



**BELLEVUE COMETS**  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

**SUPERINTENDENT**

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**Comet Highlights from the February 12, 2024 Board Meeting**  
**From Tom Meyer - Superintendent**

February 14	2-Hour Early Dismissal for Teacher Professional Learning
February 19	No School -President's Day
March 6 & 7	Parent-Teacher Conferences - 2-Hour Early Dismissal; Conferences Times: 6th-3:30-8:00; 7th-1:30-6:00
March 8	No School
March 14	Kindergarten Roundup
March 16	Athletic Booster Chicken Dinner at the Legion
March 19	Preschool Open House
March 20	2-Hour Early Dismissal for Teacher Professional Learning
March 29-April 2	No School for Students
April 2	Teacher Professional Learning
May 25	Bellevue CSD Graduation - 4:00

To view a calendar of events, see the following link:

<https://www.rivervalleyconference.org/public/genie/628/school/1/>

**Board Notes for the Board Meeting on Monday, February 12**

**APPROVED - Consent Agenda**

**Open Enrollment Requests**

- Jack Messerich - PK - Dubuque to Bellevue
- Henry Messerich - PK - Dubuque to Bellevue
- Charlee Regan - 1st grade - Andrew to Bellevue
- Tayllin Regan - 6th grade - Andrew to Bellevue
- Owen Hudrlik - K - Andrew to Bellevue

**Resignations**

- Jill Rugeberg - MS/HS Associate - Jill has been an associate in our district for 26 years and is going to retire from her position at the end of the school year.
- Tami Purvis - MS/HS Associate - Tami has been an associate in our district for 28 years and is going to retire from her position at the end of the school year.

- Nicole Kremer - Elementary Associate - Nicole is going to be leaving the elementary school on February 9.
  - The elementary school is looking to hire someone for this position for the rest of the school year and into following years, or other positions. At this time, it looks like someone else working in the district is going to move to this position. As a result, we will still need to hire someone for the person who is moving into this position. We may also utilize substitutes for this associate position.

Recommendations to Hire

- Clint Michels - MS Boys Track - Clint has experience with track and has also assisted as a middle school basketball coach.

Recognize any Visitors

No one was in attendance at the start of the meeting.

Facilities Discussion

This discussion focused on facilities work that needs to be completed, etc. for the campus, answering questions about facilities, etc.

Elementary Construction Project

A BROAD construction timeline is the following:

Key dates:

- **Tonight** - Board Accept Bids at **February 12** Board meeting, Notice to proceed following. Action was taken after the public hearing.  
**(Make sure bids are acceptable - not over price, ask questions about the bids and if they meet requirements, etc.)**
- Accept Contracts - **March 11** Board Meeting
- Substantial Completion - **June 15, 2025 (15 months for completion)**
- Final Completion - **June 30, 2025**

APPROVED - Roof

We have had some leaks in some of our roofs. One of these is at the elementary school in the older section of the building near the 5th-grade rooms as you move west from the steps (The 5th-grade landing area and where our current library is located). This will need to be replaced, but it will need to have a crane to get to it effectively. There is a chance they could do this during the school year. Some patches were made, but it is likely past its prime. A quote we have is for slightly over \$14,000. Secondly, there were also some leaks at the MS/HS building in the "high school hallway" area, along with some areas in the Commons where snow melting and leaking through the east side by the windows onto the acoustic panels. These areas were all fixed.

Radon Testing - As required by the state, the Bellevue CSD tested all of our buildings where students are for radon. All of our areas were below the level of concern for buildings. We will need to repeat this testing again in five years. The cost for this was \$5500. Results will also be posted on our website in the future.

### **Extracurricular Updates**

The numbers for softball in Bellevue High School are limited at this time. Currently, we will have seven softball players for this season. That is not enough to field a team that requires players in nine positions. Most would say, at a minimum, that you need 11-12 players to field a team based on injuries that may occur, etc.

Marquette had contacted our district in October about sharing softball with them based on their anticipated low numbers in softball, but then indicated in late November that they were reaching out to Easton Valley based on an agreement they had with them over the past two seasons. Discussion continued after the winter break, and then we were informed that they would be playing with Easton Valley. I met with the superintendent of Easton Valley and Mr. Kaiser at Marquette in the last two weeks, and they indicated the difficulty of a sharing agreement with their program at this time.

It is important to note for our community, if asked about this, that Marquette approached our district in October about sharing softball, and we expressed an interest in doing this (and said that we would) - but, that changed when they spoke with EV at the end of November. There will be some in our community wondering why our district is potentially sharing with a district for softball, and then the other school in our district is sharing with another district. I provided the explanation above (as we were planning on this), but this will likely be a question that is asked by a community member who cannot make sense as to why our two schools in our community would share with two separate school systems.

Mr. Bonifas provided an update on some other sharing options at the meeting, but one of the options is to share softball with Maquoketa. Unlike some other smaller districts that we reached out to, it would not impact Maquoketa's classification. We have also talked about/with some other districts about options. The agreements are still being worked on at this time, but Meyer anticipates an agreement of some sort to be discussed and acted upon at the March Board meeting.

### **Legislative Update, Comet School Finance & Comet Reading and Reflection**

#### Legislative

Meyer provided an overview of the legislative session to this point at the meeting, and provided updates to items shared in the past. An update from RSAI (Rural School Advocates of Iowa) is included at the end of the notes.

#### Comet School Finance - Supplemental Aid rate..

The legislature is to approve State Supplemental Aid 30 days into the session in order to allow school districts to set their tax rates accurately for public hearings. This did not happen. I am hoping this will occur soon, but it is not likely. As a result, when we have to do our budget, we may need to figure on 0.0% SSA, which will show a higher tax rate than what we will need to do when we get money determinations from the state. When the budget is posted for hearings, the tax rate can be lowered (but not increased). Abbey and I will be working on what a "reasonable" estimation may be IF the legislature does not act on determining the SSA for this year in time for the two budget hearings the district is required to have.

The legislature has been doing better with this the last few years, but the focus has been on the AEA and not on SSA by the legislature. Hopefully, we will find this out soon.

## 30-day Clock is Ticking



- Gov. Reynolds released her budget on Jan. 9, Recommendation 2.5% SSA (% applies to SSCP, ESAs, Transportation Equity Fund and grows DCP and categoricals by the per pupil \$ amount.)

### **257.8 State percent of growth — supplemental state aid.**

1. *State percent of growth.* The state percent of growth for the budget year beginning July 1, 2021, is two and four-tenths percent. The state percent of growth for the budget year beginning July 1, 2022, is two and one-half percent. The state percent of growth for the budget year beginning July 1, 2023, is three percent. The state percent of growth for each subsequent budget year shall be established by statute which shall be enacted within thirty days of the transmission of the governor's budget required by February 1 under [section 8.21](#) during the regular legislative session beginning in the base year.

- 8 days from today
- No bills introduced in the House
- [SF 2094](#) by Donahue (D from Cedar Rapids) was introduced Tuesday of this week.

As you likely remember, our enrollment went down this year. From 631.7 to 621.3. This is still higher than it was several years ago though, and part of this is likely a result of a smaller than average kindergarten this school year.

We need nearly 3.0% (2.8%) in order to not be on Budget Guarantee - I will explain this more at the Board meeting, but a BRIEF synopsis is the following:


With a 3.0% SSA we will have the capability to get \$62,645 new money. With a 2.7% SSA rate or lower we will be able to get \$48,369 - which is 1.0%.

Ultimately, anything under 2.8% we will receive \$48,369. This is a result of the "budget guarantee" for school systems. This allows for systems to get 1.0% new money, but then that impacts in a negative way the following year if we are at a declining enrollment and/or have a low SSA.

This is IMPORTANT as it assists dramatically in paying for our teachers and other staff members in all areas. The less money we have, the less we have to provide. While we can go into the funds we have, and we do often, this can also only last so long. School systems need appropriate funding for the aspect of "Recruitment and Retention" of staff members.

A few examples are the following:

1. 2.5% SSA this year, and next year would have us on a "Budget Guarantee" and 1.0% new money of \$48,639.

<b>Bellevue</b>		Select District From Dropdown		Impact on New Money, Budget Guarantee, and Funding			
0585							
FY24: SSA for FY 2023 has been set at 3.0%		Data For: <b>Bellevue</b>		Projections - Cells shaded in green can be changed			
FY24: No added equity funding for the "Equity Legislation".							
FY25: The SSA rate for FY 2025 has not yet been set.							
Fiscal Year	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Est. FY 2025**	Est. FY 2026**
Budget Enrollment	595.3	600.1	590.7	623.1	631.7	621.3	620.0
Supplemental State Aid (Allowable Growth)	2.06%	2.30%	2.40%	2.50%	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%
Dollar Change Cost Per Student	139	158	169	181	222	191	196
State Cost Per Student Before Equity Legislation	6,875	7,038	7,217	7,408	7,635	7,826	8,022
Equity Legislation: Additional Amount to the State Cost Per Pupil==>	5	10	10	5	0	0	0
<b>Adjusted State Cost Per Pupil Amount==&gt;</b>	<b>6,880</b>	<b>7,048</b>	<b>7,227</b>	<b>7,413</b>	<b>7,635</b>	<b>7,826</b>	<b>8,022</b>
<b>Supplemental State Aid (SSA) and Equity Growth Impact on the District Cost Per Pupil***</b>							
Equity Impact on District's Cost Per Pupil Amount==>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
District Cost Per Pupil Growth Due to SSA Rate==>	169	181	181	222	191	196	196
Total Increase in the District Cost Per Pupil==>	169	181	181	222	191	196	196
Districts Cost Per Pupil with Impact==>	7,254	7,435	7,435	7,657	7,848	8,044	8,044
Area	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Est. FY 2025**	Est. FY 2026**
District Cost Per Student	6,927	7,085	7,254	7,435	7,657	7,848	8,044
Regular Program Cost/W-O Budget Guarantee	4,123,643	4,251,709	4,284,938	4,632,749	4,836,927	4,875,962	4,987,280
<b>Budget Guarantee</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,288</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,334</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Regular Program Cost/With Budget Guarantee</b>	<b>4,123,643</b>	<b>4,251,709</b>	<b>4,294,226</b>	<b>4,632,749</b>	<b>4,836,927</b>	<b>4,885,296</b>	<b>4,987,280</b>
Prior Year Regular Program Cost/With Budget Guarantee	3,945,186	4,123,643	4,251,709	4,294,226	4,632,749	4,836,927	4,885,296
<b>"New Money"</b>	<b>178,457</b>	<b>128,066</b>	<b>42,517</b>	<b>338,523</b>	<b>204,178</b>	<b>48,369</b>	<b>101,984</b>
<b>Percent New Money</b>	<b>4.52%</b>	<b>3.11%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>7.88%</b>	<b>4.41%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>2.09%</b>
<b>New Money Change by Component</b>							
						Est. FY 2025**	Est. FY 2026**
<b>Enrollment Change:</b>						(10.4)	(1.3)
<b>Enrollment Change Impact:</b>						\$ (79,633)	\$ (10,202)
<b>SSA Impact:</b>						\$ 118,668	\$ 121,520
<b>Per Pupil Equity Impact:</b>						\$ -	\$ -
<b>Budget Guarantee Impact:</b>						\$ 9,334	\$ (9,334)
<b>Total New Money</b>						<b>\$ 48,369</b>	<b>\$ 101,984</b>

2. A 3.0% SSA rate for this year would provide \$62,645 for FY25. This would be 1.3% new money. Then the following year, with a basically steady enrollment we would be 2.28% new money (\$111,888) if we received 2.5% SSA.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P X

**Bellevue** Select District From Dropdown  
0585

Impact on New Money, Budget Guarantee, and Funding



FY24: SSA for FY 2023 has been set at 3.0%. Data For: **Bellevue** Projections - Cells shaded in green can be changed

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FY25: The SSA rate for FY 2025 has not yet been set.


Fiscal Year	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Est. FY 2025**	Est. FY 2026**
Budget Enrollment	595.3	600.1	590.7	623.1	631.7	621.3	620.0
Supplemental State Aid (Allowable Growth)	2.06%	2.30%	2.40%	2.50%	3.00%	3.00%	2.50%
Dollar Change Cost Per Student	139	158	169	181	222	229	197
State Cost Per Student Before Equity Legislation	6,875	7,038	7,217	7,408	7,635	7,864	8,061
Equity Legislation: Additional Amount to the State Cost Per Pupil==>	5	10	10	5	0	0	0
<b>Adjusted State Cost Per Pupil Amount==&gt;</b>	<b>6,880</b>	<b>7,048</b>	<b>7,227</b>	<b>7,413</b>	<b>7,635</b>	<b>7,864</b>	<b>8,061</b>

Supplemental State Aid (SSA) and Equity Growth Impact on the District Cost Per Pupil***					
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Area	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Est. FY 2025**	Est. FY 2026**
District Cost Per Student	6,927	7,085	7,254	7,435	7,657	7,886	8,083
Regular Program Cost/W-O Budget Guarantee	4,123,643	4,251,709	4,284,938	4,632,749	4,836,927	4,899,572	5,011,460
Budget Guarantee	0	0	9,288	0	0	0	0
<b>Regular Program Cost/With Budget Guarantee</b>	<b>4,123,643</b>	<b>4,251,709</b>	<b>4,294,226</b>	<b>4,632,749</b>	<b>4,836,927</b>	<b>4,899,572</b>	<b>5,011,460</b>
Prior Year Regular Program Cost/With Budget Guarantee	3,945,186	4,123,643	4,251,709	4,294,226	4,632,749	4,836,927	4,899,572
<b>"New Money"</b>	<b>178,457</b>	<b>128,066</b>	<b>42,517</b>	<b>338,523</b>	<b>204,178</b>	<b>62,645</b>	<b>111,888</b>
<b>Percent New Money</b>	<b>4.52%</b>	<b>3.11%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>7.88%</b>	<b>4.41%</b>	<b>1.30%</b>	<b>2.28%</b>

New Money Change by Component		
		Est. FY 2025**
		Est. FY 2026**
	Enrollment Change:	(10.4)
	Enrollment Change Impact:	\$ (79,633)
	SSA Impact:	\$ 142,278
	Per Pupil Equity Impact:	\$ -
	Budget Guarantee Impact:	\$ -
	<b>Total New Money</b>	<b>\$ 62,645</b>

3. A 2.5% SSA rate for this year and next year (with a relatively steady enrollment for next year) we would be at the "Budget Guarantee" and 1.0% new money this year (\$48,369) and 0.81% new money next year (\$39,426)

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Equity Legislation: Additional Amount to the State Cost Per Pupil=>	5	10	10	5	0	0	0		
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Regular Program Cost/W-O Budget Guarantee	4,123,643	4,251,709	4,284,938	4,632,749	4,836,927	4,875,962	4,906,840		
Budget Guarantee	0	0	9,288	0	0	9,334	17,882		
Regular Program Cost/With Budget Guarantee	4,123,643	4,251,709	4,294,226	4,632,749	4,836,927	4,885,296	4,924,722		
Prior Year Regular Program Cost/With Budget Guarantee	3,945,186	4,123,643	4,251,709	4,294,226	4,632,749	4,836,927	4,885,296		
<b>"New Money"</b>	<b>178,457</b>	<b>128,066</b>	<b>42,517</b>	<b>338,523</b>	<b>204,178</b>	<b>48,369</b>	<b>39,426</b>		
Percent New Money	4.52%	3.11%	1.00%	7.88%	4.41%	1.00%	0.81%		
<b>New Money Change by Component</b>									
						Est. FY 2025**	Est. FY 2026**		
<b>Enrollment Change:</b>						(10.4)	(11.3)		
<b>Enrollment Change Impact:</b>						\$ (79,633)	\$ (88,682)		
<b>SSA Impact:</b>						\$ 118,668	\$ 119,560		
<b>Per Pupil Equity Impact:</b>						\$ -	\$ -		
<b>Budget Guarantee Impact:</b>						\$ 9,334	\$ 8,548		

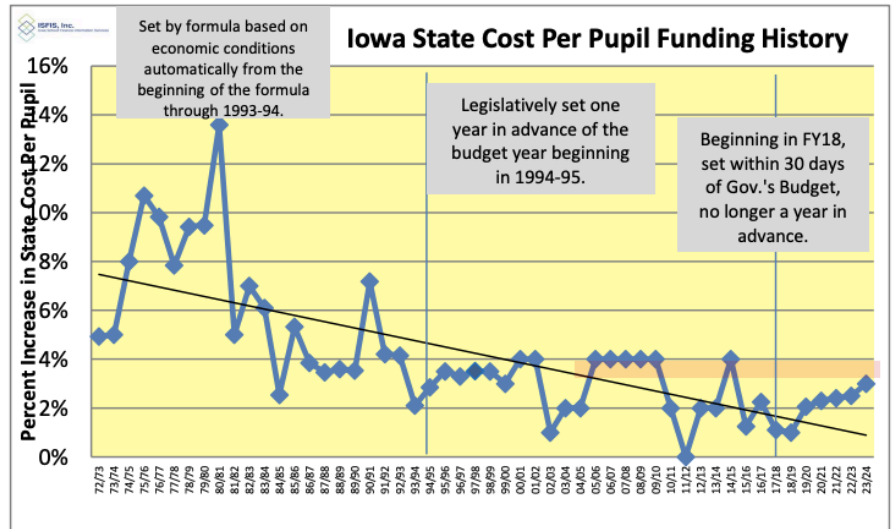
Comet Reading and Reflection

The following is another "paper" shared by RSAI (Rural School Advocates of Iowa) about school funding in the state of Iowa over the last several years. I believe this is important for you to be aware of when the question of school funding comes up in any conversations.



## RSIA 2024 Legislative Priority: Adequate School Funding

**History:** This chart shows the percentage increase in Iowa's state cost per pupil, called State Supplemental Assistance or SSA, since the funding formula began in 1972-73. Although never below zero, in 13 of the last 14 years, the per pupil increase has been lower than the cost increases schools experience (orange band on the Per Pupil Funding Chart), which typically run from 3-4% if enrollment is constant.



**Current reality:** Annual formula

increases have not been enough to pay salaries and benefits to compete with the private sector, plus other costs of operating schools and meeting student needs. Since the school's General Fund pays primarily for staff, allocating 80% of General Fund expenditures typically for salaries and benefits, low per pupil increases have a staffing shortage echo. Few or no applicants at all, not just in rural districts but in districts of all sizes across the State, demonstrates the inability to compete for human capital in Iowa's thriving economy. SSA impacts the weightings, or multipliers, assigned to students with special education needs, English-language learner supports, college credit courses and preschool, providing resources for student programs.

The SSA funding percentage is also applied to Teacher Salary, Professional Development, Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC), and the new Transportation Supplements. Although the transportation funds are for any general fund purpose (considered as reimbursement), other categorical funds are restricted for specific purposes. AEA special education and school improvement resources are also dependent on adequate increases in the per pupil amount. State and Federal unfunded mandates are paid from this funding (such as the increased employer share of IPERs or mandated new computer science courses). When school costs increase more than funding, program and staff reductions follow. Declining enrollment requires even further reduction. Growing enrollment demands additional staff and supports, both compromised by low SSA.

**Staff Shortages:** Without adequate funds, school districts cannot pay a competitive wage and attract quality staff to our schools; this dynamic has intensified over the last decade. See the RSIA Staff Shortage position paper for additional data regarding staff shortages.



**Benchmarks/Economic Measures for Comparison:** When comparing the state cost per pupil to economic benchmarks and other states, Iowa school funding falls short. Economic benchmarks:

- ❖ The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for Iowa grew 30.5%, controlling for inflation, 2011 to 2020, compared to the state cost per pupil, which grew 16.9% over the same period. <https://www.bea.gov/sites/default/files/2021-09/qgdpstate1021.pdf>
- ❖ Iowa Per Capita Personal Income increased 40%, 2010-2020, while the state cost per pupil increased 19% over the same decade. <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>

**Other State Comparisons:** from 2019 US Census data, May 2021

<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2019/econ/school-finances/secondary-education-finance.html>

- [US Census data](#) from May 2022 (reporting on FY 2020 expenditures) showed Iowa \$1,536 below the national average, ranking Iowa 30<sup>th</sup> in the nation in per pupil expenditures. [US Census Data](#) from May 2023 (reporting on FY 2022 expenditures) shows Iowa now spending \$13,259 per student or \$3,081 below the national average, ranking Iowa 35<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Contrast this recent trend with Iowa's early history. In the 70s, 80s, and 90s, Iowa schools spent more than the national average per pupil on education. [US Census data](#)
- Why does relative spending matter? Other states that spend more either have the ability to pay staff more (about 80% of the school budget) or provide more staff to meet student needs. Iowa's average teacher pay was \$7,035 behind the national average (Iowa Condition of Education Report and the [National Education Association](#)), and Iowa ranks 38<sup>th</sup> in beginning teacher pay ([Learning Policy Institute](#)).

**Education is a Significant Share of the State's General Fund:** the State's contribution to school funding is roughly 42% of the State General Fund budget. Legislators will sometimes refer to education as being "57% of the State General Fund", but that includes PK-12 PLUS postsecondary education (community colleges, universities, tuition grants) and other expenses. As the State has taken on a bigger share of the formula, lowering property taxes, the 42% benchmark is no longer indicative of a commensurate increase in resources available for educating students. It is also unknown if either of these benchmarks will be revised with the addition of hundreds of millions for Education Savings Accounts which will fall in the education budget line.

As the State is phasing in significant income tax cuts over the next few years, anticipating a smaller General Fund, committing to a percentage of a smaller pie means a smaller slice of pie for public schools. Additionally, the State of Iowa has many funds in addition to the General Fund (e.g., the Taxpayer Trust Fund is estimated to end FY 2024 with \$3.6 Billion, the Road Use Tax Fund is typically another Billion or so). According to the National Association of School Business Officials Annual [State Expenditure Report](#), Iowa spends 18.6% of all funds available to Iowa on Elementary and Secondary Education (FY 2022).

**Impact:** Efforts to educate students, prepare a qualified workforce, and deliver the excellent educational outcomes to which Iowans are accustomed will be compromised if the basic foundation of school funding is not sustained. There are not enough qualified applicants to fill jobs, generally indicating that the profession of teaching is being outpaced in the marketplace.

Class sizes are going up. Programs are being eliminated. Districts are offering fewer extracurricular and fine arts opportunities for students, especially in middle school. SSA is the lifeblood of Iowa schools.

Declining enrollment combined with low SSA means reduced staff, fewer programs, stretched services and ultimately, less opportunities and choices for students.

**Adequate School Resources:** the increase in SSA provides resources for Iowa schools to deliver an educational experience for students that meets the expectations of Iowa parents, communities, employers and policymakers. **Iowa's school foundation formula must maintain balanced state and local resources, be predictable, minimally exceed inflation, allow schools to compete for labor, and assure adequate time for budget planning and staffing.**

What schools can deliver is dependent on the level of funding provided, which begins with the 2024-25 school year and requires a consistent and sustainable commitment:

- **World-Class Education:** an investment of at least 10% SSA (\$763 per pupil, or \$4.23 per day of 180 days of instruction) would position Iowa schools and AEAs to deliver a world-class education, lower class sizes, attract and retain qualified staff, increase and individualize internships and other workforce experiences for students, and provide programs to close achievement gaps. Iowa per pupil expenditures, ranked 29<sup>th</sup> in the nation in 2021, fall \$1,581 short of the national average (*source: NCES Finance Tables, May 2023*), which does not meet the standard of Iowa's pride in our foundation of education, as shown on the Iowa state quarter. The 10% investment would be a down payment in closing Iowa's lagging funding gap, unless other states commit even more to their students' education.
- **Sustain Current Status:** an investment of at least 5% (\$382 per pupil, or \$2.12 per day of 180 days of instruction) would position school districts and AEAs to maintain current status with Iowa's competitive economy, recovering *partially* from high inflation and increased student needs.
- **Continued Erosion:** an investment of 2.5% (\$191 per pupil, or \$1.06 per day of 180 days of instruction) will *partially* cover expected increased costs of the next fiscal year, including staff salaries and benefits, but will require schools and AEAs to scale back, provide part-time librarians, counselors and nurses, shift some classes to online learning, or take other actions to squeeze more out of the current system in order to set a salary sufficient to retain existing staff (teachers, bus drivers, custodians, paraprofessionals) and provide a rounded course offering and programs.

### Weather

At this time, we have the following four dates where there has not been school, along with one late start:

- January 9
- January 10
- January 12
- January 16
- January 22 (2-hour late start)
- January 23

Each school day counts for 6.5 hours toward the total of 1080 hours that is required for schools in the state of Iowa. At the start of the school year we had a total of 1133 hours built into our calendar. Therefore, we are still at 1098.5 hours.

6.5 hours X 5 days = 32.5 hours  
2.0 hours X 1 day = 2.0 hours  
34.5 hours

1098.5 - 1080 hours = 18.5 hours over the required amount of hours.

We do not have to make up any school days with students if we meet the 1080 hours, but teachers do have a 188-day contract (calculated into the school calendar). The last day of school scheduled for this year in the original calendar is Thursday, May 23. Graduation is on Saturday, May 25. In the past, we have made up days in the final week when we were supposed to end school. I could realistically see this being done again (going to school on Friday, May 24) if the board approves it. But, we need to see about the rest of the winter season before moving forward too far.

Teachers have had two virtual learning days, and only need to make up three days at this point...therefore, student days at maximum would also only be three days. Teachers in the past, if we had more days than students made up, have made up their contractual time after school or on other days when we have scheduled days off of school.

On another note - Some of our hourly staff (associates, food service workers, bus drivers, etc.) may miss out on some pay IF we do not make up days. Some years in the past, we have offered some opportunities for them to make up time and get paid. Bus drivers clean their buses, associates help to move furniture at the end of the school year, etc. This is not a great option, but one that allows them to earn some money for their own personal budgets being impacted if they choose. I have also discussed with some associates having some online "training" on days off to match teachers' "virtual day". This is a valuable discussion to have, while also recognizing that we do not know if we will have any more days off of school due to the weather (it is only early February!)

#### **APPROVED - Auditor Services**

I am recommending we continue with O'Connor and Brooks for their auditing services. Several years ago, we had a different auditing group complete the audit but did not believe we received the feedback and thorough examination that is needed for a school. The other group was a little less expensive, but our current group does a better job. We need a quality audit for the district and its funds to ensure things are going correctly. Costs are the following for the services for the next three years (and it is required to have an audit, and assists with transparency and accountability):

- 2024 - \$16,700
- 2025 - \$18,200
- 2026 - \$19,900

For reference, past rates have been the following:

- 2021 - \$13,750
- 2022 - \$14,450
- 2023 - \$15,150

### Information Items

#### Hard Surface Routes

After consulting with the Jackson County Roads Department in the past, we went with hard surface routes only from January 29-Feb. 2. Bus drivers made calls to families about pickup locations. This worked well (as it has before as well).

After more discussion later, they approved the district going on gravel roads with buses, etc., the following week.

#### 24-25 Calendar

I sent a survey out to teachers about professional learning days for the 2024-2025 school year. Some basic findings were the following:

- 49 teachers responded (25 Elementary and 24 MS/HS)
- 56% wished to have about the same amount of professional learning days, while 20% wished for more time; 22% also wished to have more full-days during the school year.
  - A general comment included some staff wishing for more time for LETRS training (Reading/Literacy) for the elementary and AIW (Authentic Intellectual Work).
  - Full days would become more possible if the school year started earlier and we could offer one in October (as an example). It is a challenge currently to complete the year prior to Memorial Day, and this would only increase with more full-day professional learning days for teachers.
- 37% preferred staying with Wednesday early dismissals for a date, while 27% preferred moving to Friday early dismissals. Also, 31% did not care, and 4% preferred Monday mornings.
  - Various comments were included with this, from Fridays may work better for families, to Wednesdays would be better than Fridays as a result of games on Fridays. Some also thought the morning would be good to allow more focus from teachers (in comparison to at the end of the school day).
- 70% of teachers wish to have teachers return on Friday, January 3, with students returning on Monday, January 6; 16% said to have staff return on January 2 and students on January 3 (Friday); 14% stated they did not care
- 44% of teachers preferred to return on Tuesday after Spring Break (Easter) with students on Wednesday (similar to now); While 14% preferred to have staff return on Monday with students on Tuesday.
- 66% of teachers preferred to end before Memorial Day as they believe students' focus wanes after the holiday; 20% did not care.

As some of you may be aware, there is a bill proposed in the legislature about allowing schools to start the first Tuesday AFTER the State Fair (one even stating the first Monday during the week of August 23). For the 24-25 school year, this would mean the option to start with students on August 19 or 20 - this would balance our semesters to finish the one semester prior to Winter Break. I'm unsure if it will be approved, but I know there was some discussion about this.

At this point, the district is going to wait until March to have more discussions about a calendar for the 2024-2025 school year. Then, a public hearing will be held to approve a calendar. The main reason for this is to wait until further action on a calendar start date by the legislature.

### Technology

Each year, we make purchases to update our technology for students. This year, once again, we will need to order new Chromebooks for grades 3, 6, & 9. Matt Jaeger is working on quotes for these devices, but they will likely be around \$225 each for grades 3 and 6. Those in grade 9 are slightly more expensive based on their needed capabilities. Likely around \$250. With the management system on each of them, they will cost around \$50,000. This is for about 185 total, and I will likely have this on our next board meeting agenda in March.

### Staffing 24-25

- Substitute Staff

The district, along with districts in our area and across the state, is struggling to find substitute teachers and substitute associates in various positions. Some districts have gone to hiring substitute teachers as a contracted position. Internally, the administration has had various conversations about this for the future. We were not in favor of this at one time, but this may be something we need to do in the future to ensure we have substitutes available.

I won't be recommending this for sure in the future, but this is under consideration.

- Wages/Salary Comparisons

I shared some information on staff (non-teachers) compensation that includes comparisons and ideas/thoughts for next school year as we enter the contract/letter of agreement phase for the 2024-2025 school year. The Board had significant discussions about this at the meeting and will be reviewing this in future meetings as we prepare for contracts and "letters of assignment" for staff members for the 2024-2025 school year.

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**6:30 PM - Public Hearing**

The Bellevue CSD needs to conduct a public hearing as provided under Section 26.12 of the Code of Iowa for the purpose of hearing or receiving any objections to the adoption of the proposed drawings, specifications, and form of contract, and the proposed cost for the furnishing of all necessary labor, material, and equipment for a new elementary school for the Bellevue CSD.

This is the time for the public to comment on this agenda item. The Board will comment on the next agenda item.

No one was in attendance for the hearing.

**BELLEVUE ELEMENTARY  
BELLEVUE, IOWA**

**PROJECT NO. 23210000**

**SECTION 00 11 10  
NOTICE OF HEARING**

**BELLEVUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

You are hereby notified that at 6:30 P.M., local time, on February 12, 2024 at the Bellevue Community School District Board Room 1601 State Street, Bellevue, IA 52031, there will be a public hearing as provided under Section 26.12 of the Code of Iowa for the purpose of hearing or receiving any objections to the adoption of the proposed drawings, specifications and form of contract, and the proposed cost for the furnishing cost for the furnishing of all necessary labor, material, and equipment for:

**NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOR BELLEVUE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BELLEVUE, IOWA**

Proposed drawings, specifications, and form of contract may be examined at the Bellevue Community School District Office, 1601 State Street, Bellevue, IA 52031, from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

**APPROVED - Action by Board on Construction Project**

The Board needs to act on the proposed drawings, specifications and form of contract, and the proposed cost for the furnishing cost for the furnishing of all necessary labor, material, and equipment for a new elementary school for the Bellevue CSD.

We discussed these at our last meeting, and I recommend we move forward with them. Bids were accepted for these on February 8.

**APPROVED - Accept Bids**

At this point in the agenda, the Board accepted the lowest bids (Tricon Construction) that meet the requirements and specifications of the project. We will have contracts to sign for contractors at the March 2024 Board Meeting.

See the following information in regard to bids:





**Cedar Rapids**

200 Fifth Avenue SE Ste. 201  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401  
(319) 363-6018

**Des Moines**

100 Court Avenue Ste. 100  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309  
(515) 309-0722

**Iowa City**

24 1/2 S. Clinton Street  
Iowa City, Iowa 52240  
(319) 363-6018

**Madison**

301 N. Broom Street Ste. 100  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703  
(608) 819-0260

[opnarchitects.com](http://opnarchitects.com)

February 9, 2024

Tom Meyer, Bellevue Community School District, 1601 State Street, Bellevue, Iowa 52031

RE: Bid Recommendation for Bellevue Elementary (23210000)

Tom: We are pleased to report the results of bidding for Bellevue Elementary. On Thursday, February 8, we received five bids for the project. You can review the specifics of the bid results on the attached Bid Tab.

After review of the bids, we recommend that the Bellevue School Board accept the following bid from Tricon Construction Group:

<b>Base Bid</b> .....	<b>\$ 11,685,000.00</b>
<b>Alternate #1 (Motorized Bleachers)</b> .....	<b>\$ 47,000.00</b>
<b>Alternate #2 (Additional Drive lane and Parking)</b> .....	<b>\$90,000.00</b>

It is OPN's recommendation the Board accept the above project costs for the below total construction cost.

<b>Total</b> .....	<b>\$ 11,822,000.00</b>
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Upon direction from the Bellevue CSD, OPN will prepare a letter to proceed for Tricon Construction Group. Upon direction from the School Board, OPN will prepare a contract between the School District and Tricon Construction Group.

Thank you for the opportunity to partner with the Bellevue Community School District.

OPN ARCHITECTS

Roger B. Worm, AIA  
Principal

Attachments: Bid Tabulation



**BID TABULATION**  
 February 8, 2024  
 2:00 pm

23210000 Bellevue Elementary School  
 Bellevue Community School District - Bellevue, Iowa

General Contractors	Bid Bond	Bidder Status	Authority to conduct business	Add. No. 1	Add. No. 2	Base Bid	Estimate	Alternate 1	Alternate 2	Alternate 3	Unit Price 1
						\$12,047,082		Motorized Bleachers	Additional Drive Lane and Parking	Injection Well	Subgrade Stabilization with Crushed Rock \$/CU
Bruce Builders Eldridge, IA	X	X	X	X	X	\$11,820,000		\$45,000	\$87,000	\$365,000	\$75
Conlon Construction Dubuque, IA	X	X	X	X	X	\$12,229,000		\$15,000	\$84,000	\$345,000	\$70
Portzen Construction Dubuque, IA	X	X	X	X	X	\$11,740,000		\$41,000	\$85,000	\$355,000	\$70
Tricon Construction Dubuque, IA	X	X	X	X	X	\$11,685,000		\$47,000	\$90,000	\$400,000	\$64
Unzeitig Construction Cedar Rapids, IA	X	X	X	X	X	\$11,767,000		\$39,900	\$115,800	\$355,000	\$70

**Comments from Building Principals, Superintendent, and Board Members**

**Adjourn**

The next board meeting will be on Monday, March 11 at 6:30 PM.



## RSAI Legislative Update February 8, 2024

This RSAI Weekly Report from the 2024 Legislative Session includes:

- RSAI Priorities Status
- Governor's Teacher Salary and AEA Overhaul Conversations Continue
- RSAI Town Hall on Monday
- DE authority over AEAs in IC 273
- Committee Action
- Subcommittee Action
- Advocacy Actions
- Links to Advocacy Resources

### RSAI Priorities PK, SSA, Open Enrollment Deadlines and School Start Date

- **SF 2075 PK Weighting:** allows schools to count students below 185% of the FPL for PK weighting, phasing in from 0.5, to 0.75 to 1.0 over three years. Requires instructional hours to match (10, 15, 20). Approved 3-0. RSAI supports as a priority.
- **HF 2353 PK Weighting** was introduced in the House and assigned to a Subcommittee of Reps. Stone, Ehler and Gehlbach, with a meeting scheduled for Feb. 13 at noon. This bill is different, still allows a weighting of 1.0 for students below 185% of the federal poverty level, requires 24 hours of instruction for those students. However, it also allows ESAs for nonpublic school preschools at 0.5 of the state cost per pupil. RSAI has not yet registered on this policy.
- **SF 2258 School Foundation Aid:** No number in the bill, as it simply states that the legislature will enact SSA during the 2024 Session. The bill was approved in the Senate Education Committee and is assigned to the Senate Calendar. RSAI is registered opposed. The SSA increase must at least meet inflation and be set in a timely manner.
- **SF 2011 Open Enrollment Deadlines:** reinstates a March 1 open enrollment deadline and specifies good cause exceptions to the deadline. Allows an open enrollment requested after the deadline without good cause to proceed if both the sending and receiving school boards agree. The bill is awaiting action by the full Senate Education Committee. RSAI supports.
- **SF 2010 School Start Date:** allows schools to start their Fall calendar beginning no earlier than the Tuesday following the conclusion of the state fair. The Subcommittee recommended amendment and moving the bill to the full Education Committee. RSAI supports. This action is also a provision of the Governor's Charter School bill described below. Although RSAI supports the start date flexibility, we are registered opposed to the Charter school provisions.

**Teacher Pay and AEA Overhaul Governor's Bill Status:** See last week's report for a full description of the bill and provisions that RSAI has suggested. We anticipate that the House and Senate will each release their proposals on Teacher Pay and AEA changes, which are anticipated to be less drastic than the Governor's proposal. We continue to advocate for improvement in the bill:

- 1) A study by a credible education research organization to consider how Iowa's model of identifying students with disabilities as being discrepant from their peers impacts test scores, services provided for students, costs of special education services, and student outcomes.
- 2) A sensible timeline that allows planning for local districts, for AEAs and for the Department. A timeline of just a few months has created chaos and discomfort for staff currently providing

services. If change is going to happen, it needs to allow time for local decision-makers to be thoughtful.

- 3) Restore funding for educational services and media services. If legislators believe that the media services are no longer needed, it would be prudent to shift this resource to cyber security, data protection, and technology costs that have grown as the need for delivery of films to schools has decreased.
- 4) Less shift of power to the DE. We support local control, including retention of flow-through dollars for media services, later for educational services, and after sufficient time, study, and stakeholder input, perhaps consider changes for special education based on good information.
- 5) Rural school advocates encourage the legislature to support smaller and rural schools with sufficient funding and a safety net for high-cost students.
- 6) Clarity in the numbers – school leaders need to be able to verify estimates of funds retained by local leaders, those maintained in AEAs (\$177 million in federal funding for child find and early access), and those that are carved off for and state oversight are traceable and tie out to our school accounting/revenues.

RSAI is registered opposed to the and await amendments or new legislation in the House and Senate. See the RSAI Jan. [28 Call to Action: Amendment to Governor's AEA & Teacher Pay Bill: Not Much Has Changed](#) for additional information and talking points. Please let us know what member suggestions you might have to any proposals to further improve outcomes for students with special needs and provide needed services for Iowa school districts. Also, see the Feb. 2 [RSAI Weekly Report](#) for information about the Guidehouse Report on Special Education, NAEP data, and other concerns.

Join us for an RSAI Town Hall on Monday, February 12 at Noon to learn all of the details of the Governor's AEA Overhaul and Teacher Pay bill, how that's being received at the Capitol, how RSAI's voice is being heard, and share your feedback, concerns and suggestions. This Zoom Session requires registration using the link below. A unique link to join the Town Hall will be emailed to you after you register. [Register for the RSAI Town Hall](#)

### **DE and State Board of Education Authority Over AEAs**

A quick review of current Iowa Code section [273](#) shows how much authority the DE already has to approve or direct AEA programs and services. The Code section references the Director of the DE 14 times and the State Board of Education 72 times. Here are some examples:

- 273.2 (2) AEA public hearing about the purchase, lease or lease-purchase of property, approval of the AEA board and the State BOE. 273.14 Emergency Repairs: following a disaster, not required to competitively bid, but must be approved by the State BOE or its designee.
- 273.2 (5) AEA board may provide other educational programs and services as approved by the State BOE. (9) AEA board shall jointly develop a 3-year statewide strategic plan that supports goals adopted by the state BOE. AEAs provide the state BOE with annual updates on performance measures.
- 273.3 (5) Be authorized, subject to State BOE rules, to provide directly or by contract with public or private agencies for sped programs and services, media services and education program and services required by the local boards via contracts, including with out of-state public and private entities if compliant with state BOE rules.

- 273.3 (8) Be authorized, subject to the approval of the DE director, to enter into agreements for the joint use of personnel, buildings, facilities, supplies and equipment with school corporations deemed necessary to provide authorized programs and services.
- 273.3 (9) Be authorized to make application for, accept and expend state and federal funds available for programs providing education benefits approved by the Director of the DE, and cooperate with the DE in the manner provided in federal-state plans or department rules in the effectuation and administration of programs approved by the Director, or approved by other education agencies, which agencies have been approved as state educational authorities.
- 273.3 (12) Prepare an annual budget, including a process of public notice and public hearings, which the local AEA board approves. Sends to state BOE, which reviews and shall, before May 1, grant approval or return the budget without approval with comments of the state BOE included. AEA board must resubmit to final approval by May 15.
- (23) By Oct 1, submit to DE a) contracted salary including bonus wages and benefits, annuity payments, or any other benefit for the administrators of the AEA. b) contracted salary and benefits and any other expenses related to support for governmental affairs efforts, including expenditures for lobbyists and lobbying activities for the AEA.
- 273.4 (3) Submit program plans each year to the DE, for approval by the Director, to reflect the needs of the AEA for media services as provided in section 273.6.
- 273.5 (6) Submit to the DE special education instructional and support program plans and applications, subject to criteria listed in chapter 256B and this chapter, for approval by Feb. 15 of each year for the upcoming school year.
- 273.6 (2) Program plans submitted by the AEA to the DE for approval by the state BOE of media centers . . . including evidence that the media center fulfills the requirements of subsection 1 (which includes other materials and equipment deemed necessary by the DE).
- 273.9 (3) Special education support services shall not be funded until the program plans submitted by the special education directors of each AEA are modified as necessary and approved by the Director of the DE according to the criteria and limitations of Chapters 256B and 257. (4) the costs of media services shall not be funded until the program plans submitted by the administrators of each AEA are modified as necessary and approved by the Director of the DE according to the criteria of section 273.6. Requires the State BOE to adopt rules under Chapter 17A related to the approval of program plans.
- 273.10 Accreditation: Includes timeline submission of information required by the DE. Use of an accreditation team appointed by the DE director to conduct evaluation, including a site visit. Team must have access to AEA's program audit report filed with the DE. Team determines if standards have been met and makes recommendations to DE Director and state BOE. Team shall report strengths and weaknesses and shall advise of available resources and technical assistance to further enhance the strengths and improve areas of weakness. AEA may respond to the team's report. State BOE determines if accreditation is met. Approval by the state BOE shall be based upon the recommendation of the Director of DE after study of the factual and evaluative evidence on record about each AEA program in terms of accreditation standards adopted by the state BOE. If AEA does not meet standards, DE Director, in cooperation with the AEA board, establishes a remediation plan to correct deficiencies, a deadline, and the plan is subject to approval of the state BOE. Team determines if deficiencies are corrected and reports to DE Director and State BOE, which reviews. If deficiencies are not corrected, the state BOE

merges the AEA with another or contracts with another AEA of other public education institutions for program delivery.

- 273.1 Voluntary Reorganization: Reorg plan must be approved by the State BOE. 273.27 Dissolution: State board shall review the dissolution proposal and shall either grant approval for the proposal or return the proposal with recommendations, which may be resubmitted to the state BOE with modifications. State board approves it before it goes into effect July 1.

### **Committee Action House Education Committee**

**HSB 585 School Start Date** by Education: allows the earliest school start date to be the Monday preceding August 23 if August 23 is a weekday. Passed by a vote of 21:1. Moves to the House Calendar. RSAI supports. Awaiting a new bill number.

**HF 2081 Ag Science**: allows instruction in agricultural science classes to count as science instruction for offer and teach requirements. Approved by the House Education Committee and moves to the House Calendar. RSAI supports.

**HF 2197 Holocaust Education**: requires schools, beginning July 1, 2024, to include education about the Holocaust, antisemitism, religious intolerance, personal responsibility, the leading role of the US armed forces, including African Americans, Native Americans and Asian Americans, in defeating the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich and liberating concentration camps and to provide PD to teachers, and requires DE to report for the year July 1, 2024 school district compliance with this requirement. Approved in the House Education Committee and moves to the House Calendar. RSAI is opposed, not because we believe it is wrong to educate students about the Holocaust, but because we do not appreciate very specific content language in the Iowa Code.

**HF 2377 Dyslexia Endorsement Grant**: Appropriates \$335,000 to DE for grants to help teachers obtain an advanced dyslexia specialist endorsement. Amended and passed 23-0. RSAI supports.

**HF 2278 Open Enrollment Transportation** by Education: strikes requirements that a sending and receiving district agree to arrangements for transportation for an open-enrolled student. Amended to only allow a receiving district bus into the resident district by no more than 2 miles, limited to only pick up students whose resident is closer to the receiving district's attendant center than their own, and limits to school districts below 2,000 students, unless a small district comes into the larger district to pick up students, than the larger district can do the same. Amended and passed, 20-2. Moves to the House Calendar. RSAI registration is now undecided (although originally opposed, the amendments minimized the potential for harm to rural districts). Formerly HF 134.

**HF 2389 Defining Sex**: Defines sex as biological sex at birth, either male or female and requires the use of this definition on birth certificates, including one issued subsequent to a gender transition. Defines men, women, boys, girls, fathers and mothers. Includes protections for someone born with a medically verifiable sexual diagnosis. Deems that separate accommodations are not inherently unequal. Deems that laws which forbid sex discrimination shall be read to prohibit discrimination against men and women. Includes requirements for gathering sex information in various vital statistics. Passed 15-8 and moves to the House Calendar.

**HF 2393 Student Dental Exam**: Exempts dental exams for students from restrictions on physical exams, which would otherwise require written, advance parental permission, similar to exemptions for hearing and vision. Passed 23-0 and moves to the House Calendar. RSAI supports.

**HF 2396 School Pronouns:** Prohibits schools and charter schools from disciplining employees, contractors or students for the use of a legal name or the failure to use a personal pronoun. Allows an employee who is terminated to sue for reinstatement and to seek civil damages in three times the amount of back pay. Passed 13-10 and moves to the House Calendar. RSAI is undecided.

#### **Committee Action Other House Committee**

**HF 2398 Public Officer Bond:** Allows a public officer to purchase an insurance policy in lieu of posting a bond. Requires the policy to substantially meet the bond requirements. Allows for the reasonable expenses of the insurance policy be paid for by the government to the extent the expenses of the bond would be covered. Allows an officer who fails to post a bond to be suspended for failing to do so, and to be removed after a reasonable time if the bond is not posted. Passed by the House Local Government Committee, 21-0 and moves to the House Calendar. RSAI supports.

#### **Senate Education Committee**

**SF 2105 Operational Sharing:** increases the maximum amount of additional weighting a school district may receive for sharing operational functions from 21 to 29 students. Unanimous approval. RSAI supports.

**SF 2258 SSA:** Establishes the state percent of growth and the categorical state percent of growth for the budget year beginning July 1, 2024, without a percentage (shell bill). Still contains the 30-day deadline, which is today. Senators discussed moving parts of the educational budget (teacher pay minimums, operational sharing, PK and others) as delaying the determination of the amount. RSAI is registered opposed. Governor Reynolds' budget recommended a 2.5% increase. The bill moves to the Senate Calendar.

**HF 255 Alternative Pathways:** specifies requirements for higher education programs that offer a Teacher Intern License, requiring pedagogy training and work under a teacher leader, including during co-teaching and planning time. Also creates a new Temporary Initial Alternative License, which would apply to completers with a bachelor's degree who obtain a certificate from only one provider, the American College of Teacher Certification, which is an online program without student teaching or practicum experience. Although required to have a bachelor's degree, the bill does not require the participant to have a BA in the content area of their license. Specifies the requirements for the program and that the BOEE treat this license equal to other teaching licenses. Moves to the Senate Calendar with a significant amendment which we will verify resolves our concerns. RSAI is opposed to the bill.

#### **Committee Action Other Senate Committees**

**SSB 3143 Governor's Work-Based Learning:** Provisions impacting schools: Division II defines work-based learning internships for high school credit and allows experiences outside of school hours, including summer. Division III allows a student-teacher experience requirement to be reduced to four weeks if the teacher meets certain criteria. This specifically includes apprentices in the Teacher and Para Educator Registered Apprenticeship Grant Program (TPRA) or other intern program with significant para or substitute teaching experience. Approved by the Committee 8:4 and moves to the Senate Calendar. RSAI is registered in support of Division III.

#### **Subcommittee Action**

**SSB 3157 Governor's Charter School, Open Enrollment, Facilities Right of Refusal and Start Date: Division 1 Per Pupil Funding:** Sec. 1 increases the state cost per pupil to the current year amount, and sends categorical funds, including TSS, PD, and EICS, combined to about \$2,000 per pupil to the charter school. (Does not specify TLC, since that is already included in open enrollment and charter funding per students. One of the theories of charter schools is that they can provide an education more efficiently and for less money than the public school system. The original charter school legislation sends

approximately \$3.9 million to a charter school for 500 students. This would be about a 25% increase, or an additional \$1,000,000 cut, to a public school for every 500 charter school students. Sec. 2 is about open enrollment funding, having those same funds flow students who open enroll into another district.

FY 2024 District Cost Per Pupil Amounts						
	Regular Program	Teacher Salary Supplement	Professional Development Supplement	Early Intervention Supplement	Teacher Leadership Supplement	
State Cost Per Pupil (SCPP)	7,635	654.68	74.15	80.76	368.53	
Minimum	7,635	574.34	48.10	53.16	368.53	
Maximum	7,775	917.81	102.85	124.78	368.53	
Range	140	343.47	54.75	71.62	0	
Districts at or below SCPP	223	97	178	208	325	
Districts above SCPP	102	228	147	117	0	

This chart shows the variance in categorical funds per pupil. Although the State Cost Per Pupil, or SCPP, is the floor for regular program district cost, the other categorical funds do have district below the state cost per categorical. The range is based on different allocation formulas when the funds were grants, rather than categorical. RSAI opposes the increase of funding for Charter Schools and has serious questions about the variance of per pupil categoricals related to open enrollment funding.

**Division II Right of First Refusal for Charter Schools to Lease or Purchase Underutilized or Vacant Property.** Removing the provisions of chapter 297.22 from any deal between a school district and a charter school removes 7 public hearings from processes designed to inform the public. RSAI opposes this division. Rationale:

Other options: sell the property and use the proceeds for a new computer center at the high school, rather than raise property taxes, or turn a building into upscale housing like the old high school in Sioux City, or into a glass factory in NW Iowa that provides jobs and becomes taxable property, or a community center or a daycare center. Taxpayers might prefer a very old building to be demolished and a new facility built in the same place.

School boards have to consider the use of facilities over time, not just on a year-to-year basis. Some school buildings that are vacant or underutilized for a few years fill up again when age demographics change in neighborhoods, so school districts are often advised to keep them at the ready for those enrollment changes. After a decade, older homeowners move out of neighborhoods and the school is now full of students again.

The bill does not include a requirement that the charter school must meet market-driven price for either purchase or rent, and of course, with the right of first refusal and no public hearings or bid for public sale, the school district and taxpayers may not ever know. The process should restore transparency, require bids and allow the school board to have a reasonable say in any transaction that involves facilities built with taxpayer funding.

**Division III: School Start Date flexibility to begin school the Tuesday following the end of the Iowa State Fair.** RSAI Supports this provision.

**Division IV: Charter Governance:** allows charter school board members to not be Iowa residents. RSAI opposes this provision.

A subcommittee is scheduled for Monday, February 12, 2:00. RSAI is registered as undecided.



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**HSB 633 City and School Partisan Elections:** This bill would require candidates for school board (and city elections) to participate in primaries, declaring a political party association. With so many school board elections having only one candidate, this really concerns many public education groups, who are lined up in registration against this bill. It was approved by the Subcommittee, 2:1, and moves forward to the full House Education Committee. RSAI is registered as undecided.

**HSB 672 Governor's Student Data System and Count Date:** Requires DE to provide a new data information system for reporting and collecting information, at no cost to the school district for the first year. Allows DE to charge up to \$12 per pupil for year 2 (both public and nonpublic schools pay the fee) and no limit on future year fee. Would allow districts to purchase a SIS module that would play well with the state data collection system. Also adds March 1 as a second enrollment count date and requires budget enrollment to be based on the average of the Oct. 1 and Mar. 1 enrollment counts. With new budget timelines, lots of concerns were expressed about this second date's workability for schools, DE and DOM. The Subcommittee moved it forward 2:1 to the full House Education Committee, but had lots of questions. RSAI is registered as undecided. See SSB 3156.

**HF 2254 Chronic Absenteeism Financial Penalty:** requires, if 20% or more of students are chronically absent, the DE withholds in the subsequent year the state cost per pupil for each student chronically absent. Defines chronically absent as missing 10% of days with no exceptions. Also requires the parent, school district, student if an emancipated minor, and county attorney to convene a meeting and put in place an attendance plan. Subcommittee moved it forward, 2-1, with an amendment to keep the conversation going about attendance. RSAI is registered as undecided, hopeful that legislators will remove the penalty and focus efforts and working with parents to improve attendance.

**HF 2299 Open Records:** authorizes a government to provide an open record in a reasonable format rather than the requested format. Does not required the government to supply a record that is available on the internet site of the government and allows the government to send a notice of the availability on the internet. The Subcommittee moved the bill forward, 3-0, to the full House State Government Committee. RSAI supports it.

**HF 2329 DE Review of High School Graduation Requirements:** requires DE to review HS graduation requirements, core content and core curriculum, and make policy recommendations. Requires the policy recommendations to include a plan to eliminate the use of core content standards and return to the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic and US History and Civics, to make Iowa's education standards the best in the nation, in gather input from relevant stakeholders including parents and teachers, to increase the quality of the instructional curriculum, find innovative ways to streamline testing, identify opportunities to equip high school graduates with sufficient knowledge of civics and US History so they are capable of discharging the responsibilities associated with US Citizenship, a play to make Iowa the most literate state in the US using systematic and sequential approaches to teaching phonetic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and text comprehension, a plan to eliminate the teaching of critical race theory and social emotional learning. The DE is required to public a link to their website that allows public and interested stakeholders to provide comments related to the comprehensive review, including comments related to each graduation requirement, core content standard, and educational requirement by grade level. The Subcommittee recommended moving the bill forward to the full committee 2:0. RSAI is undecided.

**HF 2330 Social Studies Subjects and Regents:** Includes a list of 14 items that must be taught in social studies in grades 1-6. The high school content includes a semester of civics with 9 specified items, United States History with 5 specific items, History of Western Civilization, Iowa History to be taught in grade 8, Economics which must be taught in grade 8, requires certain historical documents be incorporated throughout. And so much more. The Subcommittee recommended the bill move forward

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2:0 to the full Education Committee. RSAI is opposed. We value history and social studies, but oppose very prescriptive curriculum and content written into the Code of Iowa.

**[SSB 3158 Union Recertification Elections:](#)** Requires PERB to notify employer and union if the employer doesn't provide the list of eligible members timely. If the employer still doesn't provide the list, the union is automatically decertified in 5 days unless the employer submits the list or the union applies to district court to force the employer to submit the list. The Subcommittee approved the bill, 2:1, moving it forward to the full Senate Workforce Committee. RSAI is registered as undecided.

**[SF 2119 Truant Drivers:](#)** prohibits DOT from giving driver's licenses to students who are truant. Requires districts to report truant students to DOT. Does not distinguish age or grade level (for example, a truant third grader would also have to be reported and would be prevented from getting a driver's license until age 18. RSAI expressed concerns about equity and sensitivity for students from different cultural backgrounds and family circumstances. RSAI is registered as undecided. The bill moved forward 2:1 to the full Senate Education Committee.

### **Advocacy Actions This Week: School Funding, AEA Overhaul Changes, Quality Preschool**

**Adequate School Funding:** Contact legislators regarding SSA, the Governor's recommendation of 2.5% falls short of inflation. The teacher salary investment in the Governor's proposal is a really good start, but SSA has to keep pace or our staff and programs for students will be compromised. See the RSAI Position Paper for additional information. Now that the Senate Education Committee has a bill on the Senate Calendar, send senators a note or call to set SSA at least at the inflation rate, not lower than 3%. Additional Supports:

See the RSAI website for an [RSAI Position Paper](#) providing education funding history, comparing total Iowa education expenditures per pupil, which most recently ranked our state as 35<sup>th</sup> in the nation, now spending more than \$3,000 per student LESS than the national average, and including some talking points to help you advocate with your legislators. *RSAI's Legislative Priority supports an SSA rate that at least matches the inflation rate schools are experiencing.*

**State Foundation Aid and Per Pupil Funding Increase:** the Governor recommends a 2.5% increase in the state cost per pupil. The total state cost of State Foundation Aid is \$3.730 billion for FY 2025, an increase of \$62.3 million compared to estimated FY 2024. Increases the state cost per pupil from \$7,635 to \$7,826, which is \$191 per student. The 2.5% proposed increase also applies to supplementary weightings (Preschool, Special Education, English-Language Learners or Concurrent Enrollment, for example), to categorical funds (TLC, PD, TSS and EICS, for example), and also applies to AEA per pupil funding. The transportation equity payments also increase by 2.5%, an increase of \$759,000.

**FY 2025 [ISFIS New Authority Calculator](#)** allows users to set the SSA rate and calculate the impact for all districts for FY 2025 on your regular program (not including special education or other supplemental weightings or categoricals). Enter the SSA percentage increase and your Budget Enrollment and you can compare to the new money you'd receive if the SSA rate matched inflation (either 3.1% for CPI and 4% for Core Inflation) compared to the Governor's Recommendation of 2.5%.

**Governor's AEA and Teacher Pay Bill:** We believe that the House and Senate will each produce a bill of AEA changes and teacher pay soon. Keep the conversation going:

- RSAI leaders would support changes to special education and AEAs that are thoughtful, provide adequate stakeholder input, allow adequate time to make wise choices in transitioning to anything different, but most importantly, are focused on providing quality services for students with disabilities, no matter where they live in the state. Chaotic transitions will interrupt the quality and quantity of services for students with disabilities.
- Concerns about state oversight have been shared by the Governor's office and legislators. RSAI leaders support local control for school districts. We also want to ensure that all students, including those in smaller or rural districts, have the resources they need to serve their students. Keep improving the bill.
- RSAI supports big investments for the teacher pay provisions. We need to emphasize that our major concerns with HSB 542 are primarily related to the AEA provisions.
- Keep talking about this bill. We do not want to be surprised by a bill that appears later in session.

**Quality Preschool and Other RSAI Priorities:** in every communication, find a way to mention Quality Preschool, Operational Sharing and Teacher and other Staff Shortages. SF 2075 Expanded Preschool is assigned to the Senate Education Committee (phases up to 1.0 weighting for students below 185% of the federal poverty level). Contact Senators to support it. SF 2105 Operational Sharing increases the cap to 29 students. RSAI strongly supports this change. Find Position Papers and other resources on the RSAI Advocacy website to find talking points or other resources to share when you meet with policymakers.

**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 biographical information about legislators gleaned from their election websites on the ISFIS site here: [http://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/legislative\\_bios](http://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/legislative_bios). Learn about your new representatives and senators or find out something you don't know about incumbents.

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>

**RSAI Advocacy Resources:** Check out the RSAI Website at <https://www.rsaia.org/2024-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 [2024 RSAI Advocacy Handbook](#).

Contact us with any questions, feedback or suggestions to better prepare your advocacy work:

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