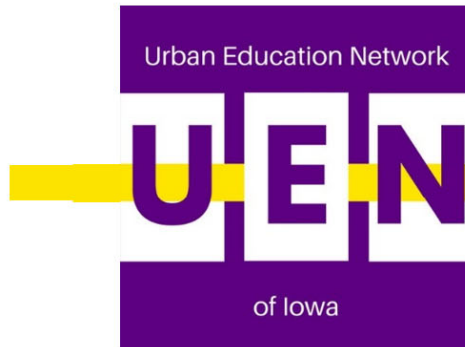


Welcome!



Nov. 19, 2025
Urban Education Network
Annual Meeting
6:00 – 8:30 PM

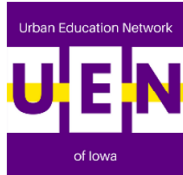


T.J. Schneckloth

Davenport Superintendent

UEN Chair

UEN Member Districts 2025-26



Ames CSD

Ames Community School District
2005 24th Street
Ames, IA 50010
(515) 268-6600
www.ames.k12.ia.us

Bettendorf CSD

Bettendorf Community School District
3311 18th Street
Bettendorf IA 52722
(563) 359-3681
bettendorf.k12.ia.us

Cedar Falls CSD

Cedar Falls Community School District
1002 West First Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 553-3000
www.cfschools.org

College CSD

College Community School District
401 76th Avenue SW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
(319) 484-5200
www.prairiepride.org

Davenport CSD

Davenport Schools
1702 N Main Street
Davenport, IA 52803
(563) 445-5000
www.davenportschools.org

Dubuque CSD

Dubuque Community Schools
2300 Chaney Road
Dubuque, IA 52001
(563) 552-2300
www.dbqschools.org

Ankeny CSD

Ankeny Community School District
306 SW School Street
Ankeny, IA 50023
(515) 965-9600
www.ankenyschools.org

Burlington CSD

Burlington Community School District
1429 West Ave
Burlington, IA 52601
(319) 753-6791
bcsds.org

Cedar Rapids CSD

Cedar Rapids Community School District
2500 Edgewood Road NW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52405
(319) 558-2000
www.crschools.us

Council Bluffs CSD

Council Bluffs Community School District
300 W Broadway, Suite 1600
Council Bluffs, IA 51503
(712) 328-6446
www.cb-schools.org

Des Moines Independent

Des Moines Public Schools
2100 Fleur Drive
Des Moines, IA 50321
(515) 242-7911
www.dmschools.org

Fort Dodge CSD

Fort Dodge Community School District
109 North 25th Street
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
(515) 576-1161
www.fdschools.org

Iowa City CSD

Iowa City Community School District
1725 North Dodge Street
Iowa City, IA 52245
(319) 688-1000
www.iowacityschools.org

Marshalltown CSD

Marshalltown Community School District
1002 South 3rd Avenue
Marshalltown, IA 50158
(641) 754-1000
www.marshalltown.k12.ia.us

Muscatine CSD

Muscatine Community School District
2900 Mulberry Avenue
Muscatine, IA 52761
(563) 263-7223
www.muscatine.k12.ia.us

Sioux City CSD

Sioux City Community Schools
627 4th Street
Sioux City, IA 51101
(712) 279-6667
www.siouxcityschools.org

Storm Lake CSD

Storm Lake Community School District
419 Lake Avenue
Storm Lake, IA 50588
(712) 732-8060
www.storm-lake.k12.ia.us

Waukee CSD

Waukee Community School District
560 SE University Ave
Waukee, IA 50263
(515) 987-5161
www.waukeeschools.org

Linn-Mar CSD

Linn-Mar Community Schools
2999 N Tenth Street
Marion, IA 52302
(319) 447-3000
www.linnmar.k12.ia.us

Mason City CSD

Mason City Community School District
1515 S Pennsylvania Avenue
Mason City, IA 50401
(641) 421-4400
www.masoncityschools.org

Ottumwa CSD

Ottumwa Community School District
1112 N Van Buren
Ottumwa, IA 52501
(641) 684-6597
www.ottumwaschools.com

Southeast Polk CSD

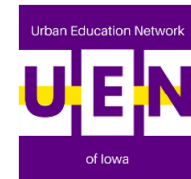
Southeast Polk Community School District
407 8th Street SE
Altoona, IA 50009
(515) 967-4294
www.southeastpolk.org

Waterloo CSD

Waterloo Community School District
1516 Washington Street
Waterloo, IA 50702
(319) 433-1800
www.waterlooschools.org

West Des Moines CSD

West Des Moines Community School District
3550 Mills Civic Parkway
West Des Moines, IA 50065
(515) 633-5000
www.wdmcs.org



Thanks for your service!

- New school board members and new superintendents.
- Outgoing or Retiring Steering Committee Members
- Thanks to continuing Steering Committee Members

The UEN. . .keeps the state's lawmakers, media, and public informed about the progress and problems in our state's largest and most diverse schools, through advocacy, legislation, communications and research.



The UEN... helps to build capacity in urban education by connecting member districts to improve student academic performance, narrow achievement gaps, improve professional development; and strengthen leadership, governance, and management.



COLLABORATION

Facilitating collaborations between UEN members

The UEN Collaborates. . . Joint efforts with other state organizations and policymakers extend the UEN's influence and effectiveness to the broader community that will ultimately benefit from the contributions of today's urban students.



UEN Association Management: ISFIS



Support and staff, accounting, association management, website development and maintenance, billing, meeting organization and tech support. New procedures and policies for UEN operations.

Jen Albers
jen@iowaschoolfinance.com

Policy development, strategic planning, legislative and fiscal analysis.

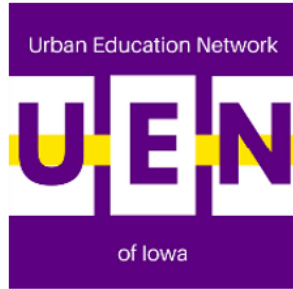
Ken Sturgis
ken@iowaschoolfinance.com

Job-alike meetings for 20 different director-level positions to share best practice, learn together, receive updates and connect with state-level experts.

Margaret Buckton
margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com

Lobbying services, legislative advocacy, communications, media, sharing best practice, survey tools.

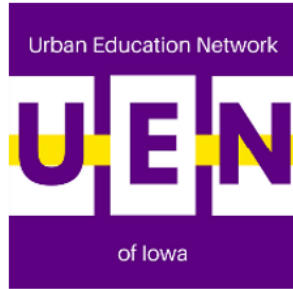




UEN Steering Committee is Governing Board

Steering Committee Duties:

- ❖ Set legislative priorities
- ❖ Set policy
- ❖ Fiduciary oversight
- ❖ Employ Executive Director
- ❖ Approve Contracts



UEN Officers



T.J. Schneckloth
Davenport
UEN Chair



Amy Hawkins
Dubuque
Chair-Elect



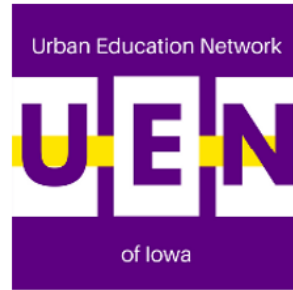
Angel Bemus
Sioux City
Chair Elect II



Matt Degner
Iowa City
Past Chair



Jared Smith
Waterloo
Treasurer

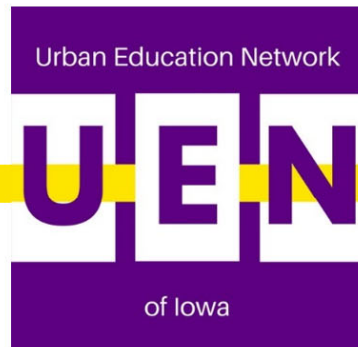


1. About UEN
Students, Staff and
Schools.

2. Report of the
Steering Committee:
2026 Legislative
Priorities

Margaret Buckton
UEN Executive Director
ISFIS Partner

3. Public Support for
Public Schools – leading
for change in challenging
times.



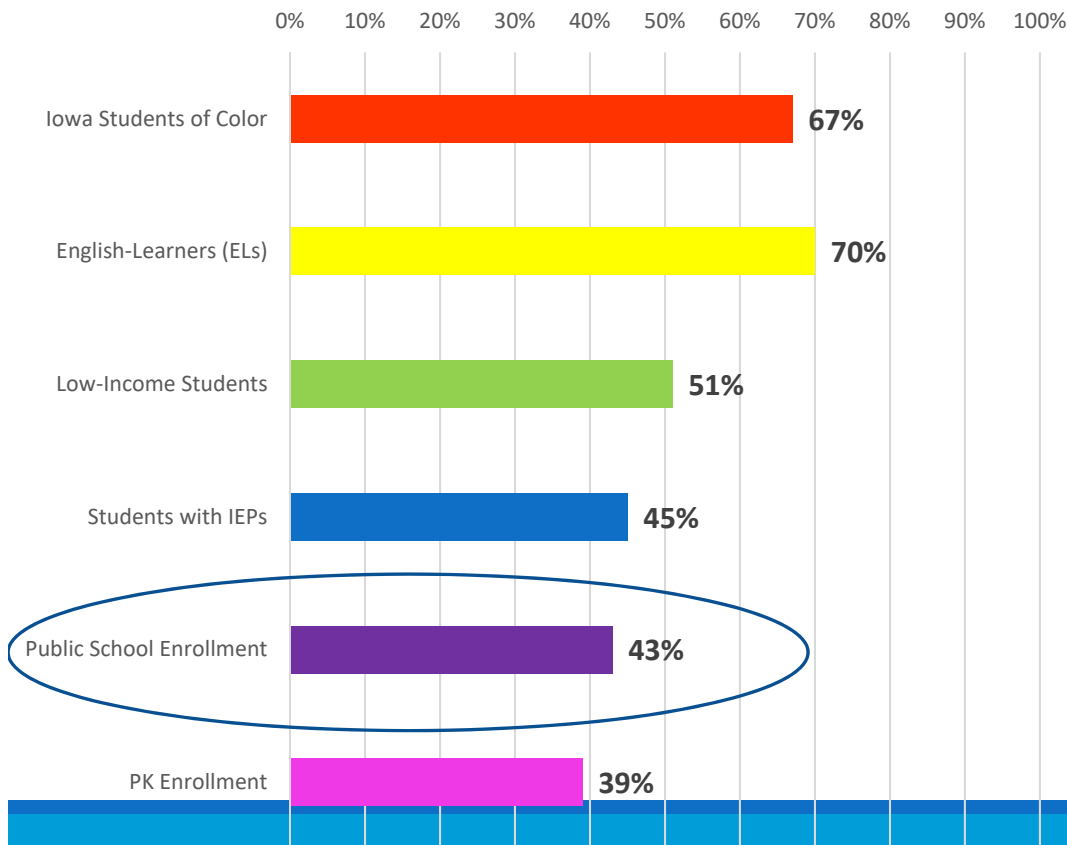
About UEN Students, Staff and Schools.



Facts About UEN Members

Ten of Iowa's largest districts in urban communities with two or more high schools, along with 14 other large school districts with one high school and other urban tendencies, make up the UEN membership. Below are some facts about UEN member districts based on the 2024-25 school year:

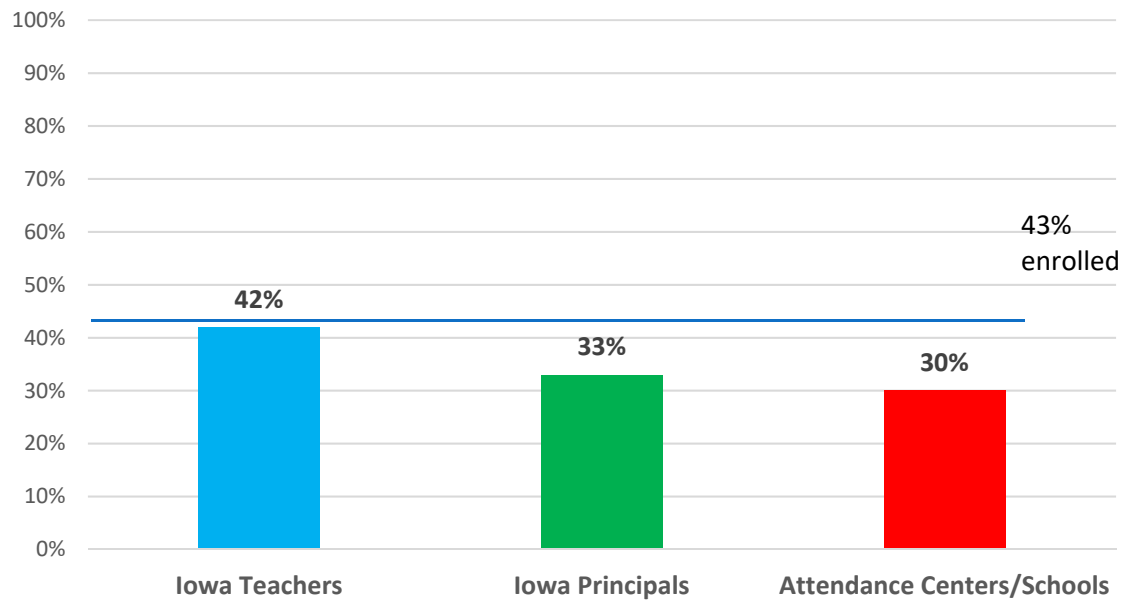
UEN Percent of Total Students



Facts About UEN Members

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UEN Percent of Staff and Schools



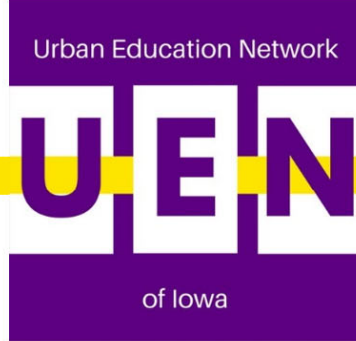


Great things are happening in our UEN Districts every day! Telling the good news about UEN Student, Staff and Community successes is one of the great joys of UEN conversations.

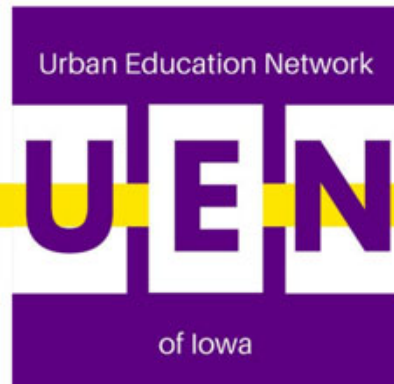


Good News

- ❖ PK Students are doing better than their peers without PK and we have data to prove it.
- ❖ Engaging High School programs are expanding – work based learning, project-based student driven work, cross-curricular learning.
- ❖ Iowa is #1 in the USA in college credits earned in high school per capita.
- ❖ Career and Technical Education opportunities are expanding.
- ❖ Computer programming and other computer courses are available in nearly every UEN district.
- ❖ New STEM Programs/facilities are underway.
- ❖ Attendance is improving.
- ❖ Gov. Reynolds' Press Release: "The most recent NAEP test scores show an 11% increase in reading proficiency among students who were in 3rd grade in the 2023-2024 school year when they were tested again as 4th graders in 2024-2025, according to state officials."
- ❖ Iowa Graduation Rates (cohort 4-year rate) are up slightly, and our urban school graduation rates are better than typical urban school experience.
- ❖ What is something great happening in your school district?



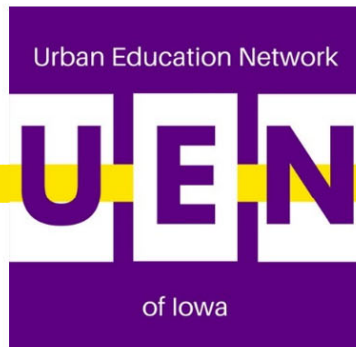
Report of the Steering Committee: 2026 Legislative Priorities



Educating Diverse Students in Iowa's Urban Communities
To Become Successful World Citizens
www.uen-ia.org

Urban Education Network 2026 UEN Priorities Nov. 19, 2025

Invest in Iowa's Future SSA Adequate Funding/ Equity	English Learner Programs and Services	ESAs and School Choice
Teacher, Administrator, Staff Shortage	Literacy: Research-Based Supports and Flexibility	Mental Health Services
Quality PK (1.0 weighting)	High School Programming	District Authority/Local Control
Student Opportunity Equity/Poverty	Special Education ID and Instruction	Safety and Cybersecurity
	New: Property Tax Reform	



The Public's Support for Public Schools:

Navigating Impacts of Declining
Enrollment, School Choice and
Public Opinion

DIVE BRIEF

American satisfaction with K-12 hits record low — but parents tell a different story

Some 74% of U.S. parents say they are satisfied with their eldest child's education, a recent Gallup poll found.

Published Sept. 17, 2025



[Naaz Modan](#)
Senior Reporter



Getty Images

K-12 Dive Brief

<https://www.k12dive.com/news/american-satisfaction-with-k-12-hits-record-low-but-parents-tell-a-differ/760399/>

American Satisfaction Poll

Only 35% of Americans are satisfied with the K-12 education system — a record low since Gallup began polling on the subject 26 years ago.

Some 62% say they are at least somewhat dissatisfied, and 73% also say that schools are headed in the wrong direction.

The low level of satisfaction marks an 8-percentage-point drop [since last year](#) and is even below the previous [historical lows recorded](#) in 2000 and 2023, according to [Gallup results released on Wednesday](#).

However, about 74% of parents say they are at least somewhat satisfied with their eldest child's education, and only 23% say they are dissatisfied to some extent. *Parent satisfaction has averaged around 76% since 1999. This is up from 70% last year, as schools were building back relationships with parents and students post COVID.*

Enrollment & School Choice

DE Projections for Statewide Enrollment:

- From Oct 20 to Oct 24, there was a statewide decline of 0.8%
- The next 5 years (Oct 25 to Oct 29) is projected to have a statewide decline of almost 3% (Based on Grade Progression)
- May not fully account for ESAs, Homeschool, Online Academies, Immigration Policy Changes
- Anecdotal accounts everywhere – 21 of 24 UEN districts have lower enrollment as of Oct. 2025
- Districts reported drops for the October 2025 count (big, small, rural, urban). Were these expected? Will they continue or is it a blip?

Source: DE [2024 Annual Condition of Education Report](#)
ISFIS Calculations

Enrollment Changes

Enrollment	2019-20 Actuals	2023-24 Actuals	DE Projections for 24-25	2024-25 Actuals	Difference Projection to Actual	
Public School	490,094	483,699	480,147	475,459	-4,688	-1.0%
Nonpublic School	33,485	36,615	39,452	39,562	110	0.3%
Total	522,981	520,314	519,599	515,021	-4,578	-0.9%

- DE projections can be found on the [DE's Education Statistics](#) Website.
- Projections are individualized to specific districts.
- Projections are tracking Certified Enrollment
- Data is based on a grade progression (1st graders become 2nd graders, etc.)
- Kindergarten classes are “based on historical ratios of past estimates of the number of live births...”

What about next year?

- Education Savings Account Approved Applications Fall 2025: 43,784
- Open enrollment statewide 2024-25 was 43,188. Has exceeded private school enrollment every year since 2019-20. Depending on your district, open enrollment may have more impact than ESAs, in either direction.
- By next fall, 17 charter schools will have been approved to open (10 are already up and running)
- Lower birthrates – all of these systems are competing for fewer students.

Why do we care?

- Enrollment counts are lumpy but funding is linear (over \$11,100 per pupil)
- Programs and staff compensation must echo enrollment changes (in either direction)
- Only two variables impact the budget: the per pupil cost set by the state (SSA) and enrollment. Choices:
 - The Legislature must set a higher SSA which takes organized and strategic advocacy
 - District must keep every student currently attending and must attract back those who have chosen other options
 - Cut the budget - Reduce programs and staff

Politics of Public School Funding (the bad news)

- Priority of tax reduction – reduced state general funds due to income tax reductions. May repeat with property taxes (if they can agree on PTR legislation)
- Per US Census 2023, Iowa ranks 35th in the nation in per pupil spending, or \$2,741 below the national average. (That would take \$1.3 Billion to get to average.)
- Fewer students in schools means larger percentage of voters are less connected to school.
- 60% supermajority passage for bond issues.

Politics of Public School Funding (the good news)

- Fewer students means it costs the state less to set a higher SSA rate.
- Parents generally support their school.
- ESA recipient families also receive the State Cost per Pupil as set by the legislature – can help advocate for enough funding.
- Public generally cares about students – if you can break through the noise.
- Dissatisfaction (school moving in the wrong direction) may be result of low funding and legislative micromanagement. That might mean more people are with you than you think.
- Business Community was one of the key players in starting Statewide Voluntary PK Program and would benefit from full day programs for 4-year olds (more parents in the workforce today and more qualified workforce in the future)

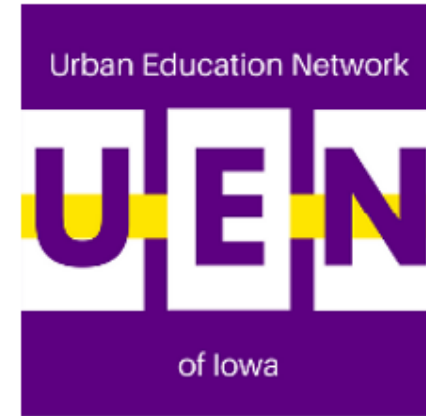
Think Abouts???



- Does this information change how your district might better communicate with stakeholders?
- Are parents your only advocacy/relationship focus?
- What about staff? Are they supportive of your school? Will they work hard to get your bond issue passed?
- Who else could care?
- In a hyper-partisan environment, navigating change and garnering more public support seems daunting. What can you do about it?

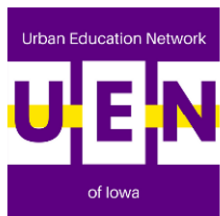
Enjoy Dinner:

1. Share something great going on in your school district. Does your public know about it?
2. Some strategic planning and active engagement is necessary.
3. After dinner, Lisa and Dana from SAI will lead us through some strategic thinking about leadership for change.



Closing Remarks

T. J. Schneckloth
Davenport, UEN Chair



THANK YOU FOR YOUR VOICE on behalf of urban Iowa students, parents, school staff and communities!

Margaret Buckton,
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RSAI Professional Advocate
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1201 63rd Street, Des Moines, IA 50311
(515) 201-3755 cell

Ken Sturgis, School Finance Director
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(515) 251-5970 x6

Jen Albers, Director of Finance and Operations
jen@iowaschoolfinance.com
(515) 251-5970 x4

Stay connected through the Interim and
into the Legislative Session.

Let us know what you need to support your advocacy efforts.