



UEN Legislative Update

February 5, 2026

This UEN Weekly Report from the 2026 Legislative Session includes:

- SSA Moves in the Senate Education Committee
- House Federal/Other Funds Appropriations Subcommittee (UAP Presentation)
- House and Senate Committee Action
- Other Subcommittees of Interest
- Bills in Education Committees
- Advocacy Actions for the Week (SSA and SAVE/Property Tax Relief – and yes, PK)
- Advocacy Resources

SSA Moves in Senate Education Committee

The Senate Introduced and moved their school funding proposal out of subcommittee and the full Education Committee this week, both votes on party lines.

SSB 3100 School Funding/SSA: Sets regular and categorical per pupil increase 1.75%, renews property tax replacement payment, uses state aid to offset budget guarantee (estimated to cost the state \$47.7 million), adds \$5 per pupil to the state cost per pupil to close the formula equity gap, requires a second enrollment count on Feb. 1, required to be certified by Feb. 15, and uses the greater of the two certified enrollments as the basis for the FY 2027 fiscal year.

The Governor's Recommendation was for a 2% increase in the regular and categorical per pupil amounts and the State payment for the budget guarantee costs (property tax relief). UEN is undecided on this bill.

House Federal and Other Funds Appropriations Subcommittee

DE Director Snow and staff presented to the Subcommittee about DE policies and processes in complying with federal law. They also presented information about the state's application to the federal DOE regarding the Uniform Allocations Plan, which provides flexibility for the state and school districts in the use of four specific federal funds. See the PPT posted on the Subcommittee's website here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/SD/1599856.pdf>

House and Senate Committee Action This Week

These bills, having cleared a committee in their chamber of origin, have already survived the Feb. 20 funnel deadline as they move to their respective calendars. Typically, bills approved by a committee in their chamber of origin receive a new bill number after committee approval.

House Education Committee Approval:

- **HF 2106 Student Protected Speech:** Allows student expression of free speech, including prayer and religious expression, by providing clear, uniform statewide standards and enforcement. Schools have to certify compliance with the requirements. DE is required to develop a professional development course to inform staff. Districts may have to pay for trainers to deliver the course. UEN is opposed.
- **HF 2121 Gender Theory and Sexual Orientation Expansion** to 7-12: Expands the current prohibition of any instruction, promotion, test, questionnaire or survey related to gender theory and sexual orientation, currently limited to K-6 to include grades 7-12. UEN is opposed.
- **HF 2171 Striking Immunization Requirements:** Removes the requirement that students in elementary and secondary schools be vaccinated to attend school. UEN is opposed.
- **HSB 557 English Learner Open Enrollment:** Amendment on transportation costs. Requires the receiving district of a student needing EL services from being open enrolled if the district does not have an EL program. UEN is undecided.
- **HSB 604 Private Preschool:** Allows private community-based providers to participate in the SVPP without partnering with a public school district. Provides funding for the first year of a program based on the number of students actually served. (Public school program expansion is not funded – school districts must save up PK program dollars to expand or fund the initial program year with grant funding, parent pay or transfers from the flexibility account. UEN is opposed.
- **HSB 636 Schools and Libraries:** Will work on language to allow 28E agreements for public schools working with public libraries to provide books to students. Prohibits use of school ID as a library card. Prohibits schools from allowing bookmobiles from the library on school property. UEN is opposed.
- **HF 2091 Misrepresentation on Application/Resume Materials:** provides that a person who falsely represents oneself as possessing an academic degree or academic credentials for the purpose of obtaining employment or other personal gain is guilty of a fraudulent practice in the second degree. A fraudulent practice in the second degree is a class “D” felony. A class “D” felony is punishable by confinement for no more than five years and a fine of at least \$1,025 but not more than \$10,245. UEN is undecided.

Senate Education Committee Approval

- **SF 2218 Proof of Legal Residence:** requires initial applicants for licensure, new applicants for employment in schools, and existing employees renewing their license to provide specified documentation that they are legally allowed to work in the US. UEN is undecided.
- **SF 2219 FFA/4-H Absences:** Requires school board policies to provide for excusing FFA and 4-H absences, requires students participating in FFA and 4-H to make up missed work. UEN is undecided.

- **SF 2220 TAG Students and Advanced Mathematics Pathway by DE:** See the Jan. 30 weekly report for a complete bill description. UEN is undecided.
- **SF 2221 Teaching Endorsements:** requires BOEE to create fine arts, math, art and science teaching endorsements. Requires participants to have a bachelor's degree. Repeals the program in 2030. UEN supports.
- **SF 2222 Teacher Preparation by DE:** establishes minimum statewide training expectation for all teacher candidates in special education and English learner differentiation, requires 40 hours minimum for EL specialization, requires a summative assessment for teacher candidates and reporting to DE by teacher prep programs regarding cut scores attained and remediation provided, and requires special education teachers with conditional or class B license, must complete a self-paced online course in special education. DE will use assessment results to support improvement in teacher preparation programs. Begins July 1, 2027. UEN is undecided.
- **SF 2223 Advanced Coursework:** Concurrent enrollment, career education planning, and career academic planning. Qualifies students taking courses via concurrent enrollment in the summer qualify for supplementary weighting, includes a statewide articulation agreement between CC and Regent Universities, stipulates that the community college credit earned qualifies as a high school credit. Only applies to courses approved by the school board. UEN supports.
- **SF 2224 Computer Science via Career and Technical Education:** Computer Science in grades 9-12 includes certain CTE courses to meet offer and teach requirements for the ½ unit of computer science. UEN supports.

Subcommittee Meetings of Interest:

- **HF 332 Administrator Teaching Mandate:** Requires all building and district administrators, including all department heads, to teach a class/subject every 3 years. UEN is opposed.
- **HF 2191 School Elections:** moves school board elections to the general election (oppose this provision), allows bond elections in June and November (supports this provision). UEN is undecided.
- **HSB 623 Early Childhood by Health and Human Services:** Changes ECI structure to match HHS regions – HHS states in the subcommittee their goal to match federal funds and reduce administrative costs. The Subcommittee tabled this bill until a further meeting. UEN is undecided.
- **HSB 599 Math and Literacy Compliance reporting requirements:** Requires the DE to prepare and file an annual report on district compliance with implementation of the state's literacy and mathematics plans. UEN is undecided.
- **SF 2121 Civics & US Government in Grades 7-8:** requires ½ unit of civics and US Government coursework in 7th and 8th grades. The requirement first applies beginning in school year 2028-29. UEN is undecided.
- **HF 2052 Requires School Districts to Accept Requested Partnership with Private PK Providers.** Mandates that a public school district must sign an agreement for a private

provider to participate as a community provider in the SVPP for 4-year-old preschool. Prohibits an agreement from setting a limit on the slots offered by the private providers. UEN is opposed.

- **HF 2092 Preschool for Young children** – allows students with a March 15 or earlier birthday into SVPP but prohibits a student from being in 4-year-old preschool twice. The bill does not restrict transitional kindergarten programs. UEN is undecided.
- **HF 2171 Strikes Immunization Requirements**: eliminates proof of vaccination for school enrollment in elementary and secondary schools. UEN is opposed.
- **HSB 646 Antisemitism Incident Reporting**: requires school districts to report on incidents of antisemitism. UEN is undecided.
- **SSB 3075 and HSB 633 Joint Investment Trust Restrictions**: puts limitations on local government deposits in joint investment trusts. UEN is opposed

Bills in the Education Committees:

There are two places to find lists, links and descriptions of bills in each of the chamber's Education Committees:

Senate Education Committee:

- Bills sponsored by individual legislators or bills passed by the other chamber, are found here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/committeeBills?committee=327&GA=91>
- Study bills sponsored by the DE, the Governor or the Chair of the Committee, are found here:
<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/committeeStudyBills?committee=327&GA=91>

House Education Committee:

- Bills sponsored by individual legislators or bills passed by the other chamber, are found here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/committeeBills?committee=686&GA=91>
- Study bills sponsored by the DE, the Governor or the Chair of the Committee, are found here:
<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/committeeStudyBills?committee=686&GA=91>

Advocacy Actions This Week:

Adequate School Funding: Contact legislators regarding SSA. The Governor's recommendation of 2.0% falls short of inflation (as has every SSA increase over the last five years). The Senate's 1.75% is even worse. The teacher salary investment last year was 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 February 12, so the advocacy window is tight. No bill has yet been introduced in the House to set the SSA rate. We expect the Senate may debate its proposal next week. Additional Supports:

- Download the [UEN 2026 Adequate School Funding Issue Brief](#), providing education funding history, comparing total Iowa education expenditures per pupil, which most recently ranked our state as 35th in the nation, now spending over \$2,700 less per student than the national average, and including some talking points to help you advocate with your legislators. *UEN's Legislative Priority supports an SSA rate that at least matches the inflation rate schools are experiencing.*

- The REC sets a revenue growth estimate for FY 2027 of 4.2%. Shouldn't schools benefit from the general fund recovery?
- With a statewide enrollment decline of 7,336 students, the cost of SSA to the state is lower than it would normally be. The state could fund a 4% increase at a cost of \$132 million (lower than last year's increase of \$134 million). Higher SSA of 4% would leave fewer districts on the budget guarantee and lower budget guarantee property taxes to 25% of those estimated in the Governor's 2% recommendation. The higher SSA would also result in less special education deficits or English-Learner requests for modified supplemental amount (MSA) from the School Budget Review Committee (SBRC).
- The [ISFIS New Authority Calculator](#) allows users to set the SSA rate and calculate the impact across all districts for FY 2027 on your regular program (not including special education or other supplementary weightings). Enter the SSA percentage increase to compare to the new money you'd receive if the SSA rate was higher than the Governor's Recommendation of 2.0% or the Senate's 1.75%. Check out the new tab to determine the impact of proposals on your TSS and other per pupil categoricals and media and education services. What would that additional authority provide for students? What happens if your school experiences a few more years of 2% or lower?

Property Tax Relief: No committee or subcommittee action this week, but keep in contact with legislators about school district concerns and questions (or even kudos for some things that you like). Encourage legislators to get fiscal estimates from LSA and DOM before proceeding with big system changes. The property tax system is complicated. Multiple changes to all three components of the system are very hard to predict.

- The Senate's proposal, in particular, significantly changes or limits all three components: Valuation, Rates and Total Levy (dollars collected).
- The Governor's version is more modest, but still accelerates SAVE funds within a very short time frame, negatively impacting resources available for school infrastructure, safety and equipment. This proposal removes an estimated \$170 million annually from school infrastructure, technology, safety, equipment, buses and construction in four years. Reach out to the experts at Piper Sandler to discuss the point at which your district may be at risk of defaulting on bonds if SAVE is reduced based on the Governor's proposal. See [Piper Sandler's SAVE Bond Default Risk Calculator](#)
- There is already significant voter involvement in SAVE:
 - Voters approve a district RPS, which must include bonding to authorize it.
 - Many districts have facility planning and infrastructure committees that involve local citizens, taxpayers, and community leaders.
 - Public hearings are held on SAVE bonding decisions.
 - A reverse referendum is an opportunity for taxpayers if used for athletic facilities.
- Many districts choose to move slowly, bonding for just a year or two at a time and improving facility safety and upgrades along the way. Having to hold special elections every other year would be cost-prohibitive.
- Delays increase costs as revenue growth doesn't keep pace with construction inflation.

- Districts would be more inclined to use property tax bonds, which get a better interest rate if the SAVE process was changed, which doesn't align with the intention of this bill.

Protect schools from property tax reductions and limiting policies that restrict revenue, since schools are already primarily budget-limited and enrollment-driven under the foundation formula.

See the [UEN Property Tax Reform 2026 Issue Brief](#) for additional talking points and items to discuss with your legislators. See the [ISFIS Property Tax Comparison Side-by-Side](#), which compares and contrasts the ideas in all three.

Quality Preschool and Teacher Shortages: In every communication, find a way to mention Quality Preschool and Teacher (especially special education) and other Staff Shortages. Find Issue Briefs and other resources on the [UEN Website](#) to find talking points or as resources to share when you meet with policymakers.

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 for the best way to contact them during the session. They may prefer email, text message, or a 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. The 2026 UEN Advocacy Handbook will be available and posted soon at www.uen-ia.org/advocacy-handbook.

Contact Us

Margaret Buckton

UEN Executive Director

margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com

515.201.3755 Cell

Thanks to our 2025-26 UEN Corporate Sponsors:

Special thank you to your UEN Corporate Sponsors for their support of UEN programs and services. Find information about how these organizations may help your district on the Corporate Sponsor page of the UEN website at www.uen-ia.org/uen-sponsors.

 10FOLD™ ARCHITECTURE + ENGINEERING	www.10foldarchitecture.com
 INVISION PLANNING ARCHITECTURE INTERIORS	www.invisionarch.com
 Solution Tree Transform education worldwide to ensure learning for all	www.solutiontree.com/st-states/iowa