**UEN Legislative Update
March 17, 2022**

**Week Ten of the 2022 Session:** Both the House and Senate have a flurry of action to have bills survive the March 18 funnel deadline. School Choice and other policies on mandatory reporters and transparency take a back seat. This UEN Weekly Report from the 2022 Legislative Session includes:

* March 18 Second Funnel Deadline
* Shooting at Des Moines East High School
* Floor, Committee and Subcommittee Action Funnel Survivors
* Next steps on Sorting out the bills dead due to the Funnel
* Advocacy Action Steps for This Week
* Links to Advocacy Resources

**March 18 Second Funnel**

Most of the work impacting education this week was done in Committees, as both chambers worked to move along bills created in the other chamber, to survive the self-imposed March 18 funnel deadline. Many bills do not survive this second deadline, which means they are considered “dead” for the remainder of the Session. However, proposals in these bills can move forward through a variety of other bills exempt from the funnel. Ways and Means (tax) bills, Appropriations (spending) bills, Leadership bills (both majority and minority leaders approve the bill moving), and always, as amendments to bills that have survived the funnel deadline. No idea is truly dead until the chambers adjourn *Sine Die* to end the Session.

**Shooting at Des Moines East High School**

We all pause and express our concerns and support for the students and families, staff and community at Des Moines East High School for the gang-related shooting that occurred in front of the school recently. We encourage community members, state leaders, and all Iowans, to come together and support the resources necessary to educate all students to success. This morning’s [Iowa Capital Dispatch](https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/briefs/they-should-have-been-in-school-reynolds-calls-for-education-system-change-after-east-high-shooting/) reported on Gov. Reynold’s comments yesterday:

In the wake of a Des Moines shooting that [left one teenager dead and another two injured](https://www.kcci.com/article/shooting-reported-outside-des-moines-iowa-school/39359495), Gov. Kim Reynolds said state leaders should be focusing on improving the education system rather than considering new gun control measures. “Let’s figure out how we get these kids in school, get them the education that they need and set them up to be successful,” she said. “Not set them up for jail or a life of crime.”

Reynolds instead advocated for better support within schools to prevent students from dropping out and getting involved in crime. Of the three victims and six suspects, Reynolds said five were not enrolled in school, and four were enrolled but not attending class at the time of the shooting. “I think the tragedy is our system, our educational system, is letting these kids down,” she said. “They should have been in school. We should be figuring out resources to help them stay there and to help them get an education and a life where they can take care of themselves and their families.”

UEN has been advocating for over a decade that resources associated with students at-risk are not allocated based on any measures of “at-riskness” and are insufficient to provide the needed services to engage those most at-risk of dropping out of school. We have talked about quality preschool, activities at middle school, fine arts programs, before and after school safe places, counselors and social workers, mental health supports, connecting students and families to a medical home, food pantries and other needed community services. Blaming this tragic act of gun violence on our education system is as wrong as blaming it on law enforcement or parents or any other single entity. In times of crisis, Iowans come together to support neighbors with life necessities. The families of both victims and shooters, the Des Moines East High Community, and all school districts where events like this could happen at any time, deserve a commitment of support and adequate resources from our state leaders.

**House Floor Action this Week:**

[**HF 2549**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf2549) **MH Loan Payments:** establishes a prescribing mental health professional loan repayment program in the College Student Aid Commission, similar to other loan repayment programs for health care professionals. Requires the professional to practice for five years. Gives priority to Iowans and members of the Iowa National Guard. Limits loan repayments to $40,000 annually and $200,000 overall (psychiatrists); $10,000 and $50,000 (ARNP); $8,000 and $40,000 (prescribing psychologist). Appropriates $1 million for the program to the CSC. Appropriates $1.5 million for the program. The bill was amended to include provisions on requirements for employment and added additional payment levels for buy-ins by service areas ($20,000 for a psychiatrist, $4,000 for a psychologist/MH professional, $5,000 for a PA operating under a psychiatrist or psychiatric ARNP.) The House passed the bill as amended 94-2, sending it to the Senate. It is on the Senate Calendar attached to [SF 2195](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=%20SF%202195&ga=89). UEN is registered in support.

**Committee Action this Week:**

**Senate Education Committee**

[**HF 604**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=HF604) **Educational Processes and Parent Mentoring for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Students:** will amend on the Senate Floor to remove the mandated task force, as the DE has already convened a workgroup of parents and stakeholders to inform their work, to add spoken word language and world languages to ASL and English Literacy (reading) to the options for parents to choose in supporting their children, and create a parent-mentoring program to help the 90% of hearing-parents to whom a deaf child is born better understand the challenges and opportunities ahead. The Senate Education Committee approved the bill unanimously, moving it to the Senate Calendar, with the intention to amend it during the floor debate. UEN is registered as undecided on the bill.

[**HF 771**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf771) **Bronchodilators:** allows students to self-administer with parent permission, allows (does not mandate) districts to stock and administer for an asthma or other breathing emergency and protects district employees who administer the bronchodilators from liability. Approved by the Senate Education Committee, moving it to the Senate Calendar. UEN is registered as undecided since this is permissive language, however, we have concerns about potential litigation if a district does not provide for the storage and administration of bronchodilators.

[**HF 2080**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf2080) **Shared Operational Functions:** increases the weighting generated by a shared superintendent from 8 to 9 students and allows an employee of the school to qualify for multiple shared functions, as long as the minimum FTE requirements (20%) are met. The Education Committee approved the bill unanimously, moving it to the Senate Calendar. UEN is registered as undecided.

[**HF 2081**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf2081) **Teacher Assessment (Praxis):** eliminates the praxis test requirement for either entry to a teacher prep program or to get a teaching license.The Senate Education Committee approved the bill unanimously, moving it to the Senate Calendar. UEN is registered in support.

[**HF 2083**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=HF2083)**: Tuition Grant (College) Definition of Eligible Institution and Teach Iowa Scholar Program:** will amend on the floor to more closely conform with the Senate version, but this bill eliminates the criteria that Teach Iowa Scholar recipients be in the top 25% of their class and be teaching in a defined shortage area position. The bill requires that half the scholarships go to districts, charter or private schools below and half above 1,200 enrolled students. The bill also requires the Iowa Tuition Grant Program is limited to institutions in Iowa prior to Jan. 1, 2020. The Education Committee approved the bill, moving it to the Senate Calendar. Similar provisions are included in SF 2202, detailed below, which was also approved by the Senate Ways and Means Committee this week. UEN is registered in support of this bill concerning the Teach Iowa Loan Program and has no position on the Iowa Tuition Grants.

[**HF 2398**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=HF2398)**: Permanent Masters/Doctorate License:** the bill creates a permanent educator license for higher degreed educators, requires a background check every five years and eliminates the requirement for Masters’ and Doctorate level educators from additional CEU’s for licensure. Senator Sinclair described the amendment she will offer during debate in the full Senate, to still require a license to be rechecked every 5 years, so a background check and registry check is done by BOEE in the process, but to no longer require Masters’ and higher-level educators to participate in CEU’s. Instead, the evaluator of the higher degreed educator can sign off on the educator’s professional development. The Senate Education Committee approved the bill unanimously, moving it to the Senate Calendar, with intention to amend it during the floor debate. UEN is registered as undecided.

[**HF 2412**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf2412) **Radon Testing and Mitigation:** requires testing and mitigation, allows SAVE to pay for both by board action (without including in the revenue purpose statement), exempts buildings if construction, renovation or a building closure will happen in the next 5 years. The Senate Education Committee approved the bill unanimously, moving it to the Senate Calendar. UEN is registered in support.

[**HF 2495**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf2495) **Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Scholarship:** creates a program for students over age 18 with disabilities to transition to postsecondary, contingent on an appropriation. Requires the program to meet federal requirements and requires the College Student Aid Commission to set criteria and manage the program. The Senate Education Committee approved the bill unanimously, moving it to the Senate Calendar. UEN is registered as undecided.

**House Education Committee Action this Week**

[**SF 2197**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=SF2197) **Special Education/Private Schools Taskforce**: requires DE to establish a task force related to special education support for students at nonpublic schools. The House Education Committee approved the bill unanimously, moving it to the House Calendar. UEN is registered as undecided.

[**SF 2362**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=SF2362) **Electronic Notice, Posting and Signatures**: allows electronic notice of the sale and receipt of bids for public bonds, allows school board presidents to use electronic signatures, specifies that it is the district’s responsibility and not the board’s responsibility to administer the Pledge of Allegiance, and addresses the membership and voting units of county and city conference boards. The House Education Committee approved the bill unanimously, moving it to the House Calendar. UEN is registered is registered in support.

[**SF 2356**](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CJen%5CDownloads%5CSF2356) **Volunteer Substitute Teachers:** allows schools to engage certain individuals as volunteer substitute teachers without compensation. The House Education Committee approved the bill, on party lines, moving it to the House Calendar. UEN is registered as undecided.

[**SF 2081**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=SF2081) **Computer Science PD**: allows a recipient of computer science professional development funds to expend the funds during the fiscal year and through Sept. 30 of the next fiscal year. The House Education Committee approved the bill unanimously, moving it to the House Calendar. UEN is registered in support.

[**SF 2080**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf2080) **Student Health Screenings:** this bill prohibits school districts from administering or conducting invasive physical health screenings not required by state or federal law without written parent permissions. The bill does not prohibit a health screening in an emergent care situation or from cooperating in a child abuse assessment. The bill defines “invasive physical examination” as any medical exam that involves the exposure of private body parts or any act during such exam that includes incision, insertion, or injection into the body, but does not include hearing, vision or scoliosis screenings. Also defines Student Health Screening as an intentionally planned, periodic process to identify if students may be at-risk for a health concern and to determine is a referral for an in-depth assessment is needed to consider appropriate health services. Specifically excludes an episodic, individual screening done in accordance with professional licensed practice from the definition of Student Health Screening. The House Education Committee approved the bill unanimously, moving it to the House Calendar. UEN is registered as undecided.

**Other Committees:**

[**HF 2561**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%202561&ga=89) **Wind Energy Property:** deems that the special valuation taxation of wind energy property is in lieu of other taxation and continues until the 19th assessment year if the ordinance should be repealed. Defines repowering. Was approved by the House Ways and Means Committee 24-0, moving it to the House Calendar. The bill number was formerly HSB 704 and its companion , [SF 2366](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF%202366&ga=89), is on the Senate Calendar. UEN supports this bill.

[**HF 2298**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf2298) **No COVID Immunizations**: prohibits requiring a COVID Immunization in order to enroll in a childcare center, school or college or university prior to July 2019. Approved 10-5 by the Senate Judiciary Committee, moving it to the Senate Calendar. UEN is undecided.

[**SF 2322**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf2322) **Copying Records Costs:** requires copying costs for public records to be reasonable. Does not allow costs for legal counsel for the review or redaction of records to be included unless the legal counsel is reviewing information that is confidential. Was approved by the House Ways and Means Committee 24-0, moving it to the House Calendar. UEN is registered as undecided on this bill.

[**HF 2505**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf2505) **Mandatory Reports and Investigations of Misconduct:** requires school districts to form alocal committee to investigate teacher misconduct, creates civil penalties for administrators who do not report teacher misconduct, changes the BOEE make-up to include more public members and only four licensed members of whom only one can be an administrator, and sets some investigation expectations. The bill also requires school districts to check with BOEE if there are any complaints filed, including unfounded complaints, before hiring a teacher. Rep. Hite, the floor manager of the bill, reiterated his intention to remove the local committee and make other amendments, which he is preparing to offer during the debate on the House floor. UEN has suggested that the amendment remove the local committee, get more specific on which law infractions would trigger an investigation, reduce the number of public members and preserve the number of licensed members of the BOEE, remove the civil penalty for administrators not in compliance (licensure removal is sufficient). The Ways and Means Committee approved the bill on party lines, moving it to the House Calendar. UEN is registered opposed to this bill.

[**HF 2499**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf2499) **Transparency:** this bill, which contains the transparency and high stakes social studies test provisions of the Governor’s School Choice bill, HSB 672, was referred to the House Appropriations Committee, with a subcommittee of Reps. Thompson, Brink and Ehlert assigned. This referral to Appropriations makes this bill exempt from the March 18 funnel deadline. See additional details in the [UEN Call to Action Governor’s School Choice](https://www.uen-ia.org/system/files/Public/UENCallsToAction/2022.03.10%20-%20UEN%20Call%20to%20Action%20Vouchers%20UPDATE%20House%20Appropriations.docx) regarding our concerns. We expect these provisions to be amended significantly in the Appropriations Committee or when the bill moves to the House Floors. UEN is registered opposed to this bill.

**Funnel Victims:**

UEN is compiling a list of all of the bills that are now dead due to the first or second funnel deadline. We will post on the UEN Legislative page with status, including registrations and links to the bills. Stay tuned for more.

**Advocacy Actions This Week:**

* **Always start with a thank you!** See the [**UEN 2021 Legislative Session Successes**](https://www.uen-ia.org/system/files/Public/UENDigests/UEN%202021%20Lesiglative%20Session%20Successes.docx) on the UEN website and find one you are grateful for them accomplishing. Weigh in your support on the bills above that are moving that might benefit your districts. Tell your legislators and the Governor thank you for getting SSA decided at the beginning of Session so you can work on your budgets within the mandated timelines.
* **Funding:** now that SSA is done, **advocate with the Senate** to approve [**HF 2315**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf2315), which provides $19.2 million in supplemental funding to help schools with inflationary costs. Explain that federal pandemic funds are (pick the one or two that apply to your district): 1) already exhausted, 2) obligated but waiting for labor/materials/other supply chain issues that have slowed HVAC construction or simply no applicants for instructional positions, 3) local district must have the funds to expend first, and then seek reimbursement, which can take time to properly document and obtain approval and for all districts, the federal pandemic funds are to be used through Sept. 2024, but then are gone. Adequate state funding would provide sustainability for many of the programs districts have been able to fund with the pandemic funds, but only for a limited time.
* **Transparency Provisions HF 2499 in House Appropriations:** Continue to advocate with House members on finding a sensible policy for parent access to student materials and information about library books, that doesn’t create a costly software system and training nightmare for school staff to post all materials and lesson plans before the start of the semester. We also oppose the high stakes civics test for high school graduation.
* **Voucher Opposition in the House:** Continue to have little conversations with House legislators, but especially those on the House Appropriations Committee and reiterate key messages:
	+ ***Taxpayer dollars should not support private, religious schools.***
	+ Public funds require public accountability and transparency.
	+ Private and public schools do not have a level playing field. If privates are to receive public money, they must have the same regulations and requirements (accept all students, comply with education policy mandates, open meetings, public records, student achievement testing and accountability.)
	+ This is a slippery slope toward a costly an expansive voucher program.
	+ Iowa already has many parent choice options and financial support for private schools, scholarships and tax credits to help parents making that choice.
	+ The state has not been able to adequately fund one education system and should not commit to the hefty price tag of funding another.

**House Appropriations Committee Members:** HSB 672 Voucher bill is currently in the House Appropriations Committee with subcommittee approval. That does not mean that the full Committee will have the bill on a meeting agenda, but we have to keep watch.

The following links will take you to listing of committee members and their legislative pages, with email address and often home or cell phone number so you can easily connect with them. Remember to be respectful and explain the impact these bills would have on your school and education for your students. *Please be sensitive to using school email when contacting legislators who may prefer you use your personal email rather than school property for advocacy purposes.*

Find the links to House Appropriations Committee members and their email addresses here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/committee?ga=89&groupID=695>

Find other Representatives here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/house>

To call and leave a message at the Statehouse, the House switchboard operator number is 515.281-3221. You can ask if they are available, leave a message for them to call you back, or just leave a short message such as “**Oppose HSB 672 Governor’s School Choice Vouchers and Unfunded Mandate on Transparency**.” (Legislators typically return to the Capitol by noon on Monday).

**Connecting with Legislators:** To call and leave a message for a Senator, call 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 tell you email, text message or phone call is the best way to connect with them during the Session, based on their personal preferences.

**UEN Advocacy Resources:** Check out the UEN Website at [www.uen-ia.org](http://www.uen-ia.org) to find Advocacy Resources such as Issue Briefs, UEN Weekly Legislative Reports and video updates, UEN 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. The latest legislative actions from the Statehouse will be posted at: [www.uen-ia.org/blogs-list](http://www.uen-ia.org/blogs-list). See the [2022 UEN Advocacy Handbook](https://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/system/files/members/Public/UEN/UEN%20Advocacy%20Handbook%20-%20Jan%202022.pdf), which is also available from the subscriber section of the UEN website.

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

Margaret Buckton
UEN Executive Director/Legislative Analyst
margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com
515.201.3755 Cell