



2020 Legislative Session Summary of Changes Affecting Schools

Overview

Dear Colleagues,

The General Assembly passed, and Governor Reynolds signed, several important pieces of legislation from the 2020 session that will impact Iowa's schools. The Iowa Department of Education is pleased to provide this summary of legislative changes to help you plan for the year ahead.

I look forward to working with you to implement these new changes, as well as the bold statewide initiatives that are under way. Together, we will build on our successes and address our challenges to ensure all Iowa students are future ready.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Lebo".

Dr. Ann Lebo
Director
Iowa Department of Education

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2020 Appropriations Policy Changes

HF 2643 Education Appropriations

The Department of Education (Department) and other state-funded agencies and educational programs are funded in appropriations bills. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the shortened legislative session, the majority of the fiscal year 2021 appropriations remained the same as fiscal year 2020, and were included in HF 2643.

For this upcoming year, the authority to change the budget has been transferred to the Department of Management (DOM), in consultation with the Legislative Services Agency (LSA), rather than the legislature. This will allow DOM to make changes to the budget, outside of the legislative session, once they have a better sense of how Iowa has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is typical for the General Assembly to make non-appropriation changes to statutory policies, programs, and corrections to previously-enacted legislation. HF 2643 does include policy language changes and modifications to some state agency budgets outside of the status quo budget. The Notes on Bills and Amendments ([NOBA](#)) includes the Education General Fund budget, which begins on page 66.

General Administration

Appropriates \$5,975,526 to the Department for general administration of the agency, which is identical to last year's appropriation.

Career and Technical Education Secondary

Appropriates \$2,952,459, which will be distributed to the 15 Regional Planning Partnerships to be spent on allowable uses specified in statute pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 258. The partnership will determine how to allocate these funds between the allowable uses and include this information in the partnership's multi-year plan. The multi-year plan is voted on by the full membership, which includes a representative of each school district in the partnership's region.

Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program

Appropriates \$2.9 million to support the following programs: National Board Certification, Career Development, Teacher Development Academies, Iowa's Teacher of the Year Program, Teacher Leadership Technical Assistance, and the Fine Arts Mentoring Program.

Statewide Clearinghouse to Expand Work-Based Learning

Appropriates \$300,000 for support, management and promotion costs associated with the expansion of the Iowa Clearinghouse for Work-Based Learning as part of the Future Ready Iowa initiative. The Clearinghouse allows employers to post projects online for K-12 schools to select to provide more students with authentic, professional learning experiences. Businesses, nonprofits and others have posted at least 133 projects, with more being developed.

Statewide Student Assessment

Appropriates \$2.7 million for school districts and \$300,000 for accredited nonpublic schools to reduce the cost associated with the Iowa Statewide Assessment for Student Progress (ISASP). The appropriation will be distributed by the Department to Iowa Testing Programs on behalf of school districts and accredited

nonpublic schools. School districts and accredited nonpublic schools will pay any remaining cost for the state assessment.

Postsecondary Summer Classes for High School Students

Appropriates \$600,000, as part of the Future Ready Iowa initiative, for resident high school students to attend a community college for college-level classes taught by a community college-employed instructor during the summer through a contractual agreement between the community college and the school district. The Department has posted guidance, which includes an overview of the summer college credit program, on the Department's [Senior Year Plus webpage](#).

Attendance Center Performance/General Internet Site and Data System Support

Appropriates \$250,000 for the continued development and implementation of the Iowa School Performance Profiles.

Online State Job Posting System

Appropriates \$230,000 to the Department for the administration of the [TeachIowa.gov](#) online job posting system. The Department, as well as public school districts, charter schools, and AEAs, are required to post all job openings on the system. Accredited nonpublic schools may participate at no charge.

Successful Progression of Early Readers

Continues the appropriation of \$7,824,782 to the Department for distribution to school districts to provide intensive instructional services for the Successful Progression of Early Readers program.

Early Warning System for Literacy

Appropriates \$1,915,000 for the Department to administer and distribute to school districts and accredited nonpublic schools an early warning assessment system that allows teachers to screen and monitor student literacy skills from prekindergarten through sixth grade. The Department is also permitted to charge school districts and accredited nonpublic schools a fee for the system, which is determined by dividing the remaining costs to purchase the statewide license for the school year by the number of students assessed under the system in the current fiscal year.

Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC)

Appropriates \$1,300,176, which will be used for carrying out the IRRC's seven priorities in the areas of evidence-based literacy interventions, reading assessment, and intensive summer reading programs. The funding will also support collaborating with the area education agencies (AEAs) and providing ongoing professional development to improve teachers' knowledge of and ability to implement effective literacy practices.

Computer Science Professional Development Incentive Fund

Appropriates \$500,000 for the Computer Science Professional Development Incentive Fund. School districts, accredited nonpublic schools and AEAs can apply to the Department for funds to provide teachers professional development in computer science or to provide tuition reimbursement for teachers seeking an endorsement in computer science. The Department will post the updated guidance and application on [educateiowa.gov](#) and expects applications will open late summer to early fall.

Children's Mental Health School-Based Training and Support

Appropriates \$2.1 million for the continuance of school-based children's mental health support, including mental health awareness training for educators. This includes: \$1.2 million to the AEAs to provide mental

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health awareness training for educators and schools; \$750,000 to identify a range of approaches to best meet the mental health needs of students and to strengthen community support for students; and \$150,000 to maintain a clearinghouse of mental health resources for use by schools and community providers.

Best Buddies Iowa

Appropriates \$25,000 to create opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, and leadership development for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Adult Education and Literacy Programs

Appropriates \$500,000 to be distributed as grants to community colleges for the purpose of adult basic education programs for students requiring instruction in English as a second language.

Nonpublic School Concurrent Enrollment Payments to Community Colleges

Appropriates \$1 million to the Department for the nonpublic concurrent enrollment program, which allows accredited nonpublic schools to contract directly with a community college to deliver courses through concurrent enrollment. The bill adds non-reversion language to the appropriation, allowing the Department to retain unspent funds for up to one additional fiscal year.

SF 2408 Standing Appropriations

The Department of Education and other state-funded education agencies have certain programs that receive, by law, ongoing funding. In other words, funding for those programs continues from fiscal year to fiscal year unless the General Assembly enacts funding changes. The standing appropriations bill, which is considered annually by the General Assembly, is where changes to those standing appropriations are made.

Nonpublic School Transportation

Appropriates \$8,197,091 for payment of claims for nonpublic school transportation. If the total approved claims exceed the amount appropriated, the Department will prorate the amount for each claim.

Area Education Agencies

Reduces the state aid for AEAs by \$15 million and prorates the reduction based on the reduction that each agency received in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003.

Additional Education Legislation

The sections below cover additional legislation impacting PK-12 education.

[SF 2082](#) Technical Code Corrections and Clarifications

Updates outdated language in Iowa Code.

[SF 2164](#) Transportation/District Cost Per Pupil

Creates equity in the areas of school transportation costs and works toward equalizing the differences in district cost per pupil. Increases the General Fund standing appropriation to the Transportation Equity Fund to \$26,253,088 in fiscal year 2021, which is an increase of \$7.25 million for transportation to get all school districts down to the state average and adds \$10 to the regular program state cost per pupil, which reduces the gap to \$155.

[SF 2261](#) Telehealth in Schools

Expands opportunities for students to access mental health services with a licensed professional mental health provider by offering parents/guardians access to services through an electronic encounter in the school setting. Public schools, accredited nonpublic schools, or AEAs can provide a secure, confidential, private area to conduct telehealth services.

The Department will provide additional guidance.

[SF 2310](#) Online Learning

Creates an online learning platform offered by the Department in collaboration with AEAs or in partnership with public school districts and accredited nonpublic schools. There are four divisions outlined in the bill. For additional details on the bill, here is the link to [SF 2310 Additional Guidance](#) dated July 17, 2020.

[SF 2356](#) Dyslexia Provisions

Establishes an Iowa Dyslexia Board, provides an updated definition for dyslexia, and addresses the education of students with dyslexia, preparation of teachers, and Dyslexia Specialist endorsement.

Requires the State Board of Education (Board) and the Board of Educational Examiners (BoEE), in collaboration with the IRRC, to adopt rules by July 1, 2021, regarding the establishment of an advanced Dyslexia Specialist endorsement. Specifies that by July 1, 2022, the Board, in collaboration with the IRRC, will adopt rules prescribing standards and procedures for the approval of practitioner preparation programs that are affiliated with the IRRC and that offer practitioner preparation for the advanced Dyslexia Specialist endorsement issued by BoEE. Requires certain AEA and school district employees to complete the IRRC Dyslexia Overview module by July 1, 2024.

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SF 2360 Classroom Management

Provides a comprehensive approach to create a safe learning space for students and teachers.

Directs the Department to develop standards, guidelines and expectations relating to behavior in the classroom, restraint of a student, and professional development to educate individuals in the least restrictive environment and researched-based intervention strategies.

Establishes a therapeutic classroom incentive grant program and outlines how school districts and accredited nonpublic schools submit a claim for reimbursement, if the student has not been assigned weighting. Modifies the Transportation Equity Program's per-pupil cost calculations to deduct any funds received from reimbursement claims for transportation of students to therapeutic classrooms. The claims reimbursement has been delayed by a year.

Provides guidance for placement of special education students and specifies that individualized education plans (IEPs) and behavior intervention plans should not include room clears. Specifies instances when a classroom teacher may clear students from a classroom.

Requires the school to notify parents of students assigned to the classroom when a classroom clearance has occurred. The principal will request a meeting with the parent or guardian of the student whose behavior caused the classroom clearance. If the student has an IEP or behavior intervention plan, the teacher may call for and participate in the meeting. Establishes mechanisms for teacher reporting student violence or assault to the principal. Incidents that result in injury, property damage or assault by a student will be reported to the Department and an annual report will be provided to the General Assembly.

Grants immunity from civil or criminal liability which might be incurred or imposed as a result of physical contact if a school employee who, in the reasonable course of their responsibilities, comes into physical contact with a student and if the physical contact is reasonable under defined circumstances.

Requires the BoEE to address: the failure of an administrator to protect the safety of staff and students and to address an administrator's failure to meet mandatory reporter obligations; and the refusal of a practitioner to implement provisions of a student's IEP or behavioral intervention plan and to address a practitioner's habitual nonparticipation in professional development.

The Department will provide additional guidance.

HF 2340 Iowa 529 Plans

Permits the use of Iowa 529 plan funds for certain beneficiaries to attend out-of-state elementary and secondary schools.

HF 2359 Teacher Preparation Reports

Eliminates the requirement that higher education institutions providing practitioner preparation administer a pre-professional skills test for program admission. If an institution offers the test, they must report the results to the Department by August of each year, and the Department is required to post the results on its website.

HF 2418 Basic Education Data Survey (BEDS) Corrections

Authorizes the Department to review, by district request, a BEDS data submission and determine whether an error resulted in an incorrect BoEE determination relating to a practitioner's license. A notification from the Department certifying that a district error in BEDS would have impacted an individual's license will be sufficient for the BoEE to correct any licensure experience based on incorrect information.

Allows the School Budget Review Committee (SBRC) to grant a modified supplemental amount (MSA) for at-risk, alternative school, and returning dropout and dropout prevention programs to school districts that submit a request after the January 15 deadline, but before March 1, of the budget year preceding the budget year during which the program will be offered. This provision is retroactive to January 1, 2020.

HF 2454 State Accreditation Standards

Provides two additional options for instructors to meet the state accreditation standards by combining education and experience in the occupational area. The first option permits an instructor to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes at a community college if they possess an associate degree in the CTE field of instruction and they have at least 3,000 hours of recent and relevant work experience in the area in which they plan to teach. The second option allows an instructor to meet state accreditation standards if they possess a baccalaureate degree in any area and if at least 18 of the credit hours completed are in the CTE field in which they plan to teach.

HF 2585 Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Replaces the terms "hearing impaired" and "deaf" with "hard of hearing" and "deaf or hard of hearing."

HF 2627 Universal Licensure

Allows the BoEE to issue a license without deficiencies and without additional testing to applicants who have held a license in another state for at least one year, who have established residency in Iowa, and who have passed the required assessments in their state. The bill also adjusts the criteria for licensure denials based on past criminal activity.

HF 2629 Future Ready Iowa

Includes policy language establishing an Apprenticeship Development Fund to encourage sponsors of apprenticeship programs with 20 or fewer apprentices to maintain apprenticeship programs in high-demand occupations.

Establishes the Iowa Child Care Challenge Fund in policy to encourage businesses, nonprofits and other partners to establish or expand local child care facilities through new construction or renovations.

Expands access to computer science instruction to all K-12 students across the state. Requires high schools to offer at least a one-semester computer science course by July 1, 2022. Middle and elementary schools will offer computer science instruction in at least one grade level each by July 1, 2023. Requires the Department and districts/nonpublic schools to develop K-12 computer science plans by July 1, 2022. A computer science

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work group will recommend how to strengthen computer science instruction and develop a statewide campaign to promote computer science to students.

Expands eligibility for the Future Ready Iowa Skilled Workforce Last Dollar Scholarship Program and opportunities for high school students to earn tuition free college credit by lifting the current annual 23-credit cap for concurrent enrollment through the Senior Year Plus Program and postsecondary enrollment options.

HF 2641 Extensive Tax Provisions

Includes sales tax exemptions that LSA projects will result in a slight reduction in school infrastructure tax collections by \$0.5 million per year beginning in fiscal year 2021 and that some provisions might result in a minor impact on income tax surtax.