



RSAI Legislative Update February 28, 2025

This RSAI Weekly Report from the 2025 Legislative Session includes:

- School Funding/SSA Status
- Status of Governor’s Bills (Cell Phones, Math Initiative, TSS and Other Education Policies, Child Care Continuum)
- Operational Sharing, Reorganization/WGS Incentives and School Start Date
- Funnel Deadlines
- Funnel Survivors
- Other Subcommittees of interest
- Advocacy Actions for the Week and Resources

School Funding / SSA Status

[SF 167](#) SSA by the Senate sets the 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, several of which have been RSAI priorities for years. 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.

Both the Senate and the House are insisting on their proposals and no agreement has been reached. We have heard reports of Senate Republicans claiming that their proposal 2% increase is really a 3.9% increase, so that’s enough. That 3.93% figure is in the Fiscal Note assigned to SF 167.

The fiscal note shows the following large increases:

- Regular Program District Cost up 1.36%
- Budget Adjustment (Budget Guarantee) up \$9.5 million, an increase of 61.56%. There are 159 districts are on the budget guarantee at 2%.
- Teacher Salary Supplement is up \$48.9 million, an increase of 12.89%. Districts must spend that on increased teacher pay. There is no flexibility to use those funds to balance the budget. Worthy of Note: if [HSB 108](#), TSS Follows Charter School Students, is

enacted, that will require districts with Charter Schools to pay the state TSS cost per pupil, or approximately \$684 per pupil, which will not be accounted for in the DOM calculation of how much funding your district needs to meet the new teacher pay minimums.

- AEA funding cuts are assumed to be restored, which is \$25 million and a 76.92% change.

Here's another way to think about it. Total state aid \$3.9365 billion minus \$25 million AEA cut, \$49 million TSS, property tax relief changes of \$13 million, results in state investment that schools can use to balance the budget as an increase at \$61.9 million, or 1.6% (and your district might actually have to use some of that to pay teacher minimums or implement any of the many unfunded mandates being proposed this Session).

Status of Governor's Proposals

Several of the Governor's bills were amended and approved in Committee action this week.

- **SF 442 and HSB 147 TSS and Other Education Policies:** Sets new TSS calculation plus growth, Student teaching flexibility, Out-of-state risk pool, Teach Iowa platform, IPERS Retired educator pay at least \$50,000. SF 422 was amended to specify that the \$50,000 minimum pay for returning retired teachers is for a full-time position (would allow prorating for less than full time.) RSAI supports these bills now on their respective calendar.
- **SF 450 and HSB 137 Math Initiative:** Both bills were amended in Committee action to remove provision related to the Civics test. RSAI is registered undecided. Both of these bills move to their respective Calendars.
- **SF 370 and HSB 106 Local Board Policy for Cell Phone Restriction during Instruction:** Amendment during the House Education Committee removed requirements for professional development and curriculum changes requiring middle school instruction in the impact of social media. RSAI is registered undecided on both of these bills are now on their respective calendars.
- **SF 445 and HF 623 Childcare Continuum and Partnership Grants:** amendments in the Senate Education Committee and the House Health and Human Services Committee included requirements that community-based providers must also have licensed teachers in the preschool program. RSAI is registered undecided on both of these bills are now on their respective calendars.

Operational Sharing, Reorganization/WGS Incentives and School Start Date

There are several different bills to address operational sharing, a new bill on reorganization incentives, and a few proposals on school start date flexibility. RSAI is registered in support of all of these bills. Bill numbers and status follow:

- **[SF 444](#)** Extends Whole Grade Sharing and Reorganization Incentives through 2030. The bill was unanimously approved by the Senate Education Committee and is on the Senate Calendar.
- **[SF 168](#)** Operational Sharing Positions Cap Exemptions specifies that several positions including SROs, mental health professionals and masters or independent social workers positions are not included in the 21-student cap. This bill was approved by the Senate

Education Committee unanimously and is on the Senate Calendar. A [fiscal note](#) assigned to the bill estimates a cost to the state of \$336,000 if all districts currently at the 21-student cap took advantage of this opportunity.

- [HF 515](#) Extra Weighting for Shared SROs increases the SRO supplementary weighting from 2 student to 4 students. Unless the cap is changed, districts already at the 21-student cap would not benefit from this bill. The fiscal note estimates a state funding cost of \$1.2 million, assuming all districts using any operational sharing but not at the cap would take advantage of the increased weighting associated with an SRO. The bill was approved unanimously by the House Education Committee and is on the House calendar.
- [S-3004](#) to [SF 167](#) SSA increases the operational sharing student weighting cap from 21 to 25 students (a potential of \$32,000 more per district for districts already at the 21-student cap.) RSAI supports this provision.
- [HSB 31](#) School Start Date allows school districts to begin school the earlier of the first Wednesday following the Iowa State Fair or August 23. The bill was approved 22:0 by the House Education Committee. It is awaiting a new bill number to be assigned to the House Calendar.
- [SF 205](#) School Start Date strikes the reference to August 23rd and instead allows schools to start the Monday immediately preceding the last Monday in August. (In August of 2025, for example, since the last Monday in August is the 25th, school could start as early as August 18. The following year, the last Monday in August is the 31st, so school could start on the 24th. The 2026 example is the latest school start date possibility.) The bill was approved unanimously by the Senate Education Committee and is on the Senate Calendar.

Teacher Salary Supplement Paid to Charter Schools

[HSB 108](#) was approved in the House Education Committee this week on a vote of 14 in favor and 9 opposed, with two Republicans joining Democrats in opposition. This bill would require the district of residence to pay the charter school the state TSS cost per pupil, an estimated \$684 per student. The bill is effective on enactment for budget years beginning on and after July 1, 2025. Charter schools do not report staffing information to DOM, so there is no consideration of the amount needed for resident districts to pay Charter Schools to meet minimum pay requirements (and to our knowledge, there is no public oversight to ensure that TSS funds would be spent on teacher minimum pay in Charter Schools). Additionally, the DOM does not have the information or authority to consider how much additional funding resident school districts would need to both meet the mandated teacher pay minimums in the local district and send money to charter schools. The floor manager stated that since districts don't have these students anymore, they don't need teachers. Many charter schools are specifically reengaging dropouts, many of whom were not on the public school district's enrollment count. The most important consideration is that TSS is being set this year based on the number of teachers who are paid below minimums, not based on enrollment. RSAI is opposed to this bill.

Funnel Deadlines:

Funnel deadlines are self-imposed timelines required in the House and Senate Chamber Rules approved annually for how they conduct business during the Session. Not all bills are subject to the funnel deadlines, including appropriations and tax bills, or certain bills agreed to by the leaders of the House and Senate. Ideas in bills that die due to a funnel deadline can resurface as amendments to other bills later in the process. There is also a rule that amendments be germane to the bill to which they are being attached, which typically requires some alignment of the subject and the Code Section impacted by the bill. It is not uncommon, however, for legislators running those amendments found not germane to request a motion to suspend the rules, which sometimes is approved. Basically, the funnel deadlines serve to cull the agenda of up to thousands of pieces of legislation that are introduced, but do not rise to the level of a priority for the legislators.

The first funnel deadline is Friday, March 7 by which bills must be approved by a committee in their chamber of origin in order to receive further consideration. A list of funnel survivors that have already met that standard follows. Additional bills approved in committees next week will be added to that list.

Funnel Survivors:

Check out the separate RSAI Bill Tracking for bill summaries and RSAI Registrations.

HF 133 School Building Demolition Fund
HF 163 Threat Assessment Teams and Information Sharing
HF 165 Civics Test Requirement for High School Graduation
HF 166 Two Minutes of Daily Silence and Iowa/USA Motto Displays
HF 167 Grooming Definition for Mandatory Reporting
HF 189 Nonpublic Student Participation in Public School Athletics
HF 190 Online Assessments for Virtual School Students
HF 212 Prohibited Ingredients in School Meals
HF 259 Public Notice Requirements
HF 271 Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Scholarship Program
HF 272 Advanced Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement Scholar Program
HF 315 Budget Adjustment for Schools Affected by Natural Disasters
HF 316 Middle School Career Education/Industry Recognized Credential Seal
HF 331 Athletic Conference Realignment Committee
HF 369 Agriculture Education Grant Program
HF 382 Child Care Staff Flex Time
HF 389 Child Abuse Reporting/DHHS Investigation of School Employees
HF 391 Pregnancy and Fetal Development Video and Curriculum (attached SF 175)
HF 393 Counting Dropouts only Once for School Performance Profiles
HF 395 School Bus Driver Training Requirements
HF 400 Public Records Requests
HF 471 Concussion Management Qualifications of Provider
HF 513 High School Athletic Participation for 8th Graders

HF 514 Robotics Extracurriculars (attached SF 278)
HF 515 Extra Weighting for Shared SROs
HF 520 One Unit of US Government (including civics) for Graduation
HF 521 Repeal of Obscenity Exemptions for Libraries and Schools
HF 522 Nutrition and Lighting Mandate in Therapeutic Classrooms
HF 579 Dropout Prevention Equity (gradually up to 5%)
HF 621 Guns on School Grounds
HF 623 Child Care Continuum Grants and Early Childhood Changes (Governor's Bill)
HSB 31 School Start Date
HSB 105 Charter School Board Member (Allows one Non-Iowan on the Board)
HSB 106 Cell Phone Restrictions (Governor's Bill)
HSB 108 TSS follows students to Charter Schools
HSB 137 Math Initiative (Governor's Bill)
HSB 147 TSS and Education Changes (Governor's Bill)
HSB 155 Library and Schools DEI restrictions

SF 8 Prohibition of Disciplinary Actions for Name and Pronoun Usage in Schools
SF 167 SSA at 2% (House Amendment at 2.25% +++)
SF 168 Operational Sharing Positions Cap Exemptions
SF 176 Open Enrollment Athletics Participation for Virtual Students
SF 205 School Start Date
SF 211 Online State Test for Virtual Students
SF 273 Grooming Definition and Mandatory Reporting
SF 274 Forms of Payment at Athletic Contest/competition
SF 277 Chronic Absenteeism Clean-up
SF 299 Immunization Exemption Information
SF 368 Seizure Management Training and Instruction
SF 369 Civics Test Requirement for High School Graduation
SF 370 Regulation of Personal Electronic Devices (Governor's Cell Phone Restriction Bill)
SF 386 Complaint Timeline Lengthened from 60 to 90 Days
SF 388 Public Meeting Notices (requiring posting in an accessible prominent place)
SF 389 Public Records Requests (notification of estimate and time to fulfill the request)
SF 442 TSS Calculation and Education Changes (Governor's Bill)
SF 444 Extension of Reorg and WGS Incentives
SF 445 Early Childhood and Child Care Continuum (Governor's Bill)
SF 446 Iowa HS Athletics Conference Realignment Committee
SF 450 Mathematics Initiative and Civics Requirements (Governor's Bill)
SF 458 Public Funds Investment
SF 472 Recertification Elections

Other Subcommittees of interest

These bills were approved in subcommittees this week, but have not yet been approved by a Committee (see bill descriptions and status in the bill tracker or contact us with questions).

- SF 335 DEI Teaching Limitations and Civil Actions
- HF 335 School Activity Fund transfers
- HF 334 Allows School Boards to Employ Chaplains
- SSB 1056 IPERS Pension Fiduciaries and Investment Requirements
- SF 280 Local Board Policy Allowing Religious instruction by Private Organizations
- HF 221 Bond Limitations at 80% of Total Project
- HF 445 ESA Applications (December Deadline for Second Semester)
- HF 448 Allows School Board to Offer Bible Courses
- HSB 219 Advanced Math (algebra in 8th grade for all students proficient in 5, 6, or 7th grade including individual tutoring and other supports)
- HSB 221 and SSB 1158 School Nutrition and curriculum (animal protein and locally sourced food, waiver from feds for FRPL standards)
- HF 451 Contracts with Giant Tech Companies Which Sensor Speech Prohibited
- SF 366 Mandatory Administrative Leave During Child Abuse investigation
- HSB 217 School Board Policy for Reduction in Force Excluding Seniority Consideration

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. Diverting the small increases that RSAI districts will get for TSS to charter schools will further stress public school budgets. See the [RSAI 2025 Adequate School Resources Position Paper](#) for additional information.

Advocacy for one-time money: Although not ideal, the \$26 million one-time supplemental appropriation in the House proposal will help school districts through several transitions, including higher teacher pay minimums, higher inflation, phase-out of federal funds, and of course, the cost of any unfunded mandates that might be approved this Session and there are many. Reach out to Senators and ask them to support the House amendment including the one-time funding appropriation. Reach out to House members and thank them for voting to invest more.

Thank legislators in both chambers for considering improvements to Operational Sharing, extending WGS and Reorganization Incentives, and common-sense improvements to the School Start Date. Encourage them to keep these bills moving forward.

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 that Iowa’s current SVPP funds). Your own data on the benefits for those students in full-day preschool is really important to share. 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 achieving 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. Express thanks to House HHS and Senate Education Committee members for amending the bills to require licensed teacher in the new community provider authorized programs. 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.

*Margaret Buckton, RSAI Professional Advocate, margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com ,
515.201.3755 Cell

*Dave Daughton, RSAI Grassroots Advocate, dave.daughton@rsaia.org, 641-344-5205 Cell

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