



UEN Legislative Update May 9, 2025

This UEN Weekly Report from the 2025 Legislative Session includes:

- Budget Compromise Announced
- Property Tax Relief Round III through Senate Ways and Means Committee
- Bills Signed by the Governor or Pending Governor's Signature
- Advocacy Actions for the Week and Resources

Budget Compromise Announced

Legislators are working overtime, as per diem payments for legislators ended May 2. A budget compromise was announced Thursday, signaling intent to adjourn the Session soon, as early as next week. The Senate is in Session Friday of this week.

This morning's [Iowa Capital Dispatch](#) reported: "In a news release, House and Senate Republicans released spending figures from their budget agreement; a total of \$9.425 billion in state appropriations for FY 2026. The compromise is \$28 million less than the House Republicans' initial budget target and \$8 million more than Senate Republicans and Gov. Kim Reynolds' target released in April." Speaker Grassley, in his weekly bulletin to constituents, stated, "This total number is an increase of \$478.1 million over the current year's spending level of \$8.947 billion. This amount is an increase of 5.34 percent over Fiscal Year 2025." He reported on the House's priorities, including insisting on the \$14 million for schools for education support personnel, which is included in the agreement, as well as \$5 million for the DE's Special Education Division and a \$7.5 million increase for Community Colleges. The education budget was approved in the House Appropriations on Thursday, now [HF 1045](#). The Senate's version, SF 647, is on the Senate Debate Calendar for today, with amendment [S-3114](#), which is a strike after amendment to reflect the budget compromise.

The \$14 million for education support personnel will be included in the Standings Bill, which is in the House Appropriations Committee and not yet introduced in the Senate.

The Iowa Capital Dispatch article continued: "Rep. Gary Mohr, R-Bettendorf, the House Appropriations Chair, said the budget agreement will provide this funding for paraeducator pay, alongside some other House GOP funding priorities, through the Sports Wagering Fund. The state fund is where taxes on sports betting and internet fantasy sports are collected — which currently contains more than \$40 million. The one-time spending from this pool will go to these budget items for the fiscal year, Mohr said, with the expectation that spending on these programs will come from the state's general fund in future years when revenues increase."

Property Tax Relief Round III through the Senate Ways and Means Committee

The Senate Ways and Means Committee held a subcommittee on Wednesday. The full Committee approved an amendment and passed the bill on a strong bipartisan vote. The new bill, [SF 651](#), moves to the Senate Calendar.

UEN comments at the Subcommittee expressed thanks for the continued conversation and some improvements (the amendment lowered PPEL and Debt Levy limits by 30% instead of 70%, anticipating growth in valuation with phase-out of the residential rollback and immediate elimination of other rollbacks). However, the amendment removed the redirection of SAVE funding currently providing property tax relief through the Property Tax Equity and Relief Fund to instead pay for the State's share of assuming the additional levy formula costs. SSB 1227's action to return SAVE to schools would have provided between \$80-\$100 per pupil to be used for local infrastructure or property tax relief. This SAVE Funding would have offset the reduction in PEPL and Debt levies, at least partially, as the residential rollback is phased out over 10 years by the amendment. Provisions of the bill:

- Valuation changes impacting schools:
 - phases out the residential rollback, from July 1, 2026 through July 1, 2036, and specifies a very gradual increase in residential valuation that is taxed, beginning with 75% for assessment years Jan. 1, 2025 and Jan 1. 2026. The threshold increases by 2.5% annually until it reaches 100% in 2036.
 - The bill sets a new homeowner exemption limited to 25% of home value, not to exceed \$125,000.
- School Funding Formula Changes effective July 1, 2026:
 - Adds media and education services to combined district cost, funded by the State rather than property taxes.
 - Sets a lower uniform levy and eliminates the formula portion of the additional levy
- School Infrastructure Levy Changes
 - Uses SAVE funding previously sent to the PTER fund to offset the state's cost of raising the foundation threshold to 100%.
 - Cuts PPEL and Debt levy rates in by 30% and specifies that levies already approved by voters are limited to 70% of prior year value. Retains the process for local board resolution by April 30 to maintain a higher levy if needed to pay obligations or debt.
- Management fund provisions are essentially the same as the first bill, with limitations first in place for the year beginning July 1, 2027. Prohibits schools from levying for additional management fund if ending balances exceed 180% of the prior three years' expenditures. Phases down to 160% over time.

The May 8 IALNS bulletin reported, "Rep. Kaufmann (Chair of House Ways and Means Committee) said he will be working on property reform on Friday and hopes to have agreed-to language ready by next week for the last committee meeting of the session." See talking points below under Advocacy Actions and contact legislators this weekend.

See the updated [ISFIS Memo on Property Tax Proposals](#) which explains the amendment changes in detail. UEN is registered as undecided on the bill, but will review our registration once a fiscal note is published, providing some evidence of the latest impact on schools.

Bills Signed by the Governor or Pending Signature

Bill #	Description/Registration	Date Passed; Date Signed
HF 190	Online State Assessments: Allows districts and accredited nonpublic schools to administer online statewide summative assessments of student progress to students enrolled in online schools. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Support.	4/15/2025
HF 299	Immunization Information: Requires school districts and child care facilities to provide immunization exemptions information. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Undecided.	4/29/2025
HF 316	Career Education Changes: includes changes to middle school career exploration and requires DE to create industry-recognized credential seals and certificates for high school students. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Undecided.	4/14/2025 5/06/2025
HF 390	Childcare Employee Physicals: Allows physical examinations of personnel working in licensed or registered child care facilities within 6 months of hire. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Undecided.	4/15/2025
HF 392	Year-round Calendar Waiver: 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.) Effective date: 07/01/2025. Support.	4/9/2025 5/06/2025
HF 393	Counting Dropouts: 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. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Support.	4/15/2025
HF 395	School Bus Driver Training: Specifies that a school bus driver with a CDL must have a passenger and school bus driver endorsement (federal law.) Requires DE and DOT to develop the minimum requirements for entry-level training for school bus drivers. Allows school boards to require additional training. Effective Jan. 1, 2026. Support.	5/08/2025

HF 471	Concussion Personnel: Expands concussion health professional definition to include a person with a doctorate in psychology and specialty training in neuropsychology or concussion management to assess student participation in athletics following a concussion. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Undecided.	4/16/2025 5/06/2025
HF 706	Sunshine Law changes: Addresses open meetings and open records requirements, increasing penalties, and requiring training for local officials (including school board members.) Effective date: 07/01/2025. Undecided.	4/23/2025
HF 782	Governor's Cell Phone Bill: Relates to electronic devices in schools, requiring school board policies restricting student access during instructional hours and school safety plans. Includes model policies by DE and specifies required components of school board policies. Effective date: 04/30/2025. Support.	4/8/2025 4/30/2025
HF 783	Conference Realignment Committees: Directs organizations that sponsor or administer extracurricular interscholastic athletics to create a conference realignment committee. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Undecided.	3/25/2025
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 DE to identify and approve screening/monitoring tools, requires school districts to create individual math plans for nonproficient students and provide interventions in grades K-6. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Undecided.	4/7/2025
HF 785	Charter School Boards: Allows up to one charter school board member to be a non-Iowa resident. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Opposed.	4/9/2025 4/25/2025
HF 787	Governor's Education Omnibus Bill: Requires TSS calculations necessary to meet new minimums including employer share of FICA and IPERS, allows for experience error correction, provides that growth from SSA be applied to the state TSS per pupil and added to district TSS per pupil amounts, recreates the TeachIowa Job posting site, a new Risk pool for high cost out-of-state special education placements (off top of state aid), sets a minimum \$50K pay for full time retired teachers returning to the classroom, and provides for Student teaching flexibility for Intern Teachers.	5/8/2025

	Effective date: on enactment for the TSS changes, for all other provisions, effective 07/01/2025. Support.	
HF 835	Seizure Disorder Training and safety plans: Requires school personnel training regarding seizures. Requires districts to implement provisions related to emergency care planning, authorizations for assisting. Limits liability concerning helping students with epilepsy or seizure disorder, and requires DE to convene a health care-related training for school personnel work group. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Support.	4/28/2025
HF 844	Public Funds Depositories: changes eligibility requirements for financial institutions in which public funds may be deposited. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Undecided.	4/7/2025 5/06/2025
HF 865	Bullying and Harassment Definition: Changes the definition of harassment or bullying of students enrolled in school districts or accredited nonpublic schools by removing mention of protected classes from the definition. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Undecided.	4/29/2025
HF 870	Religious Instruction Private Courses: Requires school districts to not count absences for purposes of determining chronic absenteeism/truancy for students in a religious instruction course 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. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Undecided.	4/15/2025
SF 167	SSA State Per Pupil Growth: 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. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Supported the House's version. Opposed the Senate's (SF 167 before amendment.)	4/8/2025
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. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Applicability date: 01/01/2025. Support	2/20/2025 3/12/2025

SF 175	Fetal Development Curriculum: 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. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Opposed	4/28/2025
SF 275	Purple Star: Requires the DE director to develop and administer a purple star school initiative to recognize districts providing excellent support for military families. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Support.	4/8/2025 5/02/2025
SF 277	Chronic Absenteeism Clean-up: Specifies 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. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Support.	4/17/2025 5/06/2025
SF 278	Robotics Programs: 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. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Support.	3/4/2025
SF 369	Civics Test: 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. First applies to graduates in the 2026-27 school year. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Opposed.	4/17/2025
SF 574	Retention Limits: Lowers the public improvement contract retention fees to no more than 3% (current law 5%). Effective date: 07/01/2025. Undecided.	4/15/2025 4/25/2025
SF 583	School Safety Assessment Teams: Allows school districts to create school safety assessment teams and authorizing information sharing between certain governmental agencies. Effective date: 07/01/2025. Support.	4/21/2025 5/06/2025

Advocacy Actions This Week

- **Start with a thank you!** Thank Legislators (and the Governor) for HF 787 Education Omnibus, which includes TSS and for agreeing to include \$14 million for education support personnel in their budget agreement.
- Have one more conversation about property tax overhaul. We appreciate the improvements in Version II of the bill. However, cutting PPEL and Debt levies by 30% on July 1, 2026, coinciding with a phased-out approach to valuation, would initially lower PPEL and debt levy capacity statewide. The homestead exemption also plays into the mix.
- Management Fund limitations could be a problem. The school General Fund can be backed by up to 20% cash reserve before school districts are prohibited from levying more. Unlike the General Fund, however, the Management Fund does not have predictable expenditures. Explain the nature of risk management and why a large carry forward balance might be necessary.
- Encourage a deliberate process to see the numbers and check back in with constituents.
- Reach out if you have a legislative visit scheduled for tips on relevant questions.

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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