential vendors or providers may collaborate to meet the requirements of this subsection. Additionally, in evaluating proposals, DE shall only consider the feasibility of implementation by school districts; the costs to school districts and the state and the technical support necessary to administer the statewide assessment; the costs of acquiring the infrastructure necessary for implementing technology readiness in all of Iowa’s school districts, including technology required for accommodations; the degree to which the submission is aligned with the Iowa core academic standards; the ability of the assessment to measure student growth and student proficiency; the ability of the assessment to meet the requirements of the ESSA; and the instructional time required to conduct the statewide assessment. RSAI is registered as undecided on the bill.

[**SF 274**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=SF%20274) **Computer Science Initiative (Governor’s Bill):** this bill creates a computer science professional development initiative, requires DE to write rules to implement, states legislative goal that, by July 1, 2019, each accredited high school offers at least one high-quality computer science course, each accredited middle school offers instruction in exploratory computer science, and each accredited elementary school offer instruction in the basics of computer science. Makes requirements contingent on sufficient appropriation. Requires BOEE to set certification standards for teachers of computer science. Approved by the Senate Education Committee. RSAI has registered as undecided.

**Education Committee Members:** Find links to members of the Education Committee for the [Senate here](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/committee?ga=87&groupID=327) and the [House here](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/committee?ga=87&groupID=686)

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 you legislators.

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