**UEN Legislative Update
Jan. 23, 2023**

In tonight’s action, the House amended and passed HF 68 Education Savings Accounts, with a vote of 55:45 (all Democrats and 9 Republicans voted no). The Senate’s version, SF 94, was amended to match. The Senate passed it 31:18 with 1 absent (3 Republicans joined the Democrats in voting no). The bill heads to the Governor, who will likely sign it as soon as it gets to her desk. In addition to the phase-in of education savings accounts and the public school district’s ability to retain some categorical funds for every private school student receiving an ESA, the bill, as amended, also:

* Provides limited additional flexibility in the use of categorical funding for teacher salary/bonuses, including talented and gifted ending balances.
* Removes the mandate to meet all of the requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 284 in order to receive Teacher Leadership and Compensation categorical funds.
* Extends operational sharing incentives until 2034.

We will provide a detailed description of the bill provisions with our reports later this week.

This has been a long, and with this result, disappointing, effort to resist expanded school choice in Iowa over the last three years. UEN advocates were engaged and respectful, and we are so proud of member efforts. This Session is just getting started with opportunities for good policy and a better SSA rate than experienced in recent years. It is more important than ever to keep building positive relationships so Iowa Senators and Representatives, including those newly elected legislators, can make good decisions for your students, schools and communities.

We will continue working hard to tell your story and provide you with the information you need to support legislation addressing adequate funding for Iowa’s public schools (State Supplementary Assistance, SSA), Iowa’s teacher shortage, weighting for full-day PK, and making sure that any policies on transparency and parent rights are workable for schools and good for students. Advocates who burn bridges lose the opportunity to stay in the game. So take a deep breath, focus on what’s next, and we can still make a difference.

Thanks for your hard work in advocating for public education, and for the work you do to educate your students every day.