



UEN Legislative Update April 16, 2026

This UEN Weekly Report from the 2026 Legislative Session includes:

- New Call to Action on Spending Authority Limit (35% UAB) in Property Tax Bills
- Budget Progress in the Chambers (Including Education Appropriations)
- Charter Schools Approved by the House
- Floor Action in the House and Senate
- Committee Action
- Advocacy Actions for the Week
- Advocacy Resources

Session Timeline

The Session has five days 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. See the Session Timeline here.

Action on State Budget

This chart from the IALNS Newsletter, through April 16, shows progress on budget bills, with many being approved in both House and Senate Appropriations Committees this week.

The Education Appropriations bill, HSB 778, was amended and approved by the House Appropriations Committee, moving it to the House Calendar.

Most of the appropriations in this Bill echo the Governor’s Recommendation for FY 2027, with the following exceptions:

- Adds \$92,646 for TeachIowa Scholar Grants.
- Creates a new appropriation to the U of I for pediatric cancer research.
- Includes the individual allocations for several items funded with the Student Achievement Teacher Quality Act, including the Iowa Teacher of the Year (Ambassador for Education), professional development

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APPROPRIATIONS BILLS					
AS OF THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2026					
HF 2768	ADMINISTRATION & REGULATION	Passed House subcommittee 4/8	Passed House committee 4/15	In House 4/15	
SF 2479		In Senate 4/2			
HF 2771	AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES	Passed House subcommittee 4/8	Passed House committee 4/15	In House 4/15	
SF 2487		Passed Senate committee 4/8	In Senate 4/9		
HF 2772	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Passed House subcommittee 4/8	Passed House committee 4/15	In House 4/15	
SF 2485		Passed Senate committee 4/8	In Senate 4/9		
HSB 777	HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	Passed House subcommittee 4/14	Passed House committee 4/16		
SF 2483		Passed Senate committee 4/8	In Senate 4/9		
HSB 778	EDUCATION	Passed House subcommittee 4/15	Passed House committee 4/16		
SF 2482		Passed Senate committee 4/8	In Senate 4/9		
HF 2769	JUDICIAL BRANCH	Passed House subcommittee 4/14	Passed House committee 4/15	In House 4/15	
SF 2486		Passed Senate committee 4/8	In Senate 4/9		
HF 2770	JUSTICE SYSTEMS	Passed House subcommittee 4/14	Passed House committee 4/15	In House 4/15	
SF 2481		Passed Senate committee 4/8	In Senate 4/9		
SF 2484	REBUILD IOWA INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (RIIF)	Passed Senate committee 4/8	In Senate 4/9		
STANDINGS					
SF 2478	TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPITALS	In Senate 4/2			

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academies, model evidence for TLC plan and evaluation, and the fine arts beginning teacher mentoring program.

- The Bill also included language regarding dropout prevention board plan approval, clarifying that school boards are required to approve the plan annually, and prohibiting SBRC and DE from deducting spending authority due to a lack of annual board approval until July 1, 2027. The Amendment in the Appropriations Committee removed the retroactive date, including SBRC and DE action, but retained the language clarifying that the plans must be approved annually. UEN requested this provision and is disappointed that the Appropriations Committee removed it.

The Bill will receive a new bill number and move to the House Debate Calendar. UEN is registered undecided.

Charter Schools Approved in the House

HF 2754 with Amendment [H-8371](#): As amended, the House's charter school bill includes the following:

- Strikes all code references to Innovation Zone Schools
- Allows UNI to authorize charters in addition to the State BOE (can authorize, continue or revoke any charters)
- Allows charters for 5 years and requires all charters (including those authorized by local school boards) to have a performance framework with goals to determine if objectives were met.
- Requires TSS, Media and Educational Services funds per pupil be paid to charter schools
- Requires AEAs to provide media and education services and programs to pupils enrolled in charter schools
- Requires school boards to allow charter students to participate in extracurricular athletics and activities (including theater, show choir and band). Activity must not have been provided for the charter school for at least two years and there is no agreement between the charter school and any other public or nonpublic school to provide the activities).
- Requires school districts to make driver's ed available to charter school students, but specifies that the charter school must pay for the course.
- Adds charter school employees to IPERS eligible employees. Requires charters to follow IRS requirements. Specifies that if a charter school closes, the assets shall be used first to pay outstanding payroll and any liabilities due and owing to IPERS, then to any other creditors, then to the public school district, then to the State.
- Establishes a revolving loan fund to receive and disburse monies to assist charter schools in purchasing, acquiring, developing, reconstructing, remodeling or replacing school buildings. Authorizes Iowa Finance Authority to provide a liquidity or credit enhancement agreement with charter schools.
- Creates a new ESA application deadline of Nov. 15 for second-semester enrollment.
- Allows a private school that fails accreditation under an independent accrediting agency to seek accreditation under the BOE. States this does not expand state or political subdivision authority over the private school. Rules adopted by BOE that impose an

undue burden on the private school are invalid. “The private school shall be given the maximum freedom possible to provide for the education needs of the school’s students, consistent with state and federal law.”

- Requires DE to convene a task force to study teacher training requirements required by the state and for re-licensure. Requires findings submitted by Dec. 31, 2026. Requires the recommendations, including how to change current law to create a more manageable training program schedule and licensure renewal requirement for teachers.
- Allows Community-Based Providers (CBPs) to participate directly in SVPP. Requires BOE to adopt rules for CBP’s: 1) methods of demonstrating readiness to implement high-quality instruction, 2) requires CBPs to participate in data collection, performance measures and reporting, 3) PD for PK teachers in the CBPs shall be addressed in CBPs PD plan.
- Pays state foundation aid directly to CBPs, applies the same expenditure requirements, and provides initial PK funding based on the rule, then subsequent years based on budget enrollment.
- Gives the State Board of Education emergency rulemaking authority.
- Requires school districts to provide Senior Year Plus (concurrent enrollment, PSEOs, AP) to charter school students in the district in which the charter school is located, or if the charter school is an online school, in the student’s district of residence.
- Requires a school board denying a request for open enrollment into the district (or the superintendent if the board has delegated this authority to the superintendent) to document the reason for denial and submit information related to the denial to the DE in a manner prescribed by the DE.
- Amended to remove limitations on home school (removes limit of up to 4 unrelated children, allows the home school to charge other parents tuition, gives authority of the parent or instructor to offer a diploma and requires the diploma be accepted by the laws of the State commensurate with other diplomas – effective before, on or after the effective date of this act).
- Specifies that the act is effective on enactment.

UEN is opposed to this Bill, primarily because it reallocates funding that, through TSS, helps school districts, large and small, adequately compensate the staff necessary to educate students every day.

Floor Action in Both Chambers: In addition to the budget bills and charter schools identified above, the following bills were approved in the House, the Senate or both:

SF 2220 DE’s TAG, Advanced Pathways and Acceleration Bill: Amended by [H-5132](#) in the House: Iowa statewide assessment of student progress and programs for gifted and talented children. Requires school districts to develop advanced mathematics and reading pathways and implement procedures for subject acceleration and whole-grade acceleration. The House amendment delayed implementation of the acceleration provisions until the school year beginning July 1, 2027. Is also required school districts to assess the readiness of students for acceleration and the likelihood of the student’s success before accelerating the student. The

Senate concurred with the House Amendment, sending this Bill to the Governor. UEN is undecided.

HF 2670 Summative Testing, S-5113: The Bill, as amended, does the following:

- Adds social studies to the state’s core academic indicators and requires a summative social studies assessment as part of the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP), administered to students in grades 8 and 11, to align with Iowa standards in both rigor and content. This provision is effective beginning on or after July 1, 2027.
- Moves summative science assessment administration from grade 10 to grade 11.
- Requires instruction related to physical education and food and nutrition in the health standards in all three grade spans (1-6, 7-8, 9-12).
- Allows for the two additional units of mathematics for students in grades 9 through 12 to include instruction related to agriculture and applied sciences (if the content meets the Iowa Code course requirements).
- Requires guidance counselors to work collaboratively with parents or guardians.
- Requires the State Board of Education (BOE) to impose financial penalties, including withholding of state aid in instances of noncompliance with relevant State and federal requirements if noncompliance is not cured within 30 days.
- Removes requirements for adopting administrative rules on protocols for identifying adverse childhood experiences (ACES), distributing standards for equity coordinators to school districts, adopting a multicultural and gender-fair approach, providing emotional and social health instruction, and considering standards and best practices from certain national organizations, as well as services provided by guidance counselors.
- States that any costs associated with the implementation of this Bill do not constitute an unfunded mandate, and requires school districts to pay costs required by the Bill as amended from State Foundation School Aid.

HF 2670, as amended, was approved, 30-17, sending it back to the House. UEN is registered in opposition, primarily to the financial penalty for state and federal noncompliance. Some federal noncompliance may take longer than 30 days to correct.

SF 2320 Concurrent Enrollment Modality: if a community college offers the course using both instruction that is delivered in person and primarily over the internet, then the student must enroll in the in-person course unless the superintendent, or the superintendent’s designee, authorizes the student to enroll in the online course. Requires the superintendent (or designee) to consider if the student is prepared for, and likely to be successful in, the online course. Allows the superintendent (or designee) to consider any other factors they deem relevant, including but not limited to potential scheduling conflicts that may impact the student’s ability to participate in the in-person course.

Note: Just a reminder, current law requires the school board to annually approve courses to be made available for high school credit, using locally developed criteria that establish which courses will provide students with academic rigor and adequately prepare them for

transition to a postsecondary institution. Current law also requires that if a community college accepts a student for enrollment under this section, the school district, in collaboration with the community college, shall send written notice to the student, the student's parent or legal guardian in the case of a minor child, and the student's school district. The notice shall list the course, the clock hours the student will attend, and the number of college credit hours the student will receive from the community college upon successful completion of the course. It would be important, but not required by law, to also include a notification that if the student fails the course, their parent (or the student, if an emancipated minor) may have to reimburse the school district for the cost. The Bill was passed - 91-2, sending it to the Governor. UEN supports.

- [SF 2218](#) **Legality of Working in the US:** Requires verification of the identity and employment eligibility of individuals by the board of educational examiners, school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, charter schools, and innovation zone schools. The House had amended the Bill with [S-5104](#) with another division prohibiting private employers from hiring individuals who cannot legally work in the country. The Senate refused to concur with the House amendment. The House insisted. A Conference Committee of 5 legislators from each chamber has been appointed to resolve their differences. UEN is undecided.
- [HF 2752](#) **Teach Iowa Scholar Grants:** Eliminates the eligibility requirement that applicants to the Teach Iowa Scholar Program be in the top 25% academically of students exiting a teacher preparation program. Requires beginning in FY 2027:
 - 20.00% must be awarded to eligible classroom teachers who provide special education instruction.
 - 50.00% must be awarded to eligible classroom teachers employed by a rural school district with a certified enrollment of fewer than 1,000 students.
 - The Bill was amended to specify that the above criteria are not duplicated (a participation could only count as either special education or rural).The Bill, as amended, was approved by the House, 91:1 and sent to the Senate. UEN is registered as undecided.
- [SF 2219](#) **FFA/4-H Absences:** Requires the boards/directors for schools (public, private and charter) to adopt policies exempting school absences for 4-H/FFA activities. Requires the student to be allowed to make up missed work. The Bill was amended to instead require public and private schools to have policies allowing excused absences for school-sponsored activities and allowing students to make up work. The House passed the Bill as amended 85-8; sending it back to the Senate. 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 is effective beginning August 2026. The House amended the Bill to allow 8th graders to compete in high school sports. Allows emergency rules. The Bill was passed as amended 92-0, sending it back to the Senate. UEN was originally supportive of the calendar change, but we have concerns about 8th graders in varsity sports.

- [SF 2299 Community College Costs](#): allows a superintendent (or designee) to require a student (or their parents) who fails a community college course or drops the course to reimburse the district for the cost. The House amended the Bill (to include repayment due to dropping the course) and passed it 62:31. Back to the Senate. UEN supports.

Committee Action This Week

- [SF 2474 Cardiac Emergency Response](#) data collection: Requires school districts to report to DE the number of AEDs in the district and whether the district has a cardiac emergency response plan. The Bill was approved by House Appropriations Committee on Thursday, moving to the House Calendar. UEN is undecided .
- [HF 2764 School District Budgeting](#): specifies that, if SSA is not set by March 5, school district must base its first budget notice/public hearing on the prior year’s SSA rate. Allows districts to increase taxes in setting the budget after the taxpayer statements are out. It is on the House Debate Calendar for Monday. UEN supports.

Advocacy Actions This Week

As the Session begins to wind down, stay close to your email inbox and watch for any last-minute Calls to Action. Advocacy actions this weekend and into next week include:

- Thank Representatives for the Amendment to the Student Behavior bill, SF 2428 amended by [S-5166](#). The Amendment improves the Bill. Discuss these issues with Senators:
Corrections: We would suggest the following amendments if changes are going to be made:
 1. Tighten the definition of assault on page 5, line 26 (the reference to IC 708.1 includes intent to injure or frighten, in addition to an injury, which is very hard to determine, especially with younger children). We would suggest that the level of assault in order to be permanently removed from a teacher’s classroom would be aggressive enough to show evidence of physical or mental injury.
 2. Specify that the notwithstanding any policy language on page 7, lines 18-21, not apply if there is a federal law that requires the student to return to the classroom.
 3. When the principal is required to impose the maximum amount of punishments applicable to such conduct as provided in the policies adopted by the school board, in should say on page 8, line 12, after the maximum amount of punishment, under the authority of the principal.
 4. Strike page 10, lines 26-29, regarding IEP team meeting after 5th removal within 15 consecutive school days. This language seems unnecessary and duplicative of language in this bill and federal law.
- If you have not yet confirmed your Representative’s position on the ISJIT bill, ask them to just say NO.
- Ask Senators to hit pause on Charter Schools legislation: expansion is happening at a record clip without these changes. The homeschool deregulation appears to create another class of

private schools. Iowa already has so many school choice options; these expansions seem unnecessary and potentially harmful to students (25% of charter schools close in five years and a lack of background checks or other safety measures in home school environments should cause concern).

- Discuss concerns with the 35% UAB limitation with all legislators. See the April 14 UEN [Call to Action : April 14, 2026 - Property Taxes and UAB](#)

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>

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.

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.

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