

## CALL TO ACTION

### PE, Extracurricular, Nutrition Waiver and Screen Time Unfunded Mandates in HF 2676 MAHA Bill on the Senate Calendar March 23, 2026

**House Action:** The House amended and approved the Governor's MAHA (Make America Healthy Again) bill, which included several costly and unworkable unfunded mandates that would impact school districts. The Bill, [HF 2676](#), was approved by the House on March 4, is attached to SF 2367 already on the Senate Calendar. A Fiscal Note was published on March 19, which indicates some, but not all, of the unfunded mandates included in this amendment.

**Advocacy Action: Contact Senators ASAP and request removal of the additional provisions, including:**

- **Div. VI Nutrition Instructional Standards:** The bill requires the addition of specific nutritional content standards for health classes and other curriculum. We do not oppose these provisions in sections 14-19. However, UEN opposes Sec. 20 Application of Federal Waiver for School Breakfast and Lunch: The [Fiscal Note](#) explains that the state receives \$250 million in federal reimbursement for schools, which is at risk if the state requires foods that are not also endorsed by the federal school lunch program. The cost of providing the food might also increase, passing on higher breakfast and lunch prices to families who must make up the difference.
- **Div. VII Screen Time/Use of Technology Limits:** These limits are costly for districts that are following the state standards for literacy (including reading, tutoring and writing) and math. The DE has provided the software literacy tools via Amira, and other technology supports for schools for non-proficient students in grades K-12. Schools would have to replace instructional software with textbooks and other materials to comply with these limitations. Teachers and paras will have to deliver literacy and math interventions in person, which increases labor costs. Technology is a great learning tool when adaptive and individualized for students. It also helps teachers provide more individualized and relevant instruction for students in their classrooms. SF 2355, School Technology Taskforce, on the House Calendar, would be a necessary first step for Iowa to study the impact of any changes in use of technology for instruction and the impact on students. Iowa DE's [webpage](#) explains the value of individualized technology instruction in Sept. 2025, which 105,000 students in 250 school districts had used: "With support from Gov. Kim Reynolds, the Iowa Department of Education has announced expanded access to Reading Assistant, an innovative literacy tool designed to strengthen reading skills for elementary students. Expanded access will allow more Iowa schools to assist English Learners and Tier I, Tier II and Tier III students."
- **Div. IX – Physical Education, Physical Activity and Co or Extracurricular Activities:** The bill requires elementary school students to engage in 30 minutes of PE daily plus 120 minutes of

physical activity weekly. Currently, elementary students typically engage in 30 minutes a day, either PE or recess. Doubling the PE would require doubling the number of PE teachers (which are a shortage area position in education) and some districts already have gym space completely scheduled. The [Fiscal Note](#) estimates the need to hire 607 total elementary PE teachers statewide. The bill also requires, as a condition of graduation, that every student and their parents sign a contract committing to at least one co-curricular or extracurricular school-supervised activity. The only exception is for a student engaged in work-based learning or another class that requires them to leave the high school during the day. Many Iowa high school students who participate in club sports, dance, or other physical activities would still be compelled to participate in one school-sponsored activity. Many high school students work to support their families or care for siblings so their parents can work. Although participation rates vary by high school, we know that schools will need to provide more coaches, equipment/materials, officials' fees or competition entry fees, transportation to events (and additional bus routes to take students home after activities). Every one of these costs is another unfunded mandate.

### **Advocacy Actions:**

**Contact your Senators today.** With the 2% SSA per pupil increase, 199 school districts will have a 1% or lower increase in funding for FY 2027. There are 89 school districts with actual decreases in regular program district cost. Any unfunded mandates, such as the cost of providing one more PE teacher per elementary school or the coaching stipends required for activity participation, or the need to purchase textbooks to replace instructional software or provide teacher-led interventions in-person to students not proficient in reading or math, will require further staff reductions or severely limit them if school districts can provide reasonable salary increases for staff.

Specifically ask your Senators to remove the four costly, unfunded educational mandates in HF 2676:

- Double PE time in elementary,
- Risk federal funding through a federal school lunch nutrition waiver,
- Limit technology-based instruction, and
- Require students to participate in co- or extracurricular activities as a condition of graduation.

Find your Senators here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/senate>

Call and leave a message at the Senate Switchboard for your Senator (515) 281-3116. Send a specific email to your Senator with your request. Please let us know if you receive any commitments of support from your senators.

Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of the students and families in your school district!