

June 3, 2013

HF 215 Education Reform and School Funding

Governor Branstad is scheduled to sign HF 215 into law on Monday, June. 3. **UEN supported this bill and advocated for its passage** because it includes a solid investment in school funding, commits to a process to improve assessment, delays the class size sunset for 5 years, establishes a teacher leadership and compensation system to improve capacity for better instruction, improves district flexibility, and provides grants for high-need schools. Although UEN does not support expansion of nonpublic or home school alternatives in the bill, those changes pale in comparison to everything else in the bill that has potential to improve outcomes for students. The conference committee report was approved 95:0 in the House and 40:10 in the Senate, showing strong bi-partisan support. UEN priorities addressed in the bill:

- **Significant Commitment to School Funding:** School districts could not have survived another year of record low funding increases or delays in setting allowable growth.
 - **FY 2013-14:** sets 2% allowable growth, an increase of \$103 million in combined district cost. 2% increase in the per pupil categorical supplements (PD, TSS, Class Size for \$7.8 million) and a 2% one-time supplemental payment to school districts estimated to be \$57.1 million (\$120 X budget enrollment, but does not apply to weighted enrollment, categoricals or AEAs.)
 - **FY 2014-15:** sets 4% allowable growth, an increase of \$169.7 million in combined district cost. 4% increase for categorical funds (\$14.3 million)
 - Provides for the state to absorb the property tax impact of allowable growth, most helpful to school districts with low property value supporting each student.
- **Sustainable Investments in Education Reform:** funding to implement reform includes:
 - FY 2014 - \$6.8 million
 - FY 2015 - \$61.5 million
 - FY 2016 - \$110.8 million
 - FY 2017 - \$158.6 million
 - FY 2018 - \$157.9 million
- **System Capacity for Improved Instruction and Rewards for Teacher Leaders:** New structure of teacher leadership and compensation rewards teachers for more contract days and supports their leadership work to help other teachers improve instruction. Districts choose either the state-conceived framework or a local comparable system approved by the DE. There is a planning year for the state and a commission to get things rolling and for districts to consider the framework or design a local comparable system. Grants are first available to districts in FY 2015 and anticipate a three-year phase-in of participation. Funding rolls into the formula as the teacher leadership supplement beginning in FY 2016 and continues into the future.
- **Progress in Assessments and Evaluation:** UEN would have supported a faster timeline and a requirement that future evaluation systems meet the expectations necessary for Iowa to receive a waiver from current NCLB rules, but we appreciate the steps in the right direction and look forward to working with the task forces and stakeholders in continuing this progress.
- **Early Intervention/Class Size:** HF 215 extends the sunset of this valuable program until July 1, 2018, allowing school districts to continue investing in lowering early elementary class sizes and supporting strong reading programs.
- **High-need Schools:** targets \$10 million annually for high-need schools, targeting school with disproportionate students who are non-English speaking, from low income families, or have low-academic growth. Funds allow recipient schools to develop extended-learning time programs, hire instructional support staff, provide additional professional development or supplement the salary of teachers.

- **Other actions:** Other divisions in the bill include: Iowa Learning Online, Teacher Iowa Scholar Program, Teacher Iowa Student Teaching Pilot Project, Competency-based Education Task Force, Option for 1,080 instructional hours instead of 180 days in the school calendar, changing school funding terminology, online job postings, preschool program flexibility, Teaching Strategies GOLD Early Childhood Assessments, School District Reporting Requirements Task Force and Extended Learning Time Pilot Program Models, Independent Accreditation of Nonpublic Schools, independent private instruction, and driver education by a teaching parent. Find more information about these in the links in Additional Resources below.

Advocacy Action:

The Urban Education Network is grateful to the Governor and members of the Iowa House and Senate for solidifying their commitment to the Class Size/Early Intervention program, for setting and funding Allowable Growth for two years, and for investing in education reform to improve instruction and compensate teachers appropriately for leadership, all for better student outcomes. Also, please thank them for the hard work in negotiating a very complicated and contentious set of policies and funding, both of which will increase school capacity to better serve students.

Office of the Governor: State Capitol, 1007 East Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50319, 515.281.5211, <https://governor.iowa.gov/contact/>

Call, write a letter to or email your legislators: in both the House and Senate, and congratulate them on enacting HF 215 education reform and education funding. With the adjourning of the Session, correspondence to legislators is best sent to their home address or home phone. Find your legislator's home address, email address or home or cell phone number here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/Legislators/find.aspx>

Write a letter to your local newspaper explaining the information above in this call to action, giving kudos to a legislature that figured out how to compromise to enact meaningful legislation that will allow schools to better serve students.

Additional Resources. Links posted on UEN web site at www.uen-ia.org/legislation.htm:

ISFIS [Summary of HF 215 Education Reform](#) gives a detailed explanation of each division of the bill, a glossary of terms and a timeline for various provisions of the bill.

HF [215 Education Reform and Appropriations Enrolled Bill](#) contains the legislation as enacted by the 2013 Legislative Session.

HF 215 [Education Reform Appropriations Bill NOBA](#) (Notes on Bills and Amendments) is the Legislative Services Agency Fiscal Report of the appropriations and funding, including policy details of the bill.

Urban Education Network of Iowa [UEN Legislative Web Page](#) includes advocacy publications, policy details and research on various aspects of the bill that were proposed throughout the 2013 Session.