



UEN Legislative Update May 1, 2026

This UEN Weekly Report from the 2026 Legislative Session includes:

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One New Call to Action: SAVE Diversion to Property Tax Relief and SAVE Extension:

The Legislature is in Session today, Friday, May 1. The House has posted a debate calendar for Saturday, signaling that they are near the end of the Session. We are hearing that the Senate has agreed to divert the SAVE fund to property tax relief, but is not committed to extending the SAVE. If an agreement moves forward, it will be approved very quickly and sent to the Governor. See the [UEN Call to Action](#) on SAVE Revenue Diversion to Property Tax Relief and SAVE Extension through 2071.

Closing Down the Session:

The Session has extended beyond Apr. 21, when per diem reimbursements for Legislators expired. The Legislature has made progress on the State Budget, which must be completed before adjourning, but has not yet shown signs of compromise on property tax reform. We expect a bit more overtime given the remaining items on their agenda. Both the House and the Senate are in Session today, Friday, May 1. The House has posted a debate calendar for Saturday. They could work through the weekend or go home and return on Monday.

Budget Progress in the Chambers:

By Thursday, Apr. 30, even more progress was announced on the budget. The IALNS reported that HF 2468 Administrative and Regulation Appropriations and HF 2772 Economic Development Appropriations were approved in both chambers and sent to the Governor. The remaining eight budget bills have all been approved in appropriations Committees and are on the House and Senate Calendars. The Standings Appropriations Bill, which includes state school aid, has not yet been introduced, but that is typically the last bill approved before they close down the Session.

The Education Appropriations Bill, [HF 2783](#), was approved in the House and sent over to the Senate on Thursday afternoon. Sen. Gehlbach, the floor manager, highlighted some specific changes:

- increase of \$76K to food service for administration of the Summer EBT program,

- reduction of \$1.5 million to the AEs for Mental Health Training and Services due to a duplication that was found when the DE took over some functions previously assigned to the AEs,
- increase of \$5 million to the DE for the Special Education Division (appropriated out of the Sports Wagering Fund in FY 2026),
- a total appropriation of just over \$1 million, which is an increase of \$96K, to the Teach Iowa Scholars Program, but included a requirement that \$96 K be allocated to grants to eligible applicants who teach in a school district located in a city in Iowa with a population of less than 26,000 that is located more than twenty miles from a city with a population of greater than 50,000,
- a new appropriation of \$335K for an Advanced Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement to provide grants to teachers participating in the program to obtain the endorsement issued by the BOEE.
- We had noted in an earlier version of the bill a new \$3 million appropriation to the University of Iowa for pediatric cancer research. Rep. Gehlbach explained that the \$3 million is not in this appropriations bill, but it might fit in other appropriations bills yet to be debated.
- The language specifying that school boards must approve their dropout prevention plan annually was not included in the strike-after amendment that became the bill approved by the House.

The House amended and approved the bill, 59 to 25. The Senate agreed, 27 to 15, sending it to the Governor. UEN is undecided.

Bills to the Governor:

The Enrolled bills list includes bills where the House and Senate have completed action and the Governor’s signature is pending. Bills sent to the Governor during the Session require her signature or veto within 3 days. Bills sent to her in the final three days of the Session follow a different timeline, allowing the Governor 30 days to sign or veto. Here are the bills on the Enrolled Bills list posted on the legislative website as of Apr. 30. Many of these will not be delivered to the Governor’s desk until the Session is closed down, *Sine Die*, which is the Latin term for being closed “without day”, or without a date certain to return. All bills not approved by passage of the Sine Die resolution are dead, and there is no further action unless a special session is held before the 2027 Session convenes next year.

There is a link on the Legislative Webpage that includes (or will soon include) the final versions of bills passed in identical form by the House and Senate, awaiting the Governor’s signature. The chart includes a notation indicating whether the Governor has signed or vetoed a bill, and information about the effective date of the bill's requirements. The following bills are on the enrolled bills list (or soon will be), as of Thursday, April 30:

Bill Number	Signed by Governor	Enrolled Bills
HF 2230		BOEE Licensing, Postsecondary Testing
HF 2231		Civics Seal

HF 2256		CINA for MH or Substance Abuse
HF 2337		Academic Fraud
HF 2345		IPERS Payment Modality (can choose loadable debt card)
HF 2490		Open Meetings and Public Records IPIB Changes
HF 2501		Election Responsibilities
HF 2514	4/09/26	Childcare Workers CCA
HF 2558	4/09/26	Public Improvement Bidding
HF 2591		140 Days Eligibility period 8th grade Varsity
HF 2610		CTE and Community Colleges DE bill
HF 2670		State Assessment, Noncompliance Penalties, Code Clean-up
HF 2676		MAHA (physical activity, technology time limits, food dyes
HF 2678		Charter Schools / School Choice Omnibus
HF 2724		Alternative Certification (Math, Sci, Fine Arts, Strat II, Activity Dir.)
HF 2783		Education Appropriations
SF 140	4/30/26	Satellite Absentee Voting
SF 176		Online Academy extracurricular participation
SF 273		Grooming Definition
SF 274		Cash at the Gate
SF 472		Recertification and Retention Elections
SF 579		Civil Rights Commissions
SF 2086		Elective Jr. Firefighter Program
SF 2201	2/26/26	SSA 2%
SF 2218		E-Verify Work Authorization (BOEE, School Districts and Others)
SF 2219		School Activities Absence Exemption
SF 2220		TAG, Accelerated Learning, Math/ELA pathways
SF 2231		Protected Speech and Private PK
SF 2299		Concurrent Enrollment Repayment (failure or drop)
SF 2320		Concurrent Enrollment Modality in-Person
SF 2365		Public Improvement Contracts Notice Provisions
SF 2428		Student Behavior / Classroom Removal
SF 2430		Display of Flags at Half-Staff

Bills to the Governor This Week:

HF 2230 Teacher Preparation Programs: Assessments: Requires schools to give teacher candidates a summative assessment to be used to determine whether the candidate meets competency requirements. Requires DE to develop and distribute the assessment. Requires Teacher Prep programs to administer the assessment to teacher candidates and report the results to the DE. Includes teacher prep programs to provide remediation for those who score below the cut score, and requires DE to collect data and publish results. **Special Ed/EL Practicum Experiences:** Requires teacher preparation programs to include classroom experience for teacher candidates with students with disabilities and with English learners. This

bill was a prefiled bill by the DE. Approved by the Senate, 28-15, sending it to the Governor. UEN is undecided.

[HF 2676](#) MAHA (Make American Healthy Again), [H-8355](#) Senate Strike-after Amendment to [S-5302](#) Provisions of this bill impacting schools include:

- **Health Curriculum:** Requires the kindergarten program, Elementary and Secondary standards to include instruction related to nutrition that emphasizes: (1) The importance of animal-based protein, dairy, vegetables, and fruit. (2) The nutritional benefits of animal-based protein, dairy, vegetables, and fruit. (3) The role that animal-based protein, dairy, vegetables, and fruit play in a balanced diet. Requires the agriculture, food, and natural resources career and technical program include instruction relating to food production and the benefits of local sourcing.
- **Food Dyes:** Prohibits school foods from containing certain dyes, effective July 1, 2027.
- **Ephedrine Delivery Systems:** changes every reference in IC 280.16A from Epinephrine auto-injector (Epi Pen) to Epinephrine delivery system. (School boards will need to update policies accordingly.)
- **Instructional Technology Time Limits K-5:** Sets instructional technology time limits in elementary classrooms: 60 minutes per day maximum for grades K-5, but specifies the following exceptions:
 - IEP/504 requirements for technology
 - Assistive or adaptive technology to provide student access to instruction or to accommodate differing student abilities (for e.g., EL, TAG, or other)
 - Teacher-directed instruction (projector, smartboard or similar display device when students are not individually operating a device
 - State assessments, screening, progress monitoring and local diagnostic assessments
 - Dedicated computer science and technology curriculum.

Board Policy: Requires school boards to have policies regulating instructional technology minutes as required by the bill, including the district's daily digital instruction limits, notice of a parent's or guardian's right to request additional reductions in their child's digital instruction, a statement that instructional technology shall support, and not supplant, foundational learning and a prohibition on the use of digital devices during recess. Requires the district to publish the policy on each elementary school's internet site.

Technology adoption checklist: Requires school districts to complete a technology adoption checklist prior to adopting or renewing a one-to-one digital device program for any grade level. Requires the school board to complete a technology adoption checklist that documents consideration of all of the following: (1) The instructional purpose of the device. (2) Age appropriateness of the device and associated software. (3) Content-filtering limitations and the district's capacity to mitigate those limitations. (4) Whether student data is collected, stored, or shared, and the nature of such data practices. Requires the school board to retain the checklist and make it available to the DE upon request for audit or compliance purposes.

Other Provisions: Requires each school district to post on its internet site a list of one-to-one digital device programs in use and information regarding opt-out options for parents who decline participation in digital instruction.

Specifies that the technology limits do not apply to students enrolled in an online learning program.

- **Physical Activity and PE Requirements**

- Requires Physical Activity minimum minutes in elementary classrooms, of 40 minutes in K-4 (current law is 30 minutes) and retains 30-minute minimum in 5th grade (no change).
- Requires PE to include physical activity/leisure activity and nutrition content.
- Requires school districts to administer the Presidential Physical Fitness Test, to all students who are physically able. Takes effect upon the issuance of final guidance for the administration of the presidential physical fitness test by the federal government. Requires the DE to inform the Iowa Code editor upon the issuance of final guidance for the administration of the presidential physical fitness test by the federal government.

The Senate approved the House amendment, sending the bill to the Governor. UEN was registered opposed to the PE unfunded mandates in an earlier version of the bill and the limited number of instructional technology exceptions. Thanks to all advocates who responded to the MAHA Call to Action and contacted your legislators. With changes in the last two amendment iterations, UEN registration will change to undecided.

HF 2754 Charter Schools: The House amendment added new homeschool provisions, minimizing existing law limitations on homeschool:

- Removes the limitation of no more than 4 unrelated children in a homeschool.
- Allows homeschools to charge fees and tuition
- Requires by state law that homeschool diplomas be recognized on par with high school diplomas for purposes of post-secondary or training access, any credential, employment, state or local programs or benefits, or any other purpose under the laws of this state in which a high school diploma is a condition or a qualification. This provision is retroactively applicable (to any diploma ever awarded by a homeschool parent/teacher).
- Specifies that a homeschool graduate cannot be required to get GED or other alternative credential.

The Senate agreed to the bill as amended by the House, sending it to the Governor. UEN opposed the original bill for many reasons, primarily because of TSS's shift to follow charter school students. The additional homeschool expansions only add to our opposition.

SF 472 Recertification and Retention Elections: first, some background: the Iowa Employment Appeal Board (IEAB) is responsible for conducting elections of bargaining unit members to certify, recertify and/or retain collective bargaining representation <https://eab.iowa.gov/>. For June 30 collective bargaining contract expiration, an election must occur between June 1 and November 1 in the year prior to the expiration date. For any other expiration dates, the election must occur between 365 and 270 days prior to the expiration.

- This bill requires IEAB to send a written notice of intent to conduct an election to the employer and the bargaining representative if an election regarding retaining the collective bargaining representative is due. Requires the employer to submit a list of all employees in the bargaining unit within 10 days of the notice. Requires IEAB to use that list to determine eligibility of those who may vote in the election.
- Requires IERB to post a list of public employers that have been sent the request and indicate if the employer has not provided the list of employees in the bargaining unit (requires IEAB to update the post if they subsequently receive the list). The bill states that it is unlawful for a public employer to fail to submit the requested list.
- Allows any resident of Iowa to petition the district court within 60 days of the IERB's initial publication, so the court, through expedited resolution, may compel the public employer to submit the list of employees.
- Allows IEAB to extend timelines or reschedule an election for the next election period if necessary.
- Requires IEAB to establish procedures and rules to implement. Effective on enactment.

This bill was approved by the Senate on March 10, 2025. The bill was approved by the House this week, sending it to the Governor. UEN is monitoring the bill.

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 non-public schools, charter schools, and innovation zone schools. Requires BOEE to verify that applicants for initial licensure and licensure renewal are legally authorized to work in the US, and also requires school districts to verify the same for new employees using the federal E-Verify system. Requires the state Department of Inspections and Appeals to develop a process for employees or licensure applicants to challenge the report from E-Verify or SAVE (SAVE is not required to be checked by school districts). Division I of the bill, requiring BOEE to verify eligibility for licensure, is effective on enactment. All other provisions of the bill are effective July 1. The House and Senate both approved the [conference committee report](#), sending the bill to the Governor. UEN is undecided.

SF 2428 Student Behavior: House Amendment was amended by the Senate and sent back to the House. [H-8399](#) removed the requirement for every teacher to read and sign confirmation of reading every IEP. Instead, requires each school district employee responsible for the implementation of a student's IEP, including regular education teachers, special education teachers, and any other service providers, to read all changes to accommodations or modifications described in the IEP. Requires the regular education teacher to confirm that they have read the recent changes to the special education teacher. **Note:** *the Senate did NOT insist that its original review committee decide when a student returns to the classroom, as the House amendment removed.* Thank you to all advocates who responded to the Call to Action on Student Behavior, particularly those who opposed the review committee, which was removed in the House amendment. The Senate further removed the IEP reading mandate, 44:0. The House concurred in the Senate amendment, sending it to the Governor. UEN is undecided and appreciates the continued progress made along the way. See the [April 9 UEN Weekly Report](#) for a detailed bill description.

Bouncing Bills and Committee Work:

SF 2474 School AED Plans (Cardiac Emergency Response): the bill was amended and approved in the House, returning it to the Senate. The bill requires school districts, charter schools, and accredited non-public schools to report to the state the number and location of AEDs and whether cardiac emergency response plans are included in their emergency plans. The bill requires the DE to prepare a report and submit it to the General Assembly by Jan. 15 of 2027. The House amended the bill to require school districts to report whether the AED is in working order, but eliminated the requirement for non-public schools to participate in the reporting. The amendment also extended the repeal date for the Dyslexia Board to July 1, 2032. The bill, as amended, was approved 85 to 0 and returns to the Senate. UEN is undecided.

HF 2759 Non-Public School Transportation: appropriates funds to the DE for FY 2026 Transportation Reimbursement for a district that made an error in reporting non-public school transportation. Requires the DE to provide the prorated reimbursement to the district and requires the district to provide funds to the non-public schools. Approved by the House. Assigned a subcommittee of Sens. Zumbach, Kraayenbrink and Winckler in the Senate Appropriations Committee. UEN supports.

HF 2764 School Budgeting: requires a school district to base its initial budget for purposes of the Mar. 5 deadline for property taxpayer statements on no more than the SSA rate for the prior budget year if the SSA rate has not yet been enacted for the upcoming fiscal year. Allows a school district to certify their property tax rate, for purposes of the second public hearing and publication of the budget, above the rate published in the taxpayer statements, pending legislative action. The bill was approved by the House, assigned to the Senate Ways and Means Committee, and assigned a subcommittee of Sens. Koelker, Bisignano, and Rowley. UEN supports.

HF 2791 Cash Reserve Levy: allows a school district under certain extreme circumstances to exchange its cash reserve levy for another local levy, such as the management fund, in order to generate funding to back unfunded spending authority. This flexibility is granted pursuant to a valuation error in excess of \$100 million that occurred in FY 2025, which significantly reduced the property tax base after the school district had certified its budget. The valuation error occurred because the county provided a property tax incentive to a data farm but did not reduce the valuation by about \$130 million, nor did it communicate the tax incentive to other local governments affected by the error. The bill was approved by the House Ways and Means Committee and is on the House Calendar. UEN supports.

SF 2472 Property Taxes:

The House replaced [SF 2472](#) with their own bill, via [S-5210](#) Amendment, on April 22. The House proposal does the following: first provisions impacting primarily cities and counties and then, provisions impacting school districts. We have not yet heard of any compromise or agreement on property taxes between the House and Senate, but it is hard to imagine all of the energy and work on this issue ending in a stalemate. We are hearing that the Senate will agree to the use of SAVE (diverting 25% of SAVE revenue to pay for property taxes) but the Senate is not in

agreement with extending the SAVE through 2071 to help districts who may be put in a default situation by this diversion. The extension would allow districts to refinance their revenue bonds.

Provisions Impacting Primarily Cities and Counties

- Sets a 2% “hard” cap on local government’s revenue growth (cities and counties, not schools). (*Senate has a “soft” cap responsive to inflation, increases gas tax and allow increase LOSS for cities and counties to recover some capacity.*)
- Converts the existing homestead tax credit to an exemption while tripling its amount of exemptible tax value to \$15,000. (*Senate changes rollbacks, phases in homestead exemption up to 15% of value, not to exceed \$150,000, and creates a new elderly property tax, creating an alignment with age - 100% exemption at age 100.*)
- Limits new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts to periods of 23 years and removes the School Aid Foundation and Emergency Medical Services levies from TIF diversion (saves the state cost of uniform levy). (*Senate limits all TIF to 20 years, exempts uniform levy and creates a TIF task force.*)
- Reforms taxpayer statements (input from cities and counties) effective for budgets beginning 7.1.27), and allows online posting. (*Senate only allows online posting.*)
- Creates a \$10 million grant to help local governments pursue consolidation and shared service agreements, and creates FirstHome Iowa Accounts based on the [Iowa 529 Plan](#).

Provisions impacting schools include:

- Lowers the \$5.40 uniform levy to \$5 (changes reorganization incentive tax relief accordingly). Both provisions are effective 7.1.27.
- Extends SAVE to Jan. 1, 2071 (*this is intended to allow districts unable to make bond payments against SAVE, given the next provision to be able to refinance the bonds*).
- Accelerates SAVE contribution to property tax relief (buys down the additional levy to the average, then buys down the \$5.40 levy): The percentage of SAVE diverted annually for property tax relief follows: 12.5% FY27. 15% FY28. 17.5% FY29. 22.5% FY30. 25% FY31 and beyond. (*Senate has no SAVE provisions. The Governor’s proposal had a shorter implementation schedule and diverted 30% of SAVE to property tax relief.*) Requires DOM to reconcile SAVE in the fiscal year immediately following the fiscal year when the revenues were received.
- Allows schools to pay funds to cities to support TIF (but prohibits asking SBRC for corresponding authority).
- Adds a June special election date option for bond elections.
- Limits school district UAB (Unspent authorized budget, or spending authority) to no more than 35% of authorized expenditures (effective July 1, 2026). Makes a district’s on-time modified supplemental amount (MSA) request permissive for SBRC approval. Requires school boards to have a financial policy establishing a targeted range and maximum UAB, reviewed annually. We are opposed to the UAB limitation but support the requirement that a local school board have a financial policy with a UAB-targeted range and a maximum goal.

The bill was amended and passed by the House, 64:23. It is assigned to the Senate Calendar. UEN is undecided.

Advocacy Actions This Week:

There is a new Call to Action regarding SAVE dollars being diverted to property tax relief and extension for the SAVE through 2071. If you have not spoken with your Senator today, find that [UEN Call to Action](#) and make that call!

The Legislature is very close to ending this 2026 Session. We have reached the point where advocates have already expressed concerns about everything else that is left on the legislative agenda. Legislators will focus on the budget and completing any bouncing bills on their priority list. We encourage school leaders to step away from issue advocacy for a couple of weeks, let them finish up their work, and adjourn the Session.

However, watch your inbox for any last minute Calls to Action. When it's all over, look forward to additional resources, including two ISFIS Webinars (one on bills with fiscal impact and another with policy bills), to describe legislative action, define required school actions, report on Governor's signature or veto on any bills with the 30 days following the Session, and the RSAI Legislative Digest which will detail all of the 2026 Session activity impacting schools and provide links to important information important to implementation requirements. We will also prepare resources to connect with candidates, from returning veterans to newbies, as the November 2026 General Election approaches.

In the meantime, write a thank-you note for listening if you reached out to your legislators and bills were amended to reflect UEN's requests. You can also express gratitude for bills that provide additional flexibility to school districts.

We also truly thank all UEN members who paid attention to legislative action this Session! Thanks for connecting with your legislators and reporting their responses back to us. Thank you for repeatedly reaching out, even when it was hard or seemed hopeless. Your collective voices made substantial improvements to several big policy bills possible. In some cases, where policy directions seemed to go the wrong way, know that our work is never done. We will assess after the Session ends, set a list of priorities for the 2027 Session, and make every attempt to limit any negative consequences possible as we prepare for next year.

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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