



## CALL TO ACTION

April 17, 2019

### Financial Literacy Graduation Requirement Transition

**Status:** [HF 420](#) and [SF 139](#) **Financial Literacy Implementation:** these identical bills postpone the financial literacy ½-unit graduation requirement to apply to the class of 2022-23 (A.K.A. incoming freshman in the 2019-20 school year). Both bills are on the House calendar, so a vote in the House moves this issue on to the Governor. Despite unanimous approval in the Senate and in the House Education Committee with 22 in favor, 1 opposed, House Leadership remains unconvinced that this bill needs to pass. UEN Supports this transition to allow intelligent consideration of staff and students to accomplish this mandate.

**Background:** [SF 475](#) approved in the 2018 Session requires Iowa high school graduates in both public and nonpublic schools to have completed a ½ unit of financial literacy. That requirement was added as a floor amendment in the House Debate, so did not get vetted through subcommittee and committee discussion. **DE Guidance** on how to implement was published Feb. 9, 2019 and can be found [here](#).

Past changes to graduation requirements provided more time for school districts and students to prepare. Changes in graduation requirement have historically included a waiver process, but not this time. The effective date of the requirement, July 1, 2019, applies to seniors this Fall. The bill included a long list of content that must be taught in the curriculum. [SF 2415 Education Appropriations](#), also approved in the 2018 Session, made slight modifications allowing the content to be included in several areas of study; a math course, social studies course or Career and Technical Education (CTE) course. Although financial literacy was already included as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skill embedded in the K-12 curriculum, this mandate requires specific dedicated courses.

**Contact your representatives today!** Tell them to tell leadership that this bill needs to get done so schools can implement this new graduation requirement intelligently for students. **Talking Points:**

- Financial literacy is important content for students to master and we are committed to providing this content for students.
- DE guidance was just published to schools in February of 2019. The cycle of teacher training and credentialing in order to teach this content is longer than just a few months. Professional development plans for the 2018-19 school year were planned before this requirement was enacted. Details about fitting courses into a master schedule are often a year in the making.
- Teachers willing and credentialed to teach this content are in short supply. If they are required to teach seniors to meet this mandate, they will not be available to provide the course to juniors or other students when it might fit best in their schedule. It takes time to scale up and train teachers.
- Online options [SF 394 Online Learning](#) would allow school districts flexibility to meet accreditation requirements four ways in addition to teaching courses at the high school; but this bill is on the House Calendar awaiting amendment. It is expensive to use Iowa Learning Online for the course, assuming there is capacity to serve thousands of students. ILO charges a fee, typically \$250 for a semester online course. On a matter of scale, if this year's 36,715 11th graders all took the semester course online, it would cost Iowa school district \$9.2 million. Online learning is a great option for some, but not all students and accommodations will have to be made for students with disabilities and non-English speaking students, whether the course is offered online or at school. (FYI, the Senate Education Subcommittee stripped ILO funding out of the appropriations bill yesterday.)

- Seniors already have their college plans and career plans in place. They've had financial literacy imbedded throughout their high school education. The transition might make them retake a course - such as economics or business accounting, either of which are incorporating the new financial literacy content. Since seniors have already taken the course to which the content will be added, they will have to sacrifice a credit in order to repeat it. Currently school district policies do not allow students to retake courses for credit that they have already taken. *Reminder: DE guidance indicating which courses could teach this content was provided to schools on Feb. 9, 2019.*
- CTE agreements and internships have a lot of moving parts, with internships and transportation requirements, especially for our seniors. Adding another graduation requirement specific to seniors will throw a wrench in those college credit and Career and Tech schedules and programs.
- Time is a zero-sum game in schools. Some seniors will have to drop the very things they enjoy most about school, electives such as band, art or journalism, because they have to complete the rest of the core graduation credits. These courses are even more important when they are a student's passion and chosen course of study in college.
- A certain small number of seniors will fail their graduation requirements this Spring. They typically spend the summer doing credit recovery and may graduate in July or August. However, the July 1, 2019 requirement kicks in, adding one more course to complete for the high school diploma. One of two things happens – they either will continue school this Fall, delay entry to the workforce or postsecondary education, and cost the district and state the cost of being educated for another year, or they will drop out and not get their high school diploma.
- Some seniors may not pass the financial literacy requirement the first time. It could be hundreds. If schools have time to plan and get it in the cycle earlier in a student's experience, there is time for credit recovery. If a student doesn't pass it as a senior, they have to repeat 12th grade. The delay for their future is costly to Iowa's economy and costly to the state, as those students will be counted the next Oct. 1 for school foundation formula purposes.

Contact us with any questions, feedback or suggestions to better prepare your advocacy work:

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Click on any Representative within the Legislative website to find their office phone and email address. To call and leave a message at the statehouse during session, the House switchboard operator number is 515.281.3221. You can ask if they are available or leave a message for them to call you back.

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