**UEN Legislative Update
January 19, 2024**

This UEN Weekly Report from the 2024 Legislative Session includes:

* Governor’s Press Release on AEA Overhaul
* Subcommittee on HF 134 Open Enrollment Busing
* IRRC Presents to House and Senate Education Committees
* Bills Introduced
* Advocacy Actions
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**Governor’s Press Release on AEA Overhaul:**

Gov. Reynolds issued a press release on Thursday, Jan. 18, announcing some changes to HSB 542 and SSB 3073 regarding AEA and special education overhaul.

* We appreciate the advocacy from all Iowans that has generated improvements to this bill and encourage open discussions and collaboration to continue to make it better.
* UEN had specially requested reinstatement of the Educational Services and Media Services funding to school districts. The $35.7 million in Education Services is currently collected from property taxes and flows through to the AEA for a wide array of services districts may access. The Press Release states that the amendment will reinstate the funding to school districts and allow districts to determine if they will contract with the AEA for services or find them elsewhere. The Media Services are not reinstated in the amendment but should be.
* UEN had also expressed concerns about the compressed timeline. Although not mentioned in the press release, the Governor’s staff confirmed there will no longer be an April 30 decision deadline to contract with the AEA for special education services.
* There are two other issues of concern for UEN. 1) Expanded concentration of authority in the DE which has yet to demonstrate expertise or competence to take on the level of authority demanded in the original bill draft. And 2) Lack of understanding about how Iowa’s system identifies students with disabilities for special education services, including a measure of discrepancy from a student’s peer group. This system is unique to Iowa and policymakers, school leaders and parents should know the impact this process has on the identification of students and provision of services. UEN supports the state contracting for an independent credible study of Iowa’s plan to provide the knowledge to make continued improvements focused on outcomes for Iowa students with disabilities.
* UEN appreciates the policy step in the right direction with this announcement, and is registering our position as undecided in recognition of the significant investment Iowa needs in teacher pay included in this proposal. We are a long ways from being able to support the bill with challenges yet to address but hopeful we can continue to make improvements along the way for students with disabilities and AEAs and school resources needed to deliver them.

See the [Jan. 12 UEN Weekly Report](https://www.uen-ia.org/system/files/Public/2024-Reports/UEN%20Weekly%20Report%202024.01.12.docx) for a complete summary of HSB 542 AEA Overhaul and Teacher Pay Minimums. Please let us know what suggestions you might have to the bill to further improve outcomes for students with special needs and provide needed services for Iowa school districts.

**Subcommittee in HF 134 Open Enrollment Busing:** Subcommittee members of Rep. P. Thompson, Collins and Staed met to consider HF 134, which would allow a receiving district to which a student open enrolls to send a bus into a resident district without the school board’s permission. UEN expressed strong opposition to this bill. It defies the state’s attempts at providing transportation equity and rewards an inefficient system already stressed with a bus driver shortage. The Iowa Code already requires transportation assistance or reimbursement, as determined by the resident district, for open-enrolled students from families below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Such a policy would allow a school district to carefully select certain neighborhoods and pick up students at the door, even those within the mileage limit of their resident district who would not qualify for transportation. UEN supported two amendments, to limit the distance a bus could come into a district under these circumstances to no more than two miles, and to require the attendance center in the receiving district to be closer to their residence than the attendance center in their resident district, both of which we believe will minimize some potential for abuse. UEN is registered opposed.

**Iowa Reading Research Center Presents to the House and Senate Education Committees:** Members of both Committees heard a presentation from Operations & Project Management Interim Director, Ben Walizer, and Education & Outreach Assistant Director, Nina Lorimer-Easley, Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC), this week, about the science of reading. They discussed the Center’s work on the importance of literacy instruction, the science of reading, research done by the Center on quality summer school programs, and strategies for improving secondary reading. The Committee members asked questions about teaching different students to read well, including students with dyslexia and special needs. The IRRC talked about their support to districts to find and implement instructional initiatives based on student learning data, and the support of the AEAs to continue to implement once the IRRC had completed initial training. The Governor’s recommendation for education policy includes a literacy initiative to train all teachers in the science of reading and to require literacy competency testing for new teachers coming out of teacher prep programs. Her plan also includes allowing existing teachers three years to demonstrate competency on the literacy test. No legislation regarding her plan has yet been introduced.

**The House Education Appropriations Subcommittee**: met this week and heard a presentation of the Governor’s Budget Recommendation by LSA staff. See specifics of the Governor’s Recommendation impacting education in the [Jan. 12 UEN Weekly Report](https://www.uen-ia.org/system/files/Public/2024-Reports/UEN%20Weekly%20Report%202024.01.12.docx).

**Subcommittees Assigned:**

**House Education Committee**

HF 2001 School Bus Removals P Thompson (C), Bradley, Buck

HF 2002 Printed Report Cards Collins (C), Hora, Staed

HF 2023 Reserve Officer Scholarships Ingels (C), Holt, Matson

HF 2060 World Language Gustoff (C), Matson, Stone

**House State Government Committee**

HF 2062 Open Meetings Fines Siegrist (C), Bossman, Zabner

**Senate Education Committee**

SF 2001 School Foundation Aid Evans (C), Garrett, Quirmbach

SF 2003 Vaccination Information Green (C), Donahue, Salmon

SF 2004 Dyslexia Endorsement J Taylor (C), Giddens, Kraayenbrink

SF 2006 SAVE Fund Enrollment for Certificate of Need Kraayenbrink (C), Salmon, Trone Garriott

SF 2009 Teacher Spending Accounts Evans (C), Gruenhagen, Trone Garriott

SF 2011 Open Enrollment Deadlines Cournoyer (C), Celsi, Salmon

SF 2019 FFA Grants Garrett (C), Cournoyer, Giddens

SF 2020 First Responder Tuition Rozenboom (C), Celsi, Kraayenbrink

SF 2027 Human Growth & Development Courses Rozenboom (C), Quirmbach, Salmon

SF 2041 School Administrator Contracts Cournoyer (C), Garrett, Giddens

SF 2044 School Cell Phone Use Rozenboom (C), Giddens, Kraayenbrink

SF 2047 School Vans Green (C), J Taylor, Trone Garriott

SF 2048 Social Study Freedom Week Kraayenbrink (C), Quirmbach, Rozenboom

SF 2050 AEA Charges Kraayenbrink (C), Celsi, Rozenboom

SF 2059 Holocaust Education Kraayenbrink (C), Quirmbach, Rozenboom

SF 2060 Free School Lunches Kraayenbrink (C), Rozenboom, Trone Garriott

SF 2066 IEP Sports Participation Kraayenbrink (C), Donahue, Rozenboom

**Senate Ways And Means**

SF 2053 Religious School Tax Exemption Schultz (C), Dawson, Dotzler

SF 2057 Elderly Property Tax Credit Dawson (C), Jochum, Koelker (Reassigned)

**Bills Introduced:**

**House Bills**

[HF 2045](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2045&ga=90) Minor Vaccine Information by Shipley: Requires school nurses give information on exemptions in communications to parents on vaccinations recommended by the DHHS and that the information be published on the internet sites for schools and childcare centers. Assigned to the Health & Human Services. UEN is undecided.

[HF 2053](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2053&ga=90" \t "_blank) Child Cardiac Monitoring by Jacoby: Requires the DHHS and the DE to collaborate on the cardiac health of children. Requires the development of forms to evaluate the family history of a child, to gather information related to the AHA screening for child heart health and on other related matters. Screenings: Requires a provider doing a well-child examination/athlete physical to do a child heart evaluation. Requires the provider to send a signed certificate to DIAL regarding this requirement and makes the failure to do so subject to civil penalties. Requires children to give signed copies of the screenings to schools before participating in interscholastic/intermural activities. Effective after July 2025. Assigned to the House State Government Committee. UEN is undecided.

[HF 2055](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2055&ga=90) Ending School Vaccine Mandates by Shipley: Strikes the requirements for a child to be immunized in order to enroll in school or childcare. Requires the DHHS to give information on the risks of communicable diseases and immunizations to childcare centers and schools, to be shared with parents. Requires DHHS to work with the DE on rules and makes conforming changes. Assigned to the House Health and Human Services Committee. UEN is opposed.

[HF 2056](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2056&ga=90) Childcare Supervision By Teens by Sorenson: Requires the DHHS to amend its rules to allow childcare center employees who are at least 16 to supervise children up to the age of 5, provided that at least two other employees over the age of 18 are present at the center. Assigned to the House Health & Human Services Committee with a subcommittee of Wood, Baeth, and Best. UEN is undecided.

[HF 2059](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2059&ga=90) Religious School Tax Exemption by Gustoff et al: Allows the grounds of a religious institution and used by a third-party as school that offers instruction consistent with the religious institution and without rental payments to the religious institution, to remain tax-exempt, regardless of whether there is a lease in place. Effective on enactment. See SF 2053 Assigned to the House Health & Human Services Committee. UEN is undecided.

[HF 2060](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2060&ga=90) World Language by Gustoff: Prohibits the incorporation of gender-neutral language in High School world language instruction when the language uses a grammatical gender system. Assigned to the House Education Committee. UEN is opposed.

[HF 2061](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2061&ga=90) Teacher Union Membership by Gustoff: Requires schools to give notice to new teachers that membership in a union is not required. Requires the school to include a list of the unions (employee organizations) that represent employees in the district and includes a process for additional unions to be added to the list. Assigned to the House Labor & Workforce Committee. UEN is undecided.

[HF 2062](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2062&ga=90) Open Meetings Fines by Mohr: Increases the range of fines for violations of the open meeting law to $1,000 to $5,000. Requires a court to issue an order removing a member from a governmental body if the member has previously violated the open meetings law. Requires members of such bodies to take a course on open meetings and open records laws. Assigned to the House State Government Committee. UEN is undecided.

[HF 2063](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2063&ga=90) School MH Professionals by Isenhart: Requires all schools to have at least one health care professional with MH credentials available to assist students during normal school hours. Makes a standing appropriation. Assigned to the House Education Committee. UEN supports but would like to see an amendment with a waiver if schools cannot find, contract for, or otherwise provide a mental health professional with the required credential, including the opportunity to provide such a professional virtually at the ready to assist.

[HF 2068](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2068&ga=90) High School Government Instruction by Shipley: Requires High School government classes to include affirmative arguments against the use of transgender drugs and surgeries for minors, affirmative arguments for parental rights, the emotional harm of pornography and on the use of sexual themes by predators who are grooming students. Assigned to the House Education Committee. UEN is opposed.

[HF 2069](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2069&ga=90) High School Social Studies Instruction by Shipley: Requires High School students to be able to write out an explanation showing an understanding of the Great Depression, the Holodomor (Ukrainian famine) and the definition of money. Assigned to the House Education Committee. UEN is opposed.

[HF 2071](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2071&ga=90) Enforcing Vaccination Requirements by Shipley: Prohibits enforcing vaccination requirements unless the US FDA and the DHHS have determined that the vaccination is safe, with benefits outweighing risks and effective for its intended use. Assigned to the House Judiciary Committee. UEN is undecided.

[HF 2072](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2072&ga=90) School Administrator Teaching by Henderson et al: Establishes requirements for school administrators (principals, vice-principals and other positions) to teach classes in the district. Bases the requirement and frequency on the position (one class every two to three years, with elementary school administrators covering two subjects). Requires a BOEE disciplinary hearing for an administrator who fails to comply. Requires administrators to hold valid teaching licenses. Assigned to the House Education Committee. UEN is opposed.

[HF 2073](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2073&ga=90) School Chaplains by Hayes et al: Allows public schools, innovation zone schools and charter schools to have a volunteer chaplain. Does not require the chaplain to be licensed. Prohibits a school from requiring or coercing a student to participate in such activities. Assigned to the House Education Committee. See SSB 3092. UEN is opposed.

[HF 2076](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2076&ga=90) Supplemental Open-Enrollment Aid by Rinker: Deems it an unusual circumstance that allows a school district to request additional Modified Supplemental Amount (MSA) from the school budget review committee if the number of open-enrolled students in the district exceeds 35% of the number of students in the district. Excludes situations where the majority of open-enrolled students are online students. Creates a formula for determining the amount of aid. Assigned to the House Education Committee. UEN is undecided.

[HF 2078](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF2078&ga=90) Sports Officials by Latham: Grants immunity to sports officials in civil actions for their actions in supervising games. Excludes acts by the official that causes injuries or damages if the actions are malicious, intentional or grossly negligent. Makes an assault on a sports official with the intent to commit serious injury or with a dangerous weapon a Class D felony. Makes an assault that causes a bodily or mental injury an aggravated misdemeanor. Effective on enactment. Assigned to the House Judiciary Committee. UEN is undecided.

[HSB 564](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HSB564&ga=90) BOEE Grooming Investigations by DE. Strikes the requirement that BOEE investigations about the misconduct of a practitioner involving behavior that led to an inappropriate or romantic relationship be committed within three years of the conduct. See SSB 3050 Assigned to the House Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Boden, Gustoff, Kurth. UEN supports.

[HSB 566](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HSB566&ga=90) BOEE Investigation Reporting by DE: Requires the BOEE to include the number of investigations of school employees who are not licensed or holders of certificates or authorizations that are referred to law enforcement in its annual reports. Includes protections for personal information. Assigned to the House Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Gustoff (C), Boden, Madison. UEN supports.

[HSB 567](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HSB567&ga=90) Investigation Protections by DE: Extends the confidentiality protections for investigations by the BOEE for license holders to non-license holders. Requires the BOEE to report investigative information that indicates a crime has been committed to law enforcement, despite any confidentiality protections. See SSB 3043. Assigned to the House Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Boden, Cahill, Gustoff. UEN supports.

[HSB 568](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HSB568&ga=90) Reporting Grooming Behavior by DE: Adds discipline for grooming behavior to the kinds of discipline taken against teachers that must be reported to the BOEE. Defines such behavior by teachers. See SSB 3042 Assigned to the House Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Boden, Gustoff, Steckman. UEN is undecided.

[HSB 569](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HSB569&ga=90) Education Leadership Reporting Strikes the reporting requirements for the Commission on Education Leadership and Compensation to the DE, Legislature and the Governor. See SSB 3047 Assigned to the House Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Fry (C), Cahill, Gelbach. UEN is undecided.

[HSB 570](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HSB570&ga=90) Transitional Coaching by DE: Strikes the requirement that a person seeking a transitional coaching authorization complete a course on professional responsibilities developed by the BOEE. See SSB 3049. Assigned to the House Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Wheeler, Ehlert, T Moore. UEN is undecided.

[HSB 571](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HSB571&ga=90) State Academic Standards: Removes the requirements that the State Board of Education adopt rules to establish academic core standards and instead, requires the state BOE to adopt the standards. Makes prior rules effective until rescinded. See SSB 3045 Assigned to the House Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Wheeler (C), Matson, Stone. UEN supports.

[HSB 585](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HSB585&ga=90) School Start Date: Allows the earliest school start date to be the Monday preceding August 23 if August 23 is a weekday. The bill is assigned to the House Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Johnson (C), Buck, Gehlbach. UEN supports.

[HSB 586](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HSB586&ga=90) Character Education: Requires public and charter schools (but not private schools) to teach character education in grades 1-12. Requires the secondary program to include one unit of charter education and specifies that the Iowa Code 25B.2 subsection 3 unfunded mandate does not apply. Establishes criteria for a curriculum and for assessments of student performance. Assigned to the House Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Holt, Hora, Madison. UEN is opposed.

[HSB 587](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HSB587&ga=90) National Anthem In Social Studies Classes: Requires social studies instruction in 1-12 include a week of study on the national anthem and how to love and honor the national anthem, principles of the US, the sacrifices of the founders and the contributions of the armed forces. Requires students and teachers to stand for the singing of the national anthem. Allows schools to require teachers and students to sing the entire national anthem before school events. Prohibits compelling students and teachers to participate. The bill is assigned to the House Education Committee with a subcommittee of Stone, Cahill, P Thompson. UEN is opposed.

[HSB 593](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HSB593&ga=90) Public Improvement Exceptions: Excludes emergency work, repairs and maintenance done by the agent of a government body from the definition of public improvement in regard to public construction bidding for purposes of Iowa Code chapter 26 public construction bidding to exclude emergency work, repair work, and maintenance work performed by agents of a governmental entity. By operation of law, the bill affects the term “public improvement” as used in Code chapter 26A (guaranteed maximum price contracts) and in Code sections 8.46 (lease-purchase reporting); 260C.38 (community college lease-purchase contracts); 278.1 (school district lease-purchase contracts); 297.7 (construction, renovation, and repair of school buildings); 298.3 (school district bond levy revenue); 314.1B (bid threshold subcommittees); and others impacting cities, community colleges and counties. The bill is assigned to the House State Government Committee with a subcommittee of Young, Gjerde, Wulf. UEN supports.

**Senate Bills**

[SF 2047](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF2047&ga=90) School Vans by Dawson: Excludes vehicles with a capacity of no more than 12, including the driver, from the definition of school bus and allows such vehicles to be used to transport students for activities and other matters, subject to current rules on school vehicles. Requires the DE to adopt rules on the use of vehicles modified to accommodate wheelchairs, with or without a ramp. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee with a Subcommittee of J Taylor, Green, Trone Garriott. UEN supports.

[SF 2048](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF2048&ga=90) Social Study Freedom Week by Zaun: Requires social studies instruction in 1-12 include a week of study on the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights (Freedom Week). Requires a recital of portions of the Declaration. Prohibits censoring religious references of the founders. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee. UEN is opposed.

[SF 2049](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF2049&ga=90) Defined Concepts II by Salmon: Prohibits schools, including public universities, and government bodies from offering curriculum or training that deals with certain defined concepts related to racism/scapegoating. Requires the BOEE to deny licensing to applicants who have violated these provisions. Authorizes parents or employees to bring civil actions for violations in schools. Awards attorney fees to prevailing parents and employees and requires the court to impose a civil penalty between $10,000 and $50,000 for violations. Authorizes civil actions against universities and government bodies that violate these provisions from employees and university students. Similar SF 81. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee. UEN is opposed.

[SF 2050](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF2050&ga=90) AEA Charges by Trone Garriott: Allows an AEA to charge a private school for the cost of materials and services provided to the school. Limits such costs. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee. UEN is undecided.

[SF 2051](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF2051&ga=90) School Stop Sign Fines by Sweeney: Doubles the penalties for failing to stop at a stop sign in a school zone. Assigned to the Senate Transportation Committee. UEN supports.

[SF 2053](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF2053&ga=90) Religious School Tax Exemption by Salmon: Allows the grounds of a religious institution and used by a third-party as school that offers instruction consistent with the religious institution and without rental payments to the religious institution to remain tax-exempt, regardless of whether there is a lease. Effective on enactment. See HF 2059. Assigned to the Senate Ways & Means Committee. UEN is undecided.

[SF 2055](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF2055&ga=90) Single Sex Restrooms by Salmon: Requires public accommodations to designate the use of multi-occupancy restrooms and changing areas for a single-sex, and according to the user’s biological sex. Allows the public accommodation to offer alternative facilities. Allows complaints to be filed with the Attorney General. Excludes the provisions from coverage under the Iowa Civil Rights Act. Effective on enactment. Assigned to the Senate Ways & Means Committee. UEN is undecided.

[SF 2059](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF2059&ga=90) Holocaust Education by Gruenhagen: Requires middle schools and high schools to incorporate instruction on the Holocaust in their classes. Requires schools to include education on the Holocaust in professional development courses. Requires the DE to report on Holocaust education in schools to the Legislature. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee. UEN is opposed.

[SF 2060](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF2060&ga=90) Free School Lunches by Weiner et al: Requires schools to serve free breakfast and lunch to students with a family income under 400% of the FPL in FY 2025; 500% of the FPL in FY 2026 and all students in later years. Creates a standing appropriation to cover costs not paid for federal funds. Effective on enactment. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee. UEN is undecided.

[SF 2066](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF2066&ga=90) Sports Participation for Students with Disabilities by Donahue: Deems that the lead special education teacher, and not a coach or athletic director, will determine the eligibility of a student with an IEP for sports and extracurriculars. Allows the teacher to consider the student’s attendance and academic record. Does not include students receiving special education with severe and profound needs. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee. UEN Is undecided.

[SF 2072](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF2072&ga=90) Paying With Cash by Edler: Requires schools to accept legal tender as payment for entry into sporting events and extracurricular activities. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee. UEN is undecided.

[SF 2075](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SF2075&ga=90) Expanded Preschool by Evans: Allows schools to choose between the 10 hours of instruction for voluntary PK programs or adding heightened programs (15 hours of instruction, increasing to 20 hours in FY 2026) for children in families at 185% of the FPL. Allows those families to choose which preschool program to place a child in. Makes changes to the formula for determining PK aid. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee. UEN supports.

[SSB 3068](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SSB3068&ga=90) State Online Assessment Tests: Allows schools delivering online instruction to do state assessment tests online. Requires the assessment to be taken at a time set by the school, with other management requirements. Assigned to the Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Gruenhagen, Celsi, Westrich. UEN is undecided.

[SSB 3069](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SSB3069&ga=90) Teaching Phonics by Rozenboom: Requires K-3 language arts instruction to include evidence-based early reading instruction that uses phonics. Prohibits any system teaching reading based on content (three-cueing system). Makes related changes and adds definitions. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Rozenboom, Donahue, Evans. UEN is undecided.

[SSB 3070](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SSB3070&ga=90) Entering Locker Rooms: Creates an exception to allow coaches of the opposite sex to enter locker rooms before, during and after games and practices. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Westrich, Gruenhagen, Quirmbach. UEN supports.

[SSB 3072](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SSB3072&ga=90) Charter School Activities: Requires that a student in a charter school be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities at the school in the district of residence. Allows a charter school under the group-state board model to make an agreement with other schools for interscholastic activities for its students. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Westrich, Gruenhagen, Quirmbach. UEN is opposed.

[SSB 3073](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SSB3073&ga=90) Governor’s AEA/Teacher Salary Minimums: See the complete bill description under HSB 542 in the [Jan. 12 UEN Weekly Report](https://www.uen-ia.org/system/files/Public/2024-Reports/UEN%20Weekly%20Report%202024.01.12.docx). Assigned to the Senate Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Evans, Donahue, Rozenboom. Although opposed to the original version of the bill, UEN is undecided based on changes announced this week.

[SSB 3092](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=SSB3092&ga=90) School Chaplains. Allows public schools, innovation zone schools and charter schools to have a volunteer chaplain. Does not require the chaplain to be licensed. Prohibits a school from requiring or coercing a student to participate in such activities. See HF 2073. Assigned to the Senate Education Committee with a Subcommittee of J Taylor , Green, Trone Garriott. See HF 2073. UEN is opposed.

**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 UEN Issue Brief for additional information.The deadline for deciding SSA is Feb. 9, so the advocacy window is short. Additional Supports:

See the UEN website for an [UEN Issue Brief](https://www.uen-ia.org/system/files/Public/IssueBriefs/UEN%20Issue%20Brief%20SSA%20adequate%20school%20funding%202024.pdf) providing education funding history, comparing total Iowa education expenditures per pupil, which most recently ranked our state as 35th 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. *UEN’s 2025 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](https://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/system/files/members/Public/New%20Authority%20Report%20FY%202025.xlsx) 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:** Contact Legislators with the following regarding HSB 542 and [SSB 3073](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=SSB%203073):

* UEN leaders are enthusiastic about considering changes to special education and AEAs that are thoughtful, provide adequate stakeholder input and adequate time to make wise choices in transitioning to anything different. Chaotic transitions will interrupt the quality and quantity of services for students with disabilities.
* UEN has concerns regarding the shortened timeline and lack of quality information to make an informed decision on next steps. We anticipate the amendment will remove the April 30 deadline for making a decision about engaging the AEA for special education services and support that change.
* UEN districts have not used the AEA media and education services to the same extent as other districts, but eliminating $63 million from the education pie and providing property tax relief without replacing the revenue is wrong. This leaves local districts and AEAs without the capacity to provide curriculum, materials, equipment, and educational improvement, unless we redirect funds spent on staff and other general fund commitments. We support the direction mentioned in the Governor’s press release to reinstate the Education Services funding to school districts. Schools are dependent on the Media Services funding, too.
* UEN has concerns about concentrated power without capacity in the DE for oversight and school improvement. Until the DE has a proven track record of improved customer service, responsiveness and helpfulness, districts need local control to meet the needs of students.
* UEN is concerned about the lost economy of scale, which will bring up the cost of special education services and we worry about the ability of smaller districts to meet the needs of their students if the AEAs aren’t vibrant. Continue to advocate for supporting the needs of all Iowa students.
* UEN leaders are evaluating recent information from the DE about funding that will remain with school districts. Please make sure the estimates include the $29 million AEA cut from FY 2024, the $20 million reallocation of funds to the DE for the new Special Education Division, and that federal funds estimates reflect new (and potentially lower) funding levels from the federal budget post COVID.
* UEN supports big investments for the teacher pay provisions. We need to emphasize that our major concerns with HSB 542 are primarily to the AEA provisions.
* We don’t agree with the overall premise. Iowa is the only state in the nation that identifies students with disabilities considering discrepancy in achievement from a peer group rather than just a diagnosis of disability (categorical identification). Until we understand how Iowa is different, we should not base policy changes on comparisons of NAEP scores or expenditures per pupil. We should include in the legislation a study from an independent, credible research source, such as the American Institutes for Research (AIR), to evaluate our identification system, our special education services, our student outcomes, and make scientific recommendations to improve.

**Quality Preschool and Other UEN Priorities:** in every communication, find a way to mention Quality Preschool and Teacher and other Staff Shortages. See SF 2075 Expanded Preschool by Evans above, assigned to the Senate Education Committee and contact Senators to support it. Find Issue Briefs and other resources on the UEN Advocacy website to find talking points or as resources to share when you meet with policy makers.

**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> 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>

**UEN Advocacy Resources:** Check out the UEN Website at [www.uen-ia.org](http://www.uen-ia.org) to find Issue Briefs, UEN Weekly Update Legislative Reports and Videos, 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 [2024 UEN Advocacy Handbook](https://www.uen-ia.org/advocacy-handbook), 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:

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