

Iowa House of Representatives

State Representative

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House Education Bills Still Moving

The first funnel has come and gone at the legislature. This is the self-imposed deadline which limits the number of bills the legislature will consider for the remainder of the year. It's worth taking a look at some bills that survived. This list is not purposefully exclusive, nor totally inclusive, and only contains House-passed legislation.

HSB 647 – SAVE Extension and Modifications –

Makes some modifications to the uses of SAVE (Secure and Advanced Vision for Education) infrastructure dollars and extends the sunset on the statewide penny that funds SAVE by 20 years. Increases the amount that goes towards property tax relief for high-tax districts. Builds in accountability by requiring additional steps to use SAVE funds for athletic facilities and to demonstrate the need for using the funds for new construction vs. doing repairs in smaller districts.

HSB 650 – School District Fund Flexibility –

Provides more flexible funding for dollars in district At-Risk and Dropout Prevention funds and Student Activity Funds, giving local school boards authority to develop the plans that meet their needs.

HSB 660 – School Meal Debt – Creates rules and procedures around student meal debt in schools, prohibiting negative treatment of a student who owes money for meals or cannot pay for their meal, including not singling them out, forcing them to do chores to pay for the debt, or preventing them from participating in activities. It also gives school an additional tool to collect unpaid debt from parents after it surpasses a specified dollar amount.

HF 2006 – Student Athlete Concussion Protocols –

Requires the establishment of return-to-learning and return-to-play protocols for post-concussion to be distributed to school districts, for schools to adopt those protocols, distribute concussion information to parents and obtain signatures from parents on the concussion information before students can participate.

HF 2230 – Supplemental State Aid FY19, Regular Program and Categorical –

Sets Supplemental State Aid (SSA) at 1% for FY19 for both the Regular Program and the Categorical Supplements. It also extends the Property Tax Relief Payment (PTRP) an additional year which has the state pick up any property tax growth in the Additional Levy portion of the school funding formula. The State Cost Per Pupil (SCPP) amount on which the school aid formula is based increases from \$6664 to \$6731, a \$67 increase. The total state aid increase to schools under the bill would be \$32 million.

HF 2235 – Statewide Student Assessment –

Establishes the new statewide assessment as the Next Generation Iowa Assessments, the test currently under development by the Iowa Testing Program at the University of Iowa and the successor assessment to the Iowa Assessments.

HF 2279 – Operational Sharing Incentives, Social Workers –

Adds social workers as an eligible position to be shared by districts and receive supplemental state funds.

HF 2354 – Student Data Privacy –

Protect student data privacy as the student's data and personal information is used in the K-12 school setting for educational purposes by defining what student information is covered and what software providers may and may not do with that information, including

advertising to the student based on that information or selling that information to 3rd parties.

HF 2390 – American Sign Language as a World Language – Current law excludes American Sign Language from counting towards a world language as an offering by a school district. This bill removes that exemption, specifically stating that ASL can count as an offering.

Passed by Both Senate and House, some with differences

HF 2280 and SF 2171 – Teacher Preparation Exit Exam Requirement – Both bills address what is commonly referred to as the Praxis Exam. The House bill removes the requirement altogether that teacher preparation students pass an exam to complete their program. The Senate bill doesn't eliminate the requirement but instead allows for a one-year waiver for those students that don't pass the exam initially to be allowed to enter the classroom during that year.

HF 2350 and SF 2113 – Suicide Prevention and Trauma-Informed Care Training – These bills require training for licensed school employees in suicide prevention. The House bill also includes trauma-informed care. The House bill requires the training to occur annually, the Senate bill requires training to occur with licensure renewal which occurs every 5 years.

HF 2367 and SF 2131 – Iowa Learning Online for Home School Students – These bills allow home school students to pay for and receive classes through Iowa Learning Online. Iowa Learning Online is the Department of Education's course-at-a-time online program utilized currently by school districts.

Both chambers will be discussing some of these bills on the floor during debate over the next few weeks and sending those that receive sufficient votes to the other chamber for consideration. There will be pieces not on this list passed by the Senate for the House to consider when and if they arrive. A second funnel will occur in mid-March on the other chamber's bills and a revised list of surviving bills will follow at that time.

Security Options in Schools

With the latest news of another school shooting occurring in the US last week, questions often turn to what options those in Iowa schools have for safety and security. This article provides some information on what schools can implement, how they can fund security enhancements, and what legislatively might be coming down the pipeline.

Can schools have armed security?

Yes, they can. While fire arms are prohibited on school grounds per Iowa Code 724.4B, there are exceptions. 724.4B makes carrying any firearms, even concealed, a class D felony. The exceptions include police officers, those specifically authorized by the school (such as for training purposes), or a licensed private investigator or security agent.

These exceptions allows schools to have someone hired to provide security, or of course to have an agreement with the local police to have an officer assigned to the school as a School Resource Officer (SRO).

Do districts have options for outfitting their schools with security features?

Districts have a few options besides the general fund to utilize for upgrading or adding security features to their schools.

- Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL) – PPEL consists of a board-approved portion (33 cents per \$1000 of valuation) and a voter-approved portion (\$1.34 per \$1000 of valuation). Per Iowa code 298.3, districts can use them for the construction of buildings and to repair, remodel, improve, or expand buildings, all of which could include adding security features.
- Secure an Advanced Vision for Education (SAVE) – a state-wide 1-cent sales tax that is sent to school districts for infrastructure

purposes. The use of those funds overlaps with PPEL uses.

What's happening legislatively?

Currently the Senate is working on a bill, Senate File 2364, which would require school districts to have in place an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) by next year. Many districts already have such a plan in place, but not all do. The bill would require that the development of the plan include consultation with local law enforcement and local emergency management coordinators.

The piece is similar to a bill that advanced in the House last year, House File 515, which placed the same requirements on districts as SF 2364, but also required a task force to convene to develop best practices which districts could utilize when developing their EOPs.