



UEN Legislative Update April 2, 2026

This UEN Weekly Report from the 2026 Legislative Session includes:

- Session Timeline
- Budget Targets and SSB 3191 Education Appropriations
- New HSB 768 SSA Timing and School Budget Property Taxes
- Property Tax Proposals Compromise Status - Iowa Capital Dispatch Coverage
- Floor Action This Week in Both Chambers
- Appropriations Committee Action: Charter Schools (NEW CALL TO ACTION) and Teach Iowa Scholar Grants
- Student Behavior on the House Calendar (NEW CALL TO ACTION)
- Previous Calls to Action: MAHA & Property Taxes
- Advocacy Actions for the Week
- Advocacy Resources

Session Timeline

The Session has just under three weeks left before the 100th day, April 21, when per diem reimbursements for Legislators expire. Before adjourning, the House and Senate will have to pass a budget (appropriations bills), decide whether to compromise on property tax reform, determine whether there is common ground on pipeline eminent domain legislation, and finish up the hundreds of policy bills waiting for their attention. With the General Election in November, legislators are further motivated to finish up so they can start campaigning. See the Session Timeline here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/SESTT/current.pdf>

State Budget

The Session cannot finish until they have sent a state budget to the Governor. In prior years, there have been some agreements on total state budget targets, which restrict the amount that the chambers want to spend. There does not yet appear to be agreement on the overall budget target. According to Wednesday's [Iowa Capital Dispatch on April 1, 2026](#), some progress has been made, but there is no agreement yet. The following was reported in the article about Senate budget targets:

- Senate Republicans released a \$9.623 billion budget target this week for FY 2027. This figure is below Gov. Reynolds' proposed \$9.666 billion budget.
- Sen. Kraayenbrink, Senate Appropriations Chair, said in a news release that this continues the Republicans' goal of setting a "responsible, sustainable budget" as it would leave Iowa with a projected \$4.8 billion in its ending balance, the Taxpayer Relief Fund, and other reserves.
- Senate Majority Leader Klimesh said in a statement the budget target marked the beginning of the end of Session, and that Senate Republicans wanted to provide a path

to “continue to conservatively fund the priorities of lowans.” . . . “The next fiscal year will be our second full year with our historic flat tax for lowans at 3.8%. In the coming weeks, we are looking forward to continuing conversations on passing a conservative budget to fund priorities like education and public safety, is fiscally responsible, and keeps money in the pockets of lowans.”

The article also reported on the expected action and timing in the House regarding budget targets:

- House Republicans plan to release their budget proposal next week, House Speaker Grassley told reporters Wednesday.
- There are some subjects, like funding for [paraeducator pay](#), that Grassley said will likely come up again during budget negotiations, but said that more specific items would be discussed in the coming weeks.
- Grassley said House Republicans were focused on “fully funding Medicaid” and passing “a conservative budget that fully funds those priorities that we’ve laid out.” The state will be using money from the Taxpayer Relief Fund for the shortfall in FY 2026 Medicaid funding and increased premium taxes retroactively on Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO’s), which was signed by Gov. Reynolds this week, to address projected shortfalls.

There are nine budget bills, at least, that typically move to fund Iowa’s executive branch and the state budget. The LSA provides analysis of the Governor’s budget, which is found on this legislative webpage, <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/publications/fiscal/budgetAnalysis>, providing details of the Governor’s budget proposals that have started the conversation.

[SSB 3191 Education Appropriations by the Governor](#) includes funding for the DE, Community Colleges, and Regents Universities, and several other things such as therapeutic classroom grants and mental health services funding for AEAs to provide training and services for schools. The Subcommittee of Sens. Green, Kraayenbrink, and Winckler recommended the Bill move forward to the full Senate Appropriations Committee. UEN is undecided on the Bill. The **[SSB 3191 NOBA](#)** (Notes on Bills and Amendments) written by LSA staff summarized the following details:

- **General Fund FY 2027:** Appropriates a total of \$1.047 billion from the General Fund for FY 2027 to the Department for the Blind, the Department of Education, and the Board of Regents. This is an increase of \$14.9 million compared to the estimated net FY 2026.
- **Other Funds FY 2027:** Appropriates a total of \$33.7 million from the Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund (SWJCF) for FY 2027. This is no change compared to the estimated net FY 2026.
- **Standing Appropriation FY 2027:** The attached tracking also includes a standing appropriation from the General Fund estimated at \$1.8 million for the Vocational Technical Tuition Grant and \$750,000 for Therapeutic Classroom Services; both do not appear in this Bill.

- Appropriates \$459.7 million from the General Fund to the DE, which is a net increase of \$8.4 million, including the following Major Decreases/Increases impacting K-12 compared to FY 2026:
 - An increase of \$76,000 for School Food Service.
 - A decrease of \$1.5 million for Children's Mental Health Training.
 - An increase of \$3,000 for the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MEHC).
 - An increase of \$3.7 million for General Aid for Community Colleges.
 - A decrease of \$44,000 for the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Collaborative Initiative.
 - An increase of \$5.0 million for the Special Education Division.
 - A decrease of \$500,000 for Professional Development.

New HSB 768 SSA Timing and School Budget Property Taxes

This House Ways and Means Committee bill by Rep. Nordman was introduced this week and assigned to a Subcommittee of Reps. Johnson, Gjerde and Siegrist. UEN supports the concept of this Bill, which would protect school districts if the SSA rate is determined late or the second enrollment count is not completed in time for budgeting. The Bill has two sections:

- Sec. 1: Limits a school district budget sent to DOM to calculate total taxes for the taxpayer statements, if SSA is not met by March 5, to no more property tax dollars collected than the prior year's SSA percentage would generate. Translation: if SSA for the prior year is 2%, the district is required to set its budget to generate property taxes based on that 2% rate.
- Sec. 2: Addresses the actual budget and ability to raise the tax rate based on a late enactment of SSA or enrollment (due to the second count). If an SSA rate is enacted after the March 5 taxpayer statements are sent out, school districts can increase their tax rate.
- The Bill amends IC 24.2A, subsection 4, paragraph a, which is the Code section that prohibits political subdivisions from raising their property tax rate after that first public hearing, by adding: "However, if the political subdivision is a school district, due to the timing of enrollment determinations and enactment of legislation affecting school district budgets during the budget process, the school district may, subject to other limitations established by law, increase the proposed property tax amount to be included in the school district's budget."

Property Tax Proposal Differences: Iowa Capital Dispatch Coverage [April 1, 2026](#)

- Finding a "compromise" is also a goal for property taxes, as lawmakers and the Governor aim to find a consensus on how to lower Iowans' property tax burden.
- While House Republicans amended their proposal, [House Study Bill 596](#) (now [HF 2745](#)), to include some components of the Governor's Bill, the Senate GOP proposal, [Senate File 2472](#), remains significantly different.
- Speaker Grassley said keeping the 2% "set cap" — which cannot be adjusted based on inflation, as the Senate proposal would allow — is a major objective for House

Republicans during negotiations on a final property tax bill. (Note: The 2% cap applies to cities and counties, but does not apply to school districts in the House proposal.)

- The Senate bill proposes eliminating the “rollback” system for calculating property taxes, reversing some 2013 property tax cuts for multi-residential buildings like apartments, and eliminating property taxes altogether for Iowa homeowners older than age 60 and indexing the state’s gas tax to inflation. (Note: the Bill impacts school property taxes by increasing state responsibility for more formula taxes, limiting Management Fund levy authority based on a schedule of carry-forward balances, and setting lower PPEL and Debt Levy maximum rates.)
- Sen. Dan Dawson, Senate Ways and Means chair, said in an “Iowa Press” interview that he believes the larger changes to Iowa’s property tax system proposed in the Senate Republican bill are needed to meaningfully address the issue of property tax costs.
- “The door is wide open for negotiation,” Dawson said. “But what I would say is that we have to be able to bring something meaningful to Iowans at the end of this. No more Band-Aids, no more simple approaches. Either we go after the system head-on, or we be honest with ourselves and say that we fell short.”

UEN is undecided on both property tax proposals. See the full description of [SF 2472](#) and [HF 2745](#) in the March 30 Weekly Report.

Floor Action in Both Chambers Impacting Schools

- **[SF 2218 School Employment and Identity Verification](#)**: Requires BOEE to verify the identity and employment eligibility of individuals applying for or renewing a license. Requires school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools to also verify identity and employment eligibility. S-5104 by the House would have mandated private employers to verify identity and eligibility to work in the U.S. The Senate refused to concur, sending the original Bill back to the House. UEN is undecided.
- **[HF 2337 Academic Fraud](#)**: Makes it a fraudulent practice to falsely represent having an academic degree in order to obtain employment or for personal gain. Requires acting knowingly and with intent. The Bill was amended to include occupational licenses and increased the penalty to an aggravated misdemeanor. The Senate passed the Bill 46-0 as amended; the House concurred and passed the Bill 89-3 as amended, sending it to the Governor. UEN is undecided.
- **[HF 2591 Open Enrolled Sports](#)**: Increases the period for ineligibility for an open-enrolled student to participate in sports from 90 school days to 140 calendar days. The Bill was amended in the Senate to begin August 2026. The Senate passed the Bill as amended 45-0; back to the House. UEN supports.
- **[SF 2474 School Health Plan Data Collection](#)**: Requires DE to gather information from schools on school emergency plans and whether those plans include cardiac emergency provisions, on which schools have AEDs (automated external defibrillators) and where the AEDs are located. Requires a report by January of 2027. The Senate approved the bill 45-0; it now goes to the House. UEN is undecided.

Appropriations Committee Action:

- **[HF 2713 Charter Schools Omnibus](#)**: Requires TSS state cost per pupil to follow students to charter schools (first year costs funded by a state appropriation and second and subsequent year costs deducted from public school district state aid by DOM and paid directly to the charter school), requires charter students to be served in public school extracurriculars and activities (if the charter has not provided them in the last two years.) Allows Charter employees to participate in IPERS. Specifies that Charter Schools meet the definition of LEA for purposes of federal funding. Requires the Iowa Finance Authority to create a revolving loan fund for Charter Schools to bond for facilities. Includes private PK through a 28E agreement (prohibits state or political subdivision oversight requiring changes to private school enrollment or educational standards). Sets a Dec. 20th deadline for ESA applications to begin school in the second semester. Requires DE to establish a task force and make a report with recommendations regarding required health trainings for school staff. Approved 17 to 6, sending it to the House Calendar. See the [UEN April 2nd Call to Action on Charter School Omnibus Bill](#). UEN is opposed to this bill.
- **[HF 2441 Teach Iowa Grants](#)**: Changes the Teach Iowa grant requirements for eligible teachers. Strikes requirements that the candidate be in the top 25% of the class. Requires 20% of the grants go to Special Education teachers and that 50% of the grants go to teachers in rural districts (defined as districts with enrollment under 1,000 students). Approved 23 to 0, sending it to the House Calendar. UEN is undecided.

Student Behavior on the House Calendar

The Senate passed [SF 2428](#) Student Behavior, 45 to 0. The House Education Committee passed it 17 to 6, to move it beyond the second funnel. It has been on the House Calendar as the House and Senate have been negotiating behind the scenes. The Bill is now listed on the House Debate Calendar for Monday, April 6. We would expect to see an amendment filed before they debate it, but at this point, we are not aware of what compromises have been reached. UEN is primarily opposed to the Senate's requirement to appoint a committee of two teachers and one administrator, which must convene and assess every removal of a student from the classroom to determine when the student is allowed to return to the classroom. The House version, [HF 2538](#), requires a similar committee to help develop the policy and procedures for classroom removal and return, but does not require the Committee to convene before any child is returned to the classroom, leaving that primarily under the Principal's authority after discussing with the teacher. HF 2538 is currently on the Senate Calendar, having been approved unanimously by the Senate Education Committee. See the [March 20 UEN Weekly Report](#) for complete bill descriptions comparing the two proposals. See the [UEN Call to Action on Student Behavior Bill SF 2428 on the House Calendar from April 2, 2026](#).

Previous Calls to Action: MAHA, Property Taxes, SAVE and UAB 35% Limitation

Thanks to all advocates who have reached out to legislators regarding the PE, extracurricular and nutrition waivers in the MAHA bill, HF 2676 on the Senate Calendar. We are seeing positive responses coming back from Senators. They are still taking input from stakeholders regarding screen time limitations for K-5 students. We are requesting additional exceptions, including for

English Learners, Talented and Gifted Students, and students requiring interventions for math or reading nonproficiency, as long as the technology instructional programs are interactive. See talking points in [UEN Call to Action on MAHA](#).

Diversion of SAVE for property tax relief (through the property tax equity and relief, or PTER fund) and limitation of UAB (unspent authorized balance, or spending authority carried forward from the prior year) are still both part of the House Property Tax Proposal, HF 2745. Find opportunities to keep reaching out to House members to remove these provisions. See talking points in the [UEN Call to Action on SAVE and UAB](#).

Advocacy Actions This Week

- See new Call to Action on Charter Schools and Call to Action on Student Behavior bills on the House Calendar.
- Continue contacts regarding screen time limit exceptions in the MAHA bill in the Senate and SAVE/UAB provisions in the House Property Tax proposal.

Secretary of State's List of Primary Candidates: Iowa Secretary of State, Paul Pate, has posted the final list of candidates for the June primary. Check it out, see who is running in your area. Contact information is included. Access that and save it now, so you can contact state officials at their home address or phone. Party conventions may still nominate candidates to run if there are no primary winners for some seats, so the list of general election candidates will eventually grow. See the list on the SOS website [here](#). Reach out to all candidates, regardless of party, and encourage support for public education, including adequate funding and local flexibility to best meet students' needs.

Thank legislators for the bills moving forward that UEN supports!

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. Also, find the 2026 UEN Advocacy Handbook posted 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.

	www.10foldarchitecture.com
	www.invisionarch.com
	www.solutiontree.com/st-states/iowa