

# Welcome!

Nov. 15, 2023  
Urban Education Network  
Annual Meeting  
6:00 – 8:30 PM

## **Welcome to New UEN Leaders!!!**

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**Congrats to New School Board  
Members! Thanks for opting in!**

**Welcome to New UEN  
Superintendents and staff, too!**

# UEN Member Districts 2023-24



## Ames CSD

Ames Community School District  
2008 24th Street  
Ames, IA 50010  
(515) 281-6500  
www.ames.k12.ia.us

## Bettendorf CSD

Bettendorf Community School District  
3311 18th Street  
Bettendorf, IA 52722  
(563) 358-3685  
bettendorf.k12.ia.us

## Cedar Falls CSD

Cedar Falls Community School District  
1002 West First Street  
Cedar Falls, IA 50603  
(319) 651-3000  
www.chcfschools.org

## College CSD

College Community School District  
401 76th Avenue SW  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404  
(319) 484-3000  
www.collegepride.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) 592-2300  
www.dbschools.org

## Ankeny CSD

Ankeny Community School District  
306 SW School Street  
Ankeny, IA 50023  
(515) 955-9500  
www.ankenyschools.org

## Burlington CSD

Burlington Community School District  
1429 West Ave  
Burlington, IA 52601  
(319) 753-4399  
bcsd.org

## Cedar Rapids CSD

Cedar Rapids Community School District  
2500 Edgewood Road NW  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52405  
(319) 651-3000  
www.crschools.us

## Council Bluffs CSD

Council Bluffs Community School District  
300 W Broadway, Suite 1600  
Council Bluffs, IA 51903  
(712) 326-6446  
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) 576-1181  
www.fdschools.org

## Iowa City CSD

Iowa City Community School District  
1725 South 3rd Dodge Street  
Iowa City, IA 52245  
(319) 668-1000  
www.iowacityschools.org

## Marshalltown CSD

Marshalltown Community School District  
1003 South 3rd Avenue  
Marshalltown, IA 50158  
(641) 784-1000  
www.marshalltown.k12.ia.us

## Muscatine CSD

Muscatine Community School District  
2900 Mulberry Avenue  
Muscatine, IA 52791  
(563) 252-7222  
www.muscatine.k12.ia.us

## Sioux City CSD

Sioux City Community Schools  
607 4th Street  
Sioux City, IA 51101  
(712) 279-4667  
www.siouxcityschools.org

## Storm Lake CSD

Storm Lake Community School District  
410 Lake Avenue  
Storm Lake, IA 52669  
(712) 732-8050  
www.stormlake.k12.ia.us

## Waukee CSD

Waukee Community School District  
560 SE University Ave  
Waukee, IA 50263  
(515) 928-1581  
www.wauschools.org

## Linn-Mar CSD

Linn-Mar Community Schools  
22991 N 16th Street  
Maion, IA 52392  
(319) 447-3000  
www.linnmar.k12.ia.us

## Mason City CSD

Mason City Community School District  
1015 S Pennsylvania Avenue  
Mason City, IA 50401  
(641) 421-4400  
www.masoncityschools.org

## Ottumwa CSD

Ottumwa Community School District  
112 N Van Buren  
Ottumwa, IA 52501  
(515) 934-9297  
www.ottumwaschools.com

## Southeast Polk CSD

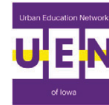
Southeast Polk Community School District  
407 8th Street SE  
Sioux City, IA 50099  
(712) 902-4394  
www.southseepolk.org

## Waterloo CSD

Waterloo Community School District  
1016 Washington Street  
Waterloo, IA 50672  
(319) 433-1050  
www.waterlooschools.org

## West Des Moines CSD

West Des Moines Community School District  
3550 Mills Civic Parkway  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
(515) 828-8000  
www.wdmschools.org



**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 facilitating connections between member districts to improve student academic performance, narrow achievement gaps, improve professional development; and strengthen leadership, governance, and management



**The UEN. . .** 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](mailto:jen@iowaschoolfinance.com)

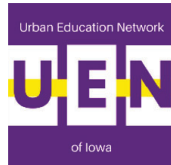
Policy development, strategic planning, legislative and fiscal analysis.

Larry Sigel  
[larry@iowaschoolfinance.com](mailto:larry@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](mailto:margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com)

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



## UEN Steering Committee is Governing Board

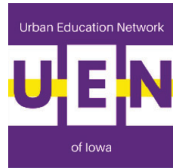
### Steering Committee Make-up:

Four Superintendents and Four Board members from original 8 UEN charter districts, of which 5 constitute a quorum.

All other districts have a vote on the Steering Committee too.

### Steering Committee Duties:

- ❖ Set legislative priorities
- ❖ Set policy
- ❖ Fiduciary oversight
- ❖ Employs Executive Director
- ❖ Approves Contracts



# UEN Officers



**Matt Degner**  
Iowa City  
UEN Chair



**T.J. Schneckloth**  
Davenport  
Chair-Elect



**Amy Hawkins**  
Dubuque  
Chair-Elect II



**Vickie Murillo**  
Council Bluffs  
Past Chair

## Chris LaFerla Council Bluffs

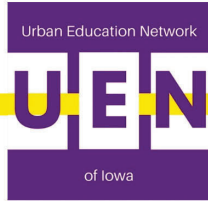
- Council Bluffs CSD School Board Member, Nov. 2015 to Nov. 2023
- Executive Director, Council Bluffs Schools Foundation, Oct. 2017 to Nov. 2023
- Dean of Admissions and Records, Iowa Western Community College, 2012 to 2018



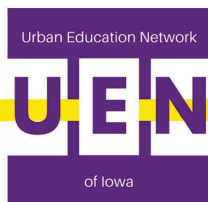
Chris LaFerla  
Executive Director

[claferla@cbsf.org](mailto:claferla@cbsf.org)  
(712) 396-2081

**Education is Everybody's Business**



After dinner, look forward to Info about our 2024 UEN Legislative Priorities and Networking conversations about student achievement work and supporting new School Board Members in our Urban Schools.

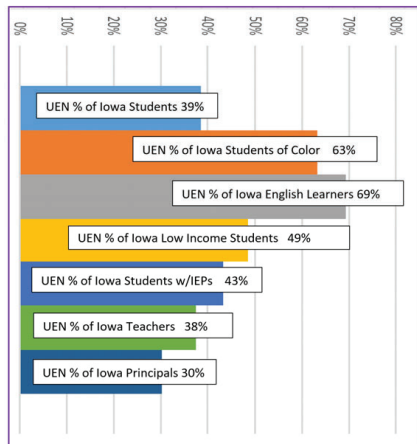


## UEN and Your 2024 Legislative Priorities

Margaret Buckton  
UEN Executive Director

## 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 2022-23 school year:



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## A few more facts . . . UEN Districts

- Educate 26,443 students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) (43% of state total)
- Maintain 360 attendance centers, including 40 high schools, 55 middle schools, 230 elementary schools, 17 PKs and 18 others (alternative schools, virtual schools, college prep academies, etc.)
- Transport students 10.1 million route miles annually (FY 2022)
- Have an average daily student attendance rate of 90.5% (FY 2023)
- Graduate 90% of students in the 5-year graduation cohort (FY 2022)
- Offer a wide range of programs and opportunities: College credits or credentials earned in high school, Opportunities for fine arts, speech, drama, programs connecting academics and passions for students, Neighborhood schools with individual student choice for academic course of action



**Thank you to UEN 2023-24 Corporate Sponsors**

More information about UEN Corporate Sponsors at: [www.uen.org/uen-sponsors](http://www.uen.org/uen-sponsors)



Boardworks provides interactive and engaging content for K-12 Math, Science, ELA, History, and Spanish, all aligned to state learning standards. With thousands of editable slides, animations, formative assessments, and virtual labs available in an easy-to-use format, Boardworks resources help teachers save time, engage students, and maximize the use of existing classroom technology. Discounts available to RSAI members. Download [Boardworks Software Flyer](#) here. Contact [inquiries@boardworksed.com](mailto:inquiries@boardworksed.com) for more information. [www.boardworkseducation.com](http://www.boardworkseducation.com)

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instructional technology use by implementing award-winning tools that create valuable insights for teachers and leaders. Their intuitive cloud-based solutions allow educators to identify and infuse equitable practices that promote individual student achievement through actionable data. Contact [Andrew Sudiswa](mailto:Andrew.Sudiswa) for a demo of their products or for more information. [www.myedpower.com](http://www.myedpower.com)



Public Progress LLC is an Iowa company providing districts and schools across the country with education consulting services. We specialize in working with leadership teams and school boards on strategic planning, conducting needs assessments, and delivering customized solutions for the district-wide implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for continuous improvement. Download [Public Progress printable flyer](#). Contact [admin@thepublicprogress.com](mailto:admin@thepublicprogress.com) for more information. [thepublicprogress.com/](http://thepublicprogress.com/)

Solution Tree has been a trusted resource of professional learning for school districts in Iowa for more than 20 years. We provide the highest quality of customized support to ensure the success for all students statewide. The state office was established in July 2022 solely to support Iowa educators in transforming education that ensures that all students are learning at high levels. The state office provides a unique state and local perspective in supporting school districts. We are dedicated to serving as a resource for districts looking for proven and research-based solutions developed by skilled practitioners who have done the work. Download [Solution Tree printable flyer](#). Contact [iowa@solutiontree.com](mailto:iowa@solutiontree.com) for more information. [www.solutiontree.com/st-states/iowa](http://www.solutiontree.com/st-states/iowa)

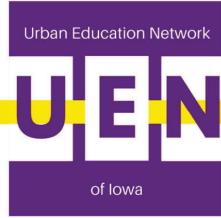


Thank You to our  
UEN Corporate  
Sponsors.



# Report of the Steering Committee: 2024 Legislative Priorities





Educating Diverse Students in Iowa's Urban Communities  
 To Become Successful World Citizens  
[www.uen-ia.org](http://www.uen-ia.org)

## Urban Education Network Legislative Priorities for 2024 Session

*Recommended by Legislative Workgroup 10/23/2023*  
 Approved by UEN Steering Committee Meeting 11/15/2023

<b>Invest in Iowa's Future / SSA / Equity</b>	<b>ELL Programs</b>	<b>ESAs and School Choice</b>
<b>Teacher, Administrator, Staff Shortage</b>	<b>Literacy/Science of Reading Supports and Flexibility</b>	<b>Mental Health Services</b>
<b>Quality PK (1.0 weighting)</b>	<b>High School Programming</b>	<b>District Authority/Local Control</b>
<b>Opportunity Equity/Poverty</b>	<b>Special Education ID and Instruction</b>	<b>Cybersecurity and Safety</b>

## Invest in Iowa's Future:

Adequate funding provides program and delivery options and individual student place-based choice within a neighborhood public school. The goals of public education, in addition to teaching basic skills, are to close achievement gaps, provide career exploration and work-based learning experiences, fine arts, and extracurriculars to help students develop skills and find their passions. Quality education prepares all students for engaged citizenship, postsecondary study and/or credentialed workforce participation.

Adequate funding helps public schools respond to student needs, provide individualized attention and build better relationships via smaller classes. Schools must hire and competitively compensate staff to nurture and challenge today's students. Iowans expect top-notch public schools.

# Invest in Iowa's Future:

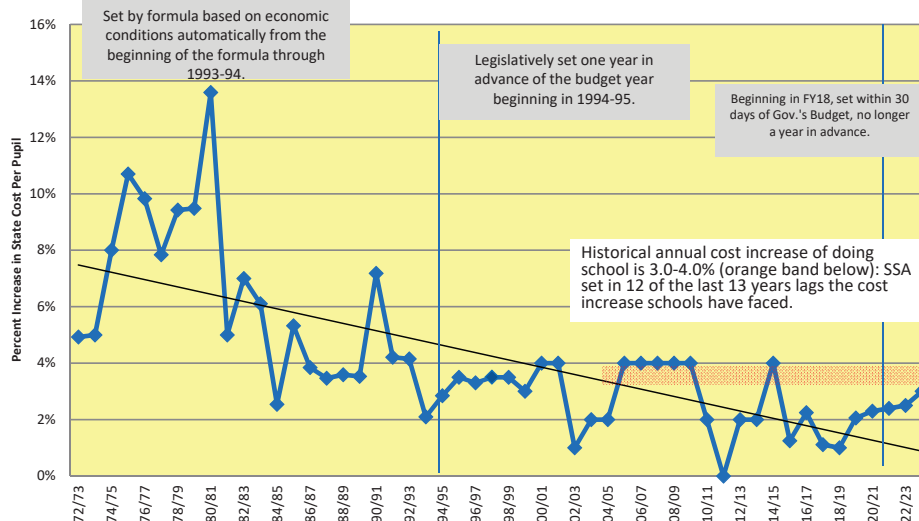
High-quality public schools provide the business community with a great recruitment and economic development tool. Funding levels should reflect Iowa citizens' recognition that education drives family decisions for where to live, work and go to school in every community. Schools are subject to market economics and must have adequate funding and more flexibility to address teacher and other staff shortages in Iowa's competitive employment environment.

Iowa's funding formula includes meaningful and significant categorical funds that support teachers, school improvement and students. UEN supports adequate and timely Supplemental State Aid (SSA), at least meeting the inflation rate. Funding should be set predictably, timely, sustainably and equitably. Continued progress on inequity within the formula is important.

**Messaging:** *return on investment, programs for students, individual supports/choice, learning gaps, workforce, citizenship, keeping up with inflation & Iowa's strong economy, competitive labor market.*



## Iowa State Cost Per Pupil Funding History



SSA is "Supplemental State Aid." Last year's 3.0% is the second highest increase in 14 years and still lags inflation.

# 2022 Session Historic Tax Cuts

**Historic Tax Cuts Enacted:** HF 2317 was signed by the Governor on March 1. RSAI opposed the bill, which will reduce general fund revenue significantly, hindering the ability of the state to adequately fund schools and other essential state services. During the debate, there was strong difference of opinion, with the Republicans stating that these tax cuts will stimulate Iowa's economic growth and the Democrats stating that other states' experiences have not delivered such growth. This chart from the [LSA Fiscal Note](#) shows the total estimated reduction of taxes:

**Figure 2**  
Projected Change in Tax Liability and State General Fund Revenue  
In Millions

Division	Item	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
I	Qualified Stock Exemption	\$ 0.0	\$ -4.0	\$ -7.6	\$ -10.3	\$ -9.6	\$ -9.5
II	Farm Lease Income Exemption	0.0	-2.1	-2.0	-1.8	-1.5	-1.6
III	Farm Capital Gains Exemption	0.0	-7.2	-6.9	-6.1	-5.4	-5.7
IV and V	Tax Rate Reduction	-37.3	-135.7	-352.1	-948.2	-1,397.1	-1,413.4
VI	Retirement Income Exemption	-179.6	-353.3	-340.6	-359.8	-363.9	-376.4
N, V, and VI	Rate Reduction and Exemption Interaction *	0.2	7.0	25.9	80.6	109.8	99.5
	Individual Income Tax Total	\$ -216.7	\$ -495.3	\$ -683.3	\$ -1,245.6	\$ -1,667.1	\$ -1,707.1
IX and X	Corporate Income Tax Rate Reduction	\$ -19.6	\$ -79.6	\$ -109.8	\$ -135.3	\$ -182.1	\$ -229.4
VII	Research Activities Tax Credit	\$ 0.0	\$ 13.1	\$ 23.7	\$ 30.0	\$ 36.6	\$ 44.8
VIII	Assistive Device Tax Credit	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
VIII	Historic Preservation Tax Credit	0.0	0.3	1.2	2.3	3.3	4.4
VIII	Redevelopment Tax Credit	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
VII	Research Activities Tax Credit (Supplemental)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2
VIII	Third-Party Developer Tax Credit	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
	Tax Credits Total	\$ 0.0	\$ 13.5	\$ 25.0	\$ 32.5	\$ 40.2	\$ 49.7
	Total Projected Change Compared to Current Law	\$ -236.3	\$ -561.4	\$ -768.1	\$ -1,348.4	\$ -1,809.0	\$ -1,886.8

\* The tax reduction and retirement income components were estimated separately and in combination. This table presents the fiscal impacts separately, and the final line of the table adjusts for the interaction of the two tax reductions.

\$1.8 B  
revenue  
loss by  
FY 2027  
(about  
20%)

## How much money does the state have?

FY 2023 Surplus: (\$100 million above estimate)	\$1.8 Billion
Est. FY 2024 Taxpayer Relief Fund:	\$3.6 Billion
Est. FY 2024 Cash Reserve Fund:	\$721 Million
Est. FY 2024 Economic Emergency Fund:	<u>\$241 Million</u>
	\$6.4 Billion

LSA General Fund Balance Sheet:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/EOS/1374050.pdf>

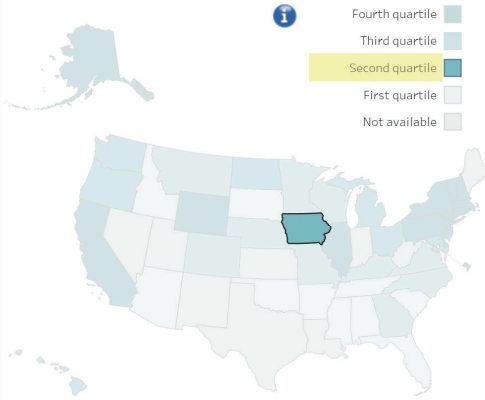
# How Did COVID-19 Affect School Finances?

Preliminary Release and 10-Year Comparison of Data From Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Annual Survey of School System Finances

For optimal experience, click on the map. (Some states are not available. Refer to the disclaimer for more details.)

Iowa

Per Pupil Current Spending by Weighted Quartile and State: FY 2022



Per Pupil Current Spending: FY 2013–2022



IA: \$13,259  
 USA: \$16,340  
 Gap: \$3,081  
 Rank: 35<sup>th</sup>

Source: <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/how-did-covid-19-affect-school-finances.html>

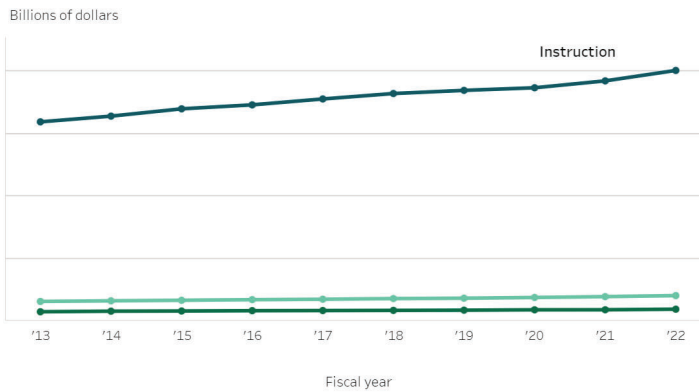
## Current Spending for Iowa: FY 2013 to FY 2022

Current Spending by School Finance Function

Select the function(s) to display on the graph.

(Multiple values)

- (All)
- Food services
- General administration
- Instruction
- Instructional staff support
- Operation and maintenance
- Other current spending
- Other/nonspecified support
- Pupil support
- Pupil transportation
- School administration



Note: Statistics are not adjusted for inflation and do not account for geographic cost differences.



U.S. Department of Commerce  
 U.S. CENSUS BUREAU  
 census.gov

Source: 2022 Annual Survey of School System Finances (preliminary release).



## Messages you'll likely hear and *Responses/Questions:*

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- Iowa gives 57% of our general fund to education. We'll try to keep it at that level. *(Does that include the funding for private school ESA's estimated to exceed half a billion by 2027?)*
- Schools have plenty of federal ESSER money, so you don't need a big increase. *(Many districts have spent all of the federal money and others have obligated it. The funding cliff is just about here. To keep working on closing achievement gaps and recovering learning loss, the state will have to participate.)*
- Iowa has a \$1.8 billion surplus and over \$3 billion in the taxpayer relief fund, so it's time to return that money to the taxpayers. *(The 2022 income tax cuts are still being phased in. Ask your legislators for a balanced approach – even 20% of the surplus could accomplish some critical important investments in public schools and students.)*

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## What does the \$\$\$ buy?

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- People: 80% of school general funds typically provide the staff, or human capital, to support and educate students. Fewer adults means increased class sizes, fewer course offerings/choices, less student engagement.
- Music and art programs, extracurriculars, theater/speech/debate, career exploration/internships and college credit while in high school all help students find their passions and develop their skills. These programs, sometimes thought of as “extras” are primary to student engagement and success.

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## Teacher, Administrator, Staff Shortage

*State and local leaders must generate enthusiasm for teaching by speaking about and treating educators with deserved respect to both attract new teachers to Iowa and keep great Iowa teachers in classrooms. Adequate funding is essential for public schools to compete with the private sector in hiring new and retaining experienced employees. New policies should be implemented to help schools recruit, attract and retain educators that mirror our diverse students, such as licensure flexibility, additional nontraditional intern programs with adequate pedagogy/on-the-job classroom exposure, grow-your-own, tuition support, and loan forgiveness programs. Iowa's Future Ready Workforce efforts should include an educator focus to replenish the talent pool and attract high school and college students to a career in education.*

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## Teacher, Administrator, Staff Shortage

UEN supports SF 392, which allows use of the Management Fund for loan forgiveness and recruitment programs. Research demonstrates that good administrators are critical for supporting teachers to thrive in classrooms. Pressures to limit administrative staff and expenses only serve to move paperwork and compliance to teachers. Investments and expectations for increasing teacher pay, included for all licensed staff in classrooms or other roles in school districts, requires additional funding above and beyond the SSA rate.

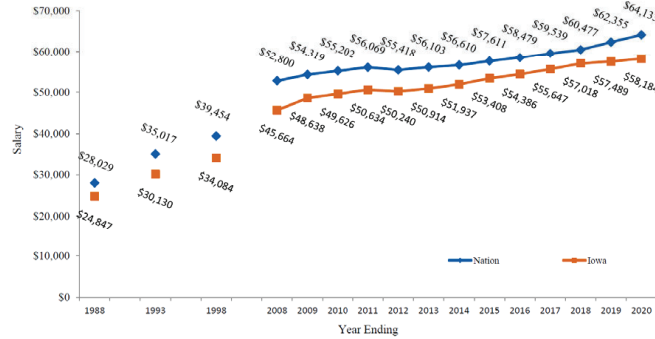
***Messaging:*** *Iowa's growing economy and inflation have made private sector jobs more attractive. Fewer college students are choosing education careers. Student loan debt and lower beginning teacher pay drives new teachers to other states. Private school ESAs will create another drain on the pool of teachers and staff. Political rhetoric targeting teachers diminishes the appeal of the job.*

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Gap between Iowa Average Teacher Salary and the National Average in 2019 is \$4,815 (in 1988, the gap was \$3,182). With significant teacher shortages across the nation, beginning teacher pay is also a critical comparison.

Figure 3-3

Average Salaries of Public School Teachers for Iowa and the Nation, 1987-1988, 1992-1993, 1997-1998 and 2007-2008 to 2019-2020



Source: National Education Association, Rankings and Estimates of School Statistics.

<https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/2022%20Rankings%20and%20Estimates%20Report.pdf>

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 est'd
Iowa \$	57,489	58,184	58,831	59,262
USA \$	62,304	64,133	65,293	66,397
IA-USA	(\$4,815)	(\$5,949)	(\$6,462)	(\$7,135)

Average Annual Starting Salary by State, 2019-20

State	Average Annual Starting Teacher Salary	State	Average Annual Starting Teacher Salary
District of Columbia	\$56,313	South Dakota	\$39,636
New Jersey	\$53,177	Arizona	\$39,057
California	\$49,303	New Hampshire	\$38,990
Washington	\$49,113	Tennessee	\$38,809
Alaska	\$48,469	Florida	\$38,724
Hawaii	\$48,428	Wisconsin	\$38,678
Maryland	\$47,959	Georgia	\$38,509
Massachusetts	\$47,396	Kansas	\$38,314
New York	\$47,181	Oregon	\$38,280
Connecticut	\$46,905	Idaho	\$38,015
Wyoming	\$46,558	Oklahoma	\$37,992
Pennsylvania	\$46,232	West Virginia	\$37,978
Texas	\$44,582	Iowa	\$37,908
Rhode Island	\$43,569	Indiana	\$37,573
Delaware	\$43,092	Ohio	\$37,569
Utah	\$43,026	South Carolina	\$37,550
Virginia	\$42,069	Michigan	\$37,549
Louisiana	\$41,747	Kentucky	\$37,238
New Mexico	\$41,214	North Carolina	\$37,049
U.S. Average	\$41,163	Mississippi	\$36,543
Alabama	\$41,028	Maine	\$36,380
Nevada	\$40,732	Nebraska	\$35,820
Illinois	\$40,484	Colorado	\$35,292
Minnesota	\$40,310	Arkansas	\$35,201
Vermont	\$40,241	Missouri	\$32,970
North Dakota	\$40,106	Montana	\$32,871

Note: Annual starting salary is defined as the salary paid to a teacher with a bachelor's degree and no prior experience. Annual starting salaries were collected by the National Education Association from district teacher salary schedules or district compensation plans. The national average is calculated as the average across districts. Annual starting salaries vary by district, so within states there are locales that offer starting salaries higher and lower than the state average.

Source: NEA 2019-2020 Teacher Salary Benchmark Report.

In 2019-20, Iowa ranked 38 in beginning teacher pay.

<https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/understanding-teacher-compensation-state-by-state-analysis>

**Table 3-1**

Characteristics of Iowa Full-Time Teachers 2000-2001, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021

Characteristics	Public			Nonpublic		
	2000-2001	2019-2020	2020-2021	2000-2001	2019-2020	2020-2021
Average Age	42.2	40.7	40.8	40.3	43.0	43.2
Percent Female	70.5%	76.1%	76.3%	80.3%	82.1%	81.1%
Percent Minority	1.8%	2.7%	2.8%	0.9%	3.0%	2.7%
Percent Advanced Degree	27.0%	37.5%	37.9%	13.1%	17.0%	18.1%
Average Total Experience	15.1	13.5	13.5	12.3	15.0	15.2
Average District/AEA Experience	11.9	10.3	10.3	8.8	10.7	11.0
Number of Teachers	33,610	37,567	38,022	2,437	1,680	1,562

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis, Basic Educational Data Survey, Staff files.

Note: State total 'Number of Teachers' includes AEA teachers.

Although minority students now make up 26.1% of the public-school K-12 enrollment, Iowa's full time teachers are only 2.8% minority. Since UEN districts educate 77% of minority students, this lack of diversity is even more concerning.

## Quality Preschool

### (New standalone priority)

Iowa's preschool program, initiated with strong support from the business community nearly a decade ago, should generate 1.0 weighting for full-day programming, including wrap-around services and childcare for low-income and non-English speaking students. Such funding delivers a proven return on investment for both student achievement and taxpayers, while also freeing up childcare slots for younger children and allowing parents to fully participate in full-time employment. Additionally, schools should be allowed to use General Fund dollars or generate spending authority to pay for preschool expansion.

**Messaging:** *FAST data shows that students with quality PK have higher student achievement than students without that experience. Lack of child care is a barrier to working for many parents.*

Education Commission of the States, <http://www.ecs.org/docs/early-learning-primer.pdf> Oct. 2014: *Six rigorous, long-term evaluation studies have found that children who participated in high-quality preschool programs were:*

- 25% less likely to drop out of school.
- 40% less likely to become a teen parent.
- 50% less likely to be placed in special education.
- 60% less likely to never attend college.
- 70% less likely to be arrested for a violent crime.



# Student Opportunity Equity (Close the Gap)

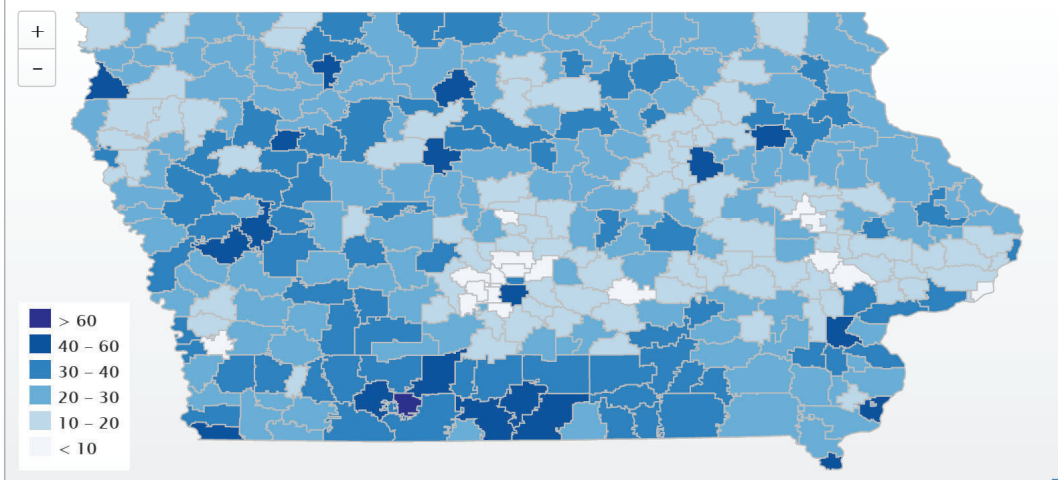
## Student Opportunity Equity

Many Iowa students start school behind their peers, some by several grade levels. With the near doubling of free and reduced-priced lunch participation, an education marker for poverty, the needs of many of Iowa's students are intense. Iowa's funding formula should include targeted funding based on the actual costs of closing achievement gaps for at-risk students living in poverty.

***Messaging:** Keep up with the nation, close achievement gaps, future workforce, ROI, long term tax savings. See UEN Issue Brief for more information and advocacy messages.*

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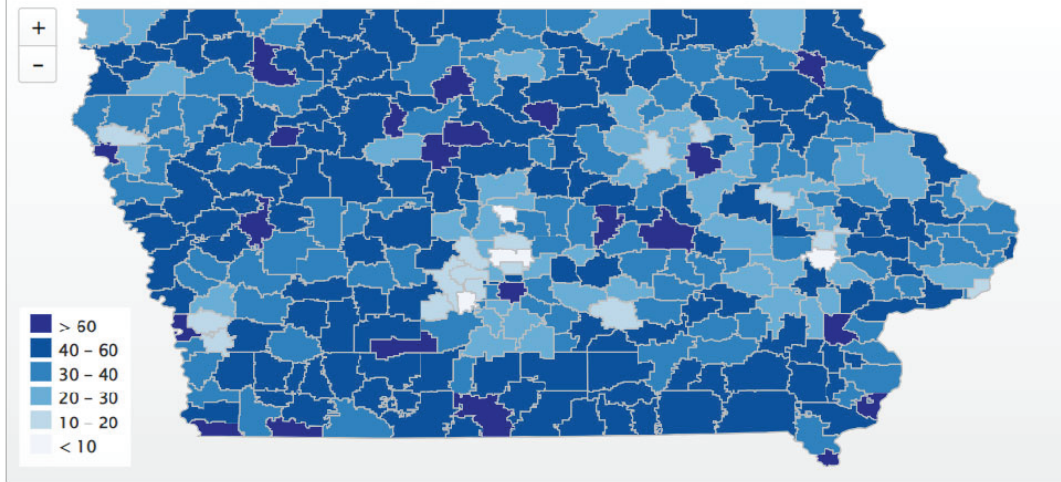
Free and Reduced Pct (FY 2001)



In 2001, only 4 districts had more than 50% of students eligible for FRPL (Waterloo, Keokuk, Wayne and Diagonal. Diagonal was the state high at 60.2% and the only district above 60%)

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Free and Reduced Pct (FY 2023)



In FY 2023, of the 74 districts with more than half of their student on FRPL: 12 are urban (62 are rural). 21 districts have more than 60% of students eligible for FRPL. Those above 70% include Clay Central-Everly, South Page, Waterloo (73.4%), Postville, Des Moines (77.2%).

## English Language Learner Programs and Services

Increased weighting commensurate with the costs of programs and support for students is needed to provide services for Iowa's English-language learners. Such investments will support the employment of appropriately credentialed staff and effective programs, closing learning gaps for these students. Ultimately, quality English Learner services build strong communities and a strong workforce.

**Messaging:** English-learner population growing fast in urban and some county seat school districts. The percent of students who are ELL increased to 6.6% of public school students in 2022 compared to the prior year. Almost 70% of all ELs in Iowa are in UEN districts. 5-year state funding is enough for young immigrants, but it takes 7 years or longer for some students to become English proficient. Investments early improve outcomes for students later. See 2013 ELL Task Force for recommendations.

# Literacy

Literacy is the gateway skill to full participation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. UEN supports state investment in improved literacy instruction with a solid research base, known as the Science of Reading. Such support involves training, materials and formative assessment tools. State support must recognize and respect the local control required to implement initiatives with fidelity.

**Messaging:** Reading instruction is rocket science and takes training and continual study. Literacy is an economic and cultural survival skill needed for success. The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy engaged Gallup to estimate the cost of adult literacy to the US economy. Gallup estimates that low levels of adult literacy could be costing the U.S. as much \$2.2 trillion a year. Source: [Readability Matters Sep 15, 2020](#)

“America’s low literacy crisis is largely ignored, historically underfunded and woefully under-researched, despite being one of the great solvable problems of our time. We’re proud to enrich the collective knowledge base with this first-of-its-kind study, documenting literacy’s key role in equity and economic mobility in families, communities and our nation as a whole.” British A. Robinson, President and CEO The Barbara Bush Foundation

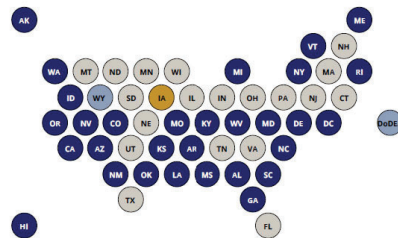
New Priority: Issue Brief pending

## The Nation's Report Card

### OVERALL RESULTS

- In 2022, the average score of fourth-grade students in Iowa was 240. This was higher than the average score of 235 for students in the nation.
- The average score for students in Iowa in 2022 (240) was not significantly different from their average score in 2019 (241) and was higher than their average score in 2000 (231).
- The percentage of students in Iowa who performed at or above the *NAEP Proficient* level was 40 percent in 2022. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2019 (42 percent) and was greater than that in 2000 (26 percent).
- The percentage of students in Iowa who performed at or above the *NAEP Basic* level was 80 percent in 2022. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2019 (81 percent) and was greater than that in 2000 (75 percent).

### COMPARE THE AVERAGE SCORE IN 2022 TO OTHER STATES/JURISDICTIONS



In 2022, the average score in Iowa (240) was  
■ lower than those in 2 states/jurisdictions  
■ higher than those in 30 states/jurisdictions  
■ not significantly different from those in 19 states/jurisdictions

DoDEA = Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools).  
 NOTE: Puerto Rico was not included in the comparison results.

- Only 2 states/jurisdictions higher than Iowa in 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading in 2022 (WY and DoDEA)
- Not significantly different from those in 19 states/jurisdictions
- Iowa does have significant achievement gaps for students with disabilities, low-income and minority students.

# High School Programming

UEN supports the expansion of funding and educational opportunities for public school students, including career and technical education (CTE) programs, apprenticeships, career pathways and college readiness experiences, including content which delivers standards relevant to their trajectory. High school content delivered through work-based learning demands that Iowa finds alternative ways to measure high school competency and completion. UEN also supports more student choice in meeting course and core graduation requirements rather than state-mandated one-size-fits-all course requirements.

**Messaging:** supporting high school students to a career credential or work-based learning might be in their best interest, but may not align to the measure to which schools are held accountable with NAEP or ACT testing in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Traditional higher level math might not serve a student's future as well as statistics or some other relevant content area.

**New Priority:** Issue Brief pending

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# Special Education Identification and Instruction

Appropriate identification of students' disabilities and provision of the continuum of care associated with their needs will support academic growth and meet individual goals for students.

Iowa is the only state in the nation that identifies and assigns special education services to students with disabilities based on nonproficiency (failure to progress and performance below expectation) rather than specific disability categories for students entitled for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Since Iowa's significant achievement gap between students with disabilities and without is evident, UEN supports an evaluation of our state's plan with the federal government for compliance, including a thorough investigation by an independent evaluator to determine how such a change to child find/student identification for services related to disability used by other states and allowed under Federal law would impact student outcomes in Iowa.

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# Special Education Identification and Instruction

The current identification process creates a barrier to identifying needed supports, accommodations and modifications, which are needed to serve students in partnership with parents and keep staff and students safe.

Additionally, Iowa does not provide for a full continuum of needed care for students, i.e., residential placements and all day wrap-around therapeutic classrooms have long waiting lists without appropriate services in the meantime. The goal to close the achievement gap for students with disabilities is further compromised by special education staff shortages in Iowa. UEN schools are committed to lowering achievement gaps for students with IEPs. Adequate SSA is required to keep pace with inflation for the cost of services required in IEPs to be funded by special education weightings in the formula. Additional state investment to build and support a full continuum of care is required. A workable system gives access to all information needed to effectively serve students entitled under IDEA. Mandates from the State of Iowa should not exceed federal requirements for special education services.

**New Priority: Issue Brief pending**

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## ESAs and School Choice (Technical Corrections)

The priority of public schools demands adequate funding and support by the state. UEN opposes any expansion of programs/plans that redirect or designate additional taxpayer funds for private school, homeschooling or other private services. Private school programs must include accountability for expenditures and should be subject to public oversight that accompanies tax dollars. Investments in education savings accounts or other private systems stress public school resources in several ways: 1) reducing students (Iowa's funding formula is enrollment-based), 2) concentrating minority and poverty in urban public schools (where private schools tend to be located), 3) creating pressures to expand to include homeschool and nonaccredited private school ESA eligibility, and 4) allowing private schools to choose which students to enroll. HF 68 was enacted so quickly in the 2023 Session, it did not benefit from the perfecting process of subcommittee and committee meetings, extended conversation, media and constituent attention.

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## ESAs and School Choice (Technical Corrections)

### **UEN supports the following correcting legislation to improve the program:**

- If a student withdraws from private school after Oct. 1 enrollment count date and enrolls in the public school, the student should be counted for funding or spending authority in the coming fiscal year. The reallocation of funds for an ESA mitigates the impact on the state budget.
- The appropriation to public schools for parent reimbursement of transportation expenditures for nonpublic students should go directly to private schools. Parents should not be reimbursed for additional transportation if the student leaves private school.
- Nonpublic and open enrollment to another public school impacts both funding and staffing decisions. A reasonable deadline for ESA application and for open enrollment should be in place. Exceptions should be reinstated to allow open enrollment or an ESA after the deadline for extreme cases. Such a deadline would improve the ability of all schools to budget and staff wisely, allocating resources for the students they will serve.

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## Mental Health Services

Iowa children need an improved mental health system, including the structure and funding to eliminate mental health professional shortages, such as loan forgiveness programs. Educators are not trained providers of mental health care, nor do they have the capacity to meet the mental health needs of students.

Iowa should engage in every opportunity to maximize school access to Medicaid claiming for health services for all students, not just students with disabilities. The formula should include a categorical funding stream designated for mental health professionals and programs serving students. Such funding would provide case management and service coordination, transition support and services for students returning to school after a mental health placement, ongoing training to improve understanding of child social-emotional, behavioral and mental health needs, actionable classroom strategies to address student needs, and integration of mental health promotion, suicide prevention and coping skills into existing curriculum.

The Legislature should avoid enacting legislation and education policies that increase pressure on students with mental health challenges. Legislation must value inclusion and the diverse lived experiences of all students.

## District Authority

Home Rule in Iowa Code 274.3 requires the executive branch and the courts to interpret Iowa Code impacting schools and school boards and develop administrative rules with deference to local control. UEN members strongly believe the Legislature and Governor should focus efforts on flexibility rather than state-mandated one-size-fits-all action.

***Messaging: locally elected officials are closest to the needs of students and communities. Local voters will hold school boards accountable. Local leaders not only listen to but engage parents and communities to best serve and prepare students for a successful future.***

*This priority will guide our lobbying efforts in many other areas of policy, from state literacy training and supports to funding associated with student subgroups, even the ability to fund a new PK section with school general funds. See the UEN Issue Brief for more.*

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## Safety and Cybersecurity

Escalated threats are increasingly present and devastating; some are obvious (flood or derecho), others are more nefarious (cybersecurity crimes). UEN supports updating funding sources to protect staff and students. Cybercriminals interrupt instructional delivery and school district operations, impacting students, families, staff and communities. UEN calls for coordinated efforts to support school districts' cybersecurity needs, to create a consortium to curate, vet and establish professional services from which school districts may choose for cybersecurity needs. The consortium should create options to preserve the local decision-making authority of school boards in choosing safety solutions for their community schools.

School districts should be able to expense cybersecurity systems, services, improvements, training, costs of cybersecurity staff, as well as the costs of safe entrances, facility safety improvements and safety training to protect staff and students from the Management Fund, as well as from the state penny for school infrastructure (SAVE) fund and the physical plant and equipment levy (PEEL). Investments to protect staff and students minimize risk exposure and avoid significant litigation settlements otherwise paid by local taxpayers.

*See the UEN Issue Brief for more.*

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# Advocacy Actions

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See the UEN Advocacy Handbook on Legislative Page of Website



**UEN**  
**ADVOCACY HANDBOOK**  
YOUR GUIDE TO ADVOCATING FOR URBAN SCHOOLS IN IOWA



# Building Relationships with Legislators

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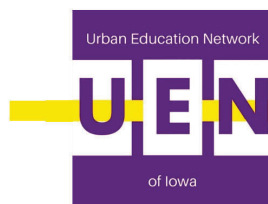
- Send a congratulations / Thank you Note
- Ask how best to connect with them during the session (email, text, cell phone, home phone, letter through the post)
- Find advocacy moments: coverage of education in the media, share successes from your school, share list of priorities from organizations
- Reach out, sit down and talk. Ask about them – their educational experience, where they (their kids) go (went) to school, what they think is good about your school and what their constituents talked to them about education while campaigning.
- Talk to them about issues, one or two at a time, follow-up with more information.



## Invite Legislators to Schools

- Let them see and hear students (everything we do is about students!)
- Recruit a business voice to talk about the quality of education related to workforce
- Talk about economics, employment markets, competitive salary and benefits, what the money buys and the long term return on investment.

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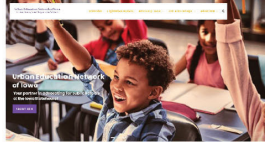
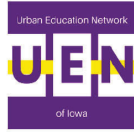


## Learn More

Advocacy Handbook, List of Successes, Issue Briefs, Weekly Videos, Legislative Update Reports, Calls to Action and more, on UEN's Legislative Web page

<https://www.uen-ia.org/blogs-list>

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### Discussion Topics for UEN Annual Meeting Networking

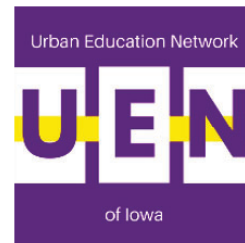
1. Introductions – Name, district, role, time in that role and one thing that drives you to take on this work
2. What are you looking forward to this year in your school district related to student learning?
3. Share how your district supports new board members. Discuss good practices of orientation and building board member skills. What can new board members expect in the next 3-6 months?
4. What do you wish the public (parents, constituents, business community, media, state-level leaders) knew about your schools? What can you do to help get the word out?
5. From everything you've heard today, what's one idea that sticks with you or one action you commit to take?

### Networking and Table conversations

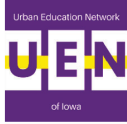
- Note taking on the back is for your reference.
- If something comes up that you think UEN needs to know about, write a note on a card and leave it on the table.
- Enjoy your conversations. We will finish up by 8:30.



**Matt Degner**  
Iowa City, UEN Chair



## Closing Remarks



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

Margaret Buckton,  
ISFIS Partner, UEN Executive Director,  
RSAI Professional Advocate  
[margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com](mailto:margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com)  
1201 63rd Street, Des Moines, IA 50311  
(515) 201-3755 cell

Larry Sigel, ISFIS Partner  
[larry@iowaschoolfinance.com](mailto:larry@iowaschoolfinance.com)  
1201 63rd Street, Des Moines, IA 50311  
(515) 490-9951 cell

Jen Albers, Director of Finance and Operations  
[jen@iowaschoolfinance.com](mailto: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.