

UEN Legislative Update May 1, 2025

This UEN Weekly Report from the 2025 Legislative Session includes:

- 2025 Session: Timetable and what's left to be done before adjourning?
- Budget Targets and Budget Bills
- Bills Signed by the Governor
- Bills to the Governor (and procedural information on why SF 167 SSA is not yet signed)
- Property Tax Relief Round III?
- Cell Phone Policy Next Steps and Resources
- Advocacy Actions for the Week and Resources

Session Timetable

The Session Timetable posted on the Legislative Webpage shows Friday, May 2, as the final day of per diem payments for legislators. They will continue to work past tomorrow until the budget and any other priorities are finished. We hope it's not more than another week or two, but adjournment is dependent on the House and Senate (and Governor) coming to an agreement on spending limits.

They will pass the state budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1 before adjourning. There may be another conversation about property tax relief, although that could (and, in our opinion, would) benefit from an Interim of study and conversation. The Governor's Childcare Continuum proposal and HF 787 TSS/Education Omnibus are both on the House Unfinished Business Calendar. There may be other policies entangled in a final compromise.

Budget Targets and Bill Action

The House released its budget targets, hoping to spend \$36 million more than the Governor/Senate Republican compromise announced last week. Most of the budget differences are in the areas of education (K-12, higher education and DE). The House Appropriations Subcommittees and Appropriations Committee met late in the week to get some of the budget action started. This chart from the IA Legislative News Service, May 1, reports on the progress of the many budget bills, which each must be approved by both chambers following committee work (and signed by the Governor).

VOL. 61, BULLETIN #79

MAY 1, 2025

APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

AS OF THURSDAY MAY 1, 2025					
SSB 1235	ADMINISTRATION & REGULATION	PASSED Senate subcommittee 4/29	In Senate committee 4/30		
HSB 341		In House subcommittee 4/30			
SF 646	AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES	PASSED Senate subcommittee 4/29	PASSED Senate committee 4/30	In Senate 5/1	
HSB 338		In House subcommittee 4/30			
SF 645	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	PASSED Senate subcommittee 4/29	PASSED Senate committee 4/30	In Senate 4/30	
HSB 336		PASSED House subcommittee 4/30	PASSED House committee 5/1		
SSB 1231	EDUCATION	PASSED Senate subcommittee 4/29	In Senate committee 4/30		
HSB 337		PASSED House subcommittee 4/30	In House committee 4/30		
SF 626	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANTS	PASSED Senate 4/21	PASSED House subcommittee 4/30	AMENDED & PASSED House committee 5/1	
SSB 1237	HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	In Senate subcommittee 4/29			
HSB 342		In House subcommittee 4/30			
SSB 1233	JUDICIAL BRANCH	PASSED Senate subcommittee 4/29	In Senate committee 4/30		
HSB 340		In House subcommittee 4/30			
SF 644	JUSTICE SYSTEMS	PASSED Senate subcommittee 4/29	PASSED Senate committee 4/30	In Senate 4/30	
HSB 339		In House subcommittee 4/30			
HSB 334	(RIIF) REBUILD IOWA INFRASTRUCTURE FUND	PASSED House subcommittee 4/30	PASSED House committee 5/1		
HSB 335	STANDINGS	In House subcommittee 4/29			
SF 628	TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPITALS	PASSED Senate 4/23	PASSED House subcommittee 4/30	PASSED House committee 5/1	

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Education Appropriations and the Standings Appropriations Bills

Education Appropriations [SSB 1231](#)/[HSB 337](#): Bills have been through Subcommittee in both the House and Senate. The Senate approved SSB 1231 in the full Appropriations Committee. Both versions have many line items with status quo funding (no change from FY 2025.) UEN is undecided on the bill. Important highlights and differences from the [NOBA for SSB 1231](#) and NOBA for HSB 337 include:

	SSB 1231	HSB 337
General Fund Appropriation	Appropriates a total of \$1.026 billion from the General Fund and 11,056.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions for FY 2026 to the Department for the Blind, the DE, and the Board of Regents. This is an increase of \$7.4 million and 1.8 FTE positions compared to estimated FY 2025.	Appropriates a total of \$1.037 billion from the General Fund and 11,065.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions for FY 2026 to the Department for the Blind, the DE, and the Board of Regents. This is an increase of \$18.3 million and 11.0 FTE positions compared to estimated FY 2025.
Other Funds Appropriation	Appropriates a total of \$33.7 million from the Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund (SWJCF) for FY 2026. This is a decrease of \$325,000 from the current level of funding compared to estimated FY 2025.	Appropriates a total of \$34.0 million from the Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund (SWJCF) for FY 2026. This maintains the current level of funding compared to estimated FY 2025.
Standing Appropriation	Tracking includes standing appropriations from the General Fund estimated at \$52.7 million, including \$750,000 for Therapeutic Classroom Services, which do not appear in this Bill.	Identical to the Senate Bill.
TeachIowa Job Posting Board	New Appropriation of \$265,000 to DE to administer an Online State Job Posting System.	Identical to the Senate Bill.
DE Division of Special Education	\$10 million appropriation to DE for the Division. (SQ Funding, same as FY 2025)	\$5 million appropriation to DE for the Division. (\$5 million reduction compared to FY 2025)
At-risk Children Grants	Programs for At-Risk Children: Limits the standing appropriation under Iowa Code 279.51 for at-risk children to \$10.5 million. This makes inapplicable the General Fund appropriation of \$12.6 million specified in the section. Requires appropriated funds to be prorated among the programs specified under Code section 279.51.	Identical to the Senate Bill.
	Establishes a contingent effective date of July 1, 2025, for the limit on the standing appropriation (Code section 279.51) for at-risk children if SF 445 (Governor's Child Care Continuum Bill) or any other successor legislation is not enacted.	Identical to the Senate Bill.
Community Colleges	Appropriates \$235.9 million to community colleges, the same as FY 2025.	Appropriates \$243.9 million to Community Colleges, which is an increase of \$8 million.
Mental Health Training & Student Services	Appropriations \$4.8 Million to DE (SQ funding same as FY 2025) to be used by AEAs to provide mental health awareness training for educators and to support mental health needs of students.	Identical to the Senate Bill.

HSB 335 Standings Appropriations: Approved by a Subcommittee in the House. UEN is registered in support, specifically due to the \$14 million for education support personnel. (We did express our opposition and concern about continued cuts to AEAs and underfunding of ISL state share at the subcommittee meeting.) Includes the following of interest to school districts (Source: [NOBA for HSB 335](#))

- Appropriates \$14 million to DE to send to schools for education support personnel compensation for both FY 2026 and FY 2027. Requires school districts to report by July 1 the number of education support personnel employed by the district and other information required by DE. *(We are asking for an Aug. 1 reporting date. If the Governor doesn't sign this bill until 30 days after it's sent to her, it could be as late as the week of June 15 before the requirement is effective.)*
- Nonpublic school transportation \$8,997,091 (same amount as FY 2025).
- Instructional Support Levy - state match of Zero (same amount as FY 2025).
- Transfers \$21.9 million from the Taxpayer Relief Fund to the state General Fund for state foundation aid.
- Cuts AEAs \$25 million in addition to the \$7.5 million statutory reduction. Although this is the same amount of reduction as FY 2025, the process will be different. Since AEA funding now goes to school districts first, we expect this reduction to impact school district special education funds. It is unknown if the DOM will have the authority to reduce or prorate any of the reduction to media or educational services.
- Exempts charter schools from the electronic devices during instructional time ban.
- Standing appropriations compared to FY 2025 for ESAs and Charter Schools increased by \$97 million and \$14 million respectively. School Foundation Aid increases by \$106 million (after AEA reduction of \$25 million and using Taxpayer Relief Funds of \$22 million to offset state General Fund appropriations. (All three of these items will increase once SF 167 SSA of 2% is applied.)

	Actual FY 2024 (1)	Estimated FY 2025 (2)	Current Law (3)	House Approp FY 2026 (4)	Net Total (5)
Education, Department of					
Education, Dept. of					
State Foundation School Aid	\$ 3,665,805,198	\$ 3,787,626,194	\$ 3,940,370,054	\$ -46,881,303	\$ 3,893,488,751
Nonpublic School Transportation	8,992,784	8,997,091	14,005,269	-5,008,178	8,997,091
Sac and Fox Settlement Education	100,000	100,000	100,000	0	100,000
Instructional Support	0	0	14,800,000	-14,800,000	0
Education Savings Accounts - Standing	129,078,537	218,048,012	314,847,020	0	314,847,020
Charter Schools - Standing	2,437,772	5,200,000	19,682,777	0	19,682,777
Education Support Personnel Salary Supplement*	0	14,000,000	0	14,000,000	14,000,000
Total Education, Department of	\$ 3,806,414,291	\$ 4,033,971,297	\$ 4,303,805,120	\$ -52,689,481	\$ 4,251,115,639

Bills Signed by the Governor

- HF 782: Cell Phone Restrictions: requires school board policies restricting student access during instructional hours and modification of school safety plans. Effective date: 04/30/2025. UEN supports.
- HF 785: Allows up to one charter school board member to be a non-Iowa resident. Effective date: 07/01/2025. UEN opposes.

- HF 844: Changes eligibility requirements for financial institutions in which public funds may be deposited. Effective date: 07/01/2025. UEN is undecided.
- SF 171: Dissolution Timelines: Modifies provisions related to the effective date of school district enlargements, reorganizations, changes in boundaries, and dissolutions, and includes retroactive applicability provisions, primarily for Orient-Macksburg School district. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Applicability date: 01/01/2025. UEN supports.
- SF 574: Limits public improvement contract retention fees to no more than 3% (current law limits to 5%). Effective date: 07/01/2025. UEN is undecided.

Bills to the Governor (and a Procedural Issue)

There are over 100 bills that have been agreed to by the House and Senate that are enrolled, but do not yet have the indication in Bill History of “Reported correctly enrolled, signed by Speaker and President, and sent to Governor.” Until that signature from the House and Senate Leaders is complete, the bills are in limbo, not yet delivered to the Governor for her signature.

The following bills are in this limbo, awaiting final signature by the chamber leaders:

- HF 190: Allows districts and accredited nonpublic schools to administer online statewide summative assessments of student progress to students of online schools. UEN supports.
- HF 299: Requires school districts and child care to provide immunization exemption information. UEN is undecided.
- HF 316: Career education changes, including middle school career exploration and industry-recognized credential seals and certificates for high school students. UEN is undecided.
- HF 390: Allows physical examinations of personnel working in licensed or registered child care facilities within 6 months of hire. UEN is undecided.
- HF 392: DE authority to grant calendar waiver to authorize a year-round school calendar at an attendance center or school for students enrolled in grades 9-12 (K-8 already allowed.) UEN supports.
- HF 393: Prohibits DE from counting a student who drops out of school more than once in data compiled to determine Iowa school performance profiles, including how dropout students affect school performance grades contained in the profiles. UEN supports.
- HF 471: Expands concussion health professional definition to include a person who holds a doctorate in psychology with specialty training in neuropsychology or concussion management to assess student participation in athletics following a concussion. UEN is undecided.
- HF 706: Addresses open meetings and open records requirements, increasing penalties, and requiring training for local officials (including school board members). UEN is undecided.
- HF 783: Directs organizations that sponsor or administer extracurricular interscholastic athletics to create a conference realignment committee. UEN is undecided.

- HF 784: Governor's Math Initiative: Requires DE director and State BOE to create a state math plan, to provide materials to schools to help engage parents, changes math training requirements for teacher prep programs, requires the DE to identify and approve screening and monitoring tools, requires school districts to create individual math plans for nonproficient students and provide interventions in grades K-6. UEN is undecided.
- HF 835: Requires school personnel training regarding seizures, requires school districts to implement provisions related to emergency care planning, authorizations for assisting, and limitations of liability concerning students with epilepsy or seizure disorder, and requires the DE to convene a healthcare-related training for school personnel work group. UEN supports.
- HF 865: Changes the definition of harassment or bullying of students enrolled in school districts or accredited nonpublic schools by removing the mention of protected classes from the definition. UEN is undecided.
- HF 870: Requires school districts to not count absences for purposes of determining chronic absenteeism/truancy for students who attend a course in religious instruction that is provided by a private organization. Requires students to make up missed work. Limits the waiver from counting absences to no more than 5 hours a week. UEN undecided.
- SF 167: Establishes the state percent of growth and the categorical state percent of growth, for the budget year beginning July 1, 2025, at two percent, continues property tax replacement payments, modifies provisions relating to the regular program state cost per pupil by increasing the minimum SCPP by \$5, increases the weighting cap for shared operational functions from 21 to 25 students. UEN opposed the Senate Bill and supported the House proposal. This compromise fell between the two.
- SF 175: Requires school districts to incorporate pregnancy and fetal development into the human growth and development and health curricula including video images. Applies to school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, charter schools, and innovation zone schools to students enrolled in grades five through twelve. UEN opposed.
- SF 275: Requires the DE director to develop and administer a Purple Star School Initiative. UEN supports.
- SF 277: Compulsory education, truancy, and chronic absenteeism corrections, including specifying that absences due to weddings and funerals are not counted toward chronic absenteeism triggers, eliminates the mandate to mail a certified letter, creates sample policies for county attorneys, requires school engagement meetings for chronically absent students only if attendance is negatively impacting their student achievement. UEN supports.
- SF 278: Requires DE to provide technical assistance to school districts related to chartering career and technical student robotics organizations and authorizing high school athletic organizations to sponsor interscholastic contests related to robotics. UEN supports.

- SF 369: Requires students to pass the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Naturalization Civics Test as a condition of high school graduation and high school equivalency diplomas. Allows accommodations for students with disabilities and English-language learners. Allows students to take the tests as many times as necessary. It first applies to graduates in the 2026-27 school year. UEN opposed.
- SF 583: Allows school districts to create school safety assessment teams and authorizing information sharing between certain governmental agencies. UEN supports.

Property Tax Relief Round III?

Although many have surmised that the property tax bill second versions by the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees are dead, there could be another version that shows up before the end of Session. See advocacy messages below and keep stressing to legislators the importance of thoroughly understanding the impact of any proposal on property taxpayers and local governments before voting on it. Stay close to your email inboxes in case information is shared should a new concept emerge.

Cell Phone Policies to Restrict Access during Instructional Times: Next Steps and Resources

Bill Provisions include:

- Requires DE to distribute model policies by May 1, 2025.
- Requires school boards, on or before July 1, 2025, to revise emergency plans (effective on enactment) *DE and IDPS are to provide support.*
- Board policies to restrict student use of electronic devices during instructional time (effective on enactment). *"1. Commencing with the school year beginning July 1, 2025, the board of directors of each school district shall adopt policies regarding student use of personal electronic devices during school hours that restrict student use of such devices during classroom instructional time."*
- Defines personal electronic devices and specifies exceptions (IEPs),
- Allows (but does not mandate) State BE to adopt rules (effective 7.1.25),
- The following components must be included in school board policies:
 - Identify policies and information related to various educational devices and technologies that will be made available to students for instructional purposes;
 - **Communication** methods during school hours, while participating in school-sponsored activities, and during an emergency situation.
 - Include protocols the district will use to **securely store** a student's personal electronic device when such device is in the possession of a school district;
 - Specify the **discipline** associated with a student's violation of the policies;
 - Establish a process for a student's parent or guardian to **petition the school district to allow** the student to maintain access to their personal electronic device during classroom instructional time if the student's parent or guardian can establish a legitimate reason re: student's physical or mental health;
 - **Exceptions:** Ensure that a student who has an IEP or 504 plan maintains access to the student's personal electronic device during the portion of the school day in which classroom instructional time is delivered **if the student's IEP or 504 plan requires the student to maintain such access.**

Review DE Model Policy for Restricting Student Use of Personal Electronic Devices During Classroom Instruction Time: The following was included in the DE's Education Leader and Superintendent Update April 30, 2025:

- [House File 782](#), which Governor Reynolds signed into law today (4/30), requires Iowa K-12 public school boards to adopt a policy beginning in the 2025-26 school year that, at a minimum, restricts the use of personal electronic devices during instructional periods. Boards have the option of restricting the use of phones in schools, including prohibiting the use of personal electronic devices during the entire school day.
- DE published a [Model Policy for Restricting Student Use of Personal Electronic Devices During Classroom Instruction Time](#), as required by the new legislation on April 30. *Districts can choose to use or adapt the Department's model policy or adopt their own policy to satisfy its responsibilities established by the legislation, including:*

Advocacy Actions This Week

Start with a thank you! Thank both Senators and Representatives for the SF 277 Chronic Absenteeism provisions, SF 583 School Threat Assessment Teams, and including funding to DE to reinvigorate the Teach Iowa job posting website for educators.

Property Tax Relief Proposals: Questions & Comments:

- Ask legislators to carefully consider any new proposals with a thorough analysis.
- Encourage a deliberate, careful review of the impact before jumping to change. It would be good to continue to work on these proposals over the interim rather than rush something through and discover an unintended consequence later.
- We appreciate the improvements in Version II of the bill, in the areas of PPEL and Debt Levies, including removing them from the levies limited to 2% growth. However, cutting those levies in half, when valuations will not double, would lower PPEL and debt levy capacity statewide. We have estimated that setting the Debt and PPEL rates at 2/3rds of their current limits would be close to revenue neutral statewide, but that would still lower those capacities significantly for many school districts. Carefully consider limitations in any new versions.

Connecting with Legislators: To call and leave a message at the Statehouse during the legislative session, the House switchboard operator number is 515.281.3221 and the Senate switchboard operator number is 515.281.3371. You can ask if they are available or leave a message for them to call you back. You can also ask them what's the best way to contact them during session. They may prefer email or text message or phone call based on their personal preferences.

Find out who your legislators are through the interactive map or address search posted on the Legislative Website here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>

Other UEN Advocacy Resources

Check out the UEN Website at www.uen-ia.org to find Issue Briefs, these UEN Weekly Update 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.

Bill Tracker

Check out our separate Bill Tracker for all the bill actions and details for the week, plus what bills are still moving.

Contact Us

Keep in touch with your questions, comments, and let us know about your advocacy actions.

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