



UEN Legislative Update March 6, 2025

This UEN Weekly Report from the 2025 Legislative Session includes:

- Property Tax Overhaul Announced
- Governor's Initiatives all Survive the Funnel Deadlines: Bill numbers and Status
- SSA Still Stuck: Create Advocacy Moments
- Property Tax Statements: Subcommittee this week and Des Moines Register Article
- Funnel Reminders
- Funnel Survivors
- Some Notable Bills Dead Due to the March 7 Funnel
- Advocacy Actions for the Week and Resources

Property Tax Overhaul Announced

As reported in the [Iowa Capital Dispatch](#) this afternoon: "The Republican leaders of the Iowa Legislature's tax committees released their property tax proposal Thursday. Rep. Bobby Kaufman, R-Wilton and Sen. Dan Dawson, R-Council Bluffs, chairs of the House and Senate Ways and Means committees, respectively, introduced legislation that they said in a news release would be "the biggest property tax system overhaul since the 1970s." The measure, introduced as [HSB 313](#) and [SSB 1208](#), makes multiple changes to Iowa's system of property taxes that the lawmakers said would provide an estimated \$426 million in property tax cuts." We will analyze this bill and have more information on how this impacts schools soon.

Status of Governor's Proposals: All Survive the First Funnel Deadline

The Governor's education policy initiatives have all cleared the funnels in both the House and Senate and are on their respective calendars. Due to changes in one chamber or the other, they are not identical. Several were assigned new bill numbers this week. Here's the status:

- **SF 442 and HF 787 Teacher Salary Supplement and Other Education Policies:** Sets new TSS calculation plus growth, Student teaching flexibility for alternative programs, Out-of-state risk pool for mandated placements, reinstates the Teach Iowa platform, IPERS Retired teacher minimum \$50,000 salary. SF 422 was amended to specify that the \$50,000 minimum pay for returning retired teachers is for a full-time position (would allow prorating for less than full time). UEN supports these bills now on their respective calendars.
- **SF 450 and HF 784 Math Initiative:** Both bills were amended in Committee action to remove provisions related to civics. The bills require the DE to develop a state math plan and provide PD and support to districts with low-achieving students. School districts are required to screen K-6 students three times a year, develop individual math plans, progress monitor every two weeks, and provide specific interventions. UEN is registered undecided.

- **SF 370 and HF 782 Local Board Policy for Cell Phone Restriction during Instruction:** The House version was amended during the House Education Committee to remove the requirements for professional development and curriculum changes requiring middle school instruction on the impact of social media on students. Both bills were amended in Committee to require the DE to provide sample model cell phone policies before districts are required to implement policies. UEN is registered undecided on both of these bills.
- **SF 445 and HF 623 Childcare Continuum and Partnership Grants:** Amendments in the Senate Education Committee and the House Health and Human Services Committee clarify that the new category of community-based provider must employ or contract with licensed teachers in their preschool program. UEN is registered undecided on both of these bills.

School Funding / SSA Still Stuck

SF 167 SSA by the Senate sets the increase per pupil cost at 2%. The House proposal amended SF 167 with Amendment **S-3004** awaiting action on the Senate Calendar. The additional investments in the House proposal include: 1) \$10 per pupil applied to the minimum state cost per pupil, to close the district cost per pupil equity gap to \$130, 2) an increase in the transportation equity fund sufficient to reimburse all districts with transportation costs per pupil above the state average, 3) increase in the operational sharing student weighting cap from 21 to 25, and 4) supplemental appropriation of \$23.6 million distributed to districts based on enrollment, estimated at \$47 per pupil, in the 2025-26 fiscal year. This supplemental appropriation is one time and not expected to carry forward into the future. UEN is registered in support of the House proposal and opposed to the Senate proposal. See last week's report, February 26, 2025, for additional information on SSA proposals.

Property Tax Statements: Subcommittee this week and Des Moines Register Article

HSB 228 Property Tax Statements was approved by a subcommittee this week with Reps. Bloomingdale, McBurney, and Meggers. They know it needs work and are committed to improving the system. The bill adds a requirement to the property tax statements sent out by counties that would include the actual individual taxpayers' taxes levied in the current year, taxes proposed to be paid in the upcoming year, and the percentage change. If SSA is not established prior to March 1, the bill requires local governments to delay the notice sent to property taxpayers and extends the deadlines for budget implementation accordingly. UEN is registered in support. We requested the notice be amended to remove the comparison for existing tax rates to proposed tax rates assuming a 10% increase in property value every year. This current requirement is very misleading, especially problematic in the year when assessments do not change, as revaluation occurs every other year. An article published on Feb. 28 in the [Des Moines Register](#), "Misleading Iowa property tax explainers could be 'alarming' for residents, Polk Co. says" explains how the calculation skews the figures to an alarming extent.

Funnel Reminders

This hurdle is the first step, which serves as a culling process and requires focus on the bills that have cleared and been approved by a committee in the chamber where it originated by March 7. Passage through one chamber's committee does not guarantee floor passage or support in the other chamber. Dead bills are considered dead, but the content can appear as amendments to other bills or included in appropriations bills. Appropriations, Ways & Means (tax) and Leadership bills are exempt from the funnel deadlines.

Funnel Survivors

Check out the separate UEN Bill Tracking for bill summaries and UEN Registrations.

HF 68 Open Enrollment Policy for English-Learner Student Requests
HF 102 Seizure Disorder Action Plans and mandatory training
HF 119 Content Specialist Authorizations and CTE Secondary Authorizations
HF 133 School Building Demolition Fund
HF 163 Threat Assessment Teams and Information Sharing
HF 165 Civics Test Requirement for High School Graduation
HF 166 Two Minutes of Daily Silence and Iowa/USA Motto Displays
HF 167 Grooming Definition for Mandatory Reporting
HF 189 Nonpublic Student Participation in Public School Athletics
HF 190 Online Assessments for Virtual School Students
HF 212 Prohibited Ingredients in School Meals
HF 259 Public Notice Requirements
HF 271 Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Scholarship Program
HF 272 Advanced Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement Scholar Program
HF 315 Budget Adjustment for Schools Affected by Natural Disasters
HF 316 Middle School Career Education/Industry Recognized Credential Seal
HF 334 Allows School Boards to Employ Chaplains
HF 369 Agriculture Education Grant Program
HF 382 Child Care Staff Flex Time
HF 389 Child Abuse Reporting/DHHS Investigation of School Employees
HF 391 Pregnancy and Fetal Development Video and Curriculum
HF 393 Counting Dropouts only Once for School Performance Profiles
HF 395 School Bus Driver Training Requirements
HF 400 Public Records Requests
HF 448 Allows School Board to Offer Bible Courses
HF 461 Chronic Absenteeism Notices by Mail
HF 471 Concussion Management Qualifications of Provider
HF 513 High School Athletic Participation for 8th Graders
HF 514 Robotics Extracurriculars (attached SF 278)
HF 515 Extra Weighting for Shared SROs
HF 520 One Unit of US Government for Graduation
HF 521 Repeal of Obscenity Exemptions for Libraries and Schools
HF 522 Nutrition and Lighting Mandate in Therapeutic Classrooms

HF 543 Period Products in Schools (funded until 2028, then unfunded mandate)
HF 579 Dropout Prevention Equity (gradually up to 5%)
HF 587 Jr. Firefighter Program for High School Students
HF 621 Guns on School Grounds
HF 623 Child Care Continuum Grants and Early Childhood Changes (Governor's Bill)
HF 771 Purple Star Initiative
HF 782 Cell Phone Restrictions (Governor's Bill)
HF 783 Athletic Conference Realignment Committee
HF 784 Math Initiative (Governor's Bill)
HF 785 Charter School Board Member (Allows one Non-Iowa on the Board) and Concurrent Enrollment for Charter School Students via District of Residence
HF 787 TSS and Education Changes (Governor's Bill)
HF 789 TSS follows students to Charter Schools
HF 791 Firearm Instruction in School Districts

HSB 2 Attendance Exceptions for Military Students
HSB 31 School Start Date
HSB 155 Library and Schools DEI restrictions
HSB 156 Publish Instructional Material on District website, lesson plans, software, civil action
HSB 173 School Nutrition and curriculum (animal protein and locally sourced food, waiver from feds for FRPL standards)
HSB 217 School Board Policy for Reduction in Force Excluding Seniority Consideration
HSB 218 Religious study w/Private Organization, course credit, excused absences, and civil actions.
HSB 220 Coach Concussion Training every two years
HSB 247 Proofs of Publication Notices
HSB 252 Eligibility Requirements for Financial Institutions with Public Deposits
HSB 311 Management Fund for School Safety

SF 8 Prohibition of Disciplinary Actions for Name and Pronoun Usage in Schools
SF 167 SSA at 2% (House Amendment at 2.25% +++)
SF 168 Operational Sharing Positions Cap Exemptions
SF 172 Child Sex Abuse and sexual assault awareness and prevention
SF 175 Pregnancy and Fetal Development Video and Curriculum
SF 176 Open Enrollment Athletics Participation for Virtual Students
SF 205 School Start Date (Monday before the last Monday in August)
SF 211 Online State Test for Virtual Students
SF 273 Grooming Definition and Mandatory Reporting
SF 274 Forms of Payment at Athletic Contest/competition
SF 275 Purple Star Initiative
SF 277 Chronic Absenteeism Clean-up
SF 278 Robotics Extracurricular and CTE organizations
SF 299 Immunization Exemption Information
SF 368 Seizure Management Training and Instruction

SF 369 Civics Test Requirement for High School Graduation
SF 370 Regulation of Personal Electronic Devices (Governor's Cell Phone Restriction Bill)
SF 386 Complaint Timeline Lengthened from 60 to 90 Days
SF 388 Public Meeting Notices (requiring posting in an accessible prominent place)
SF 389 Public Records Requests (notification of estimate and time to fulfill the request)
SF 442 TSS Calculation and Education Changes (Governor's Bill)
SF 444 Extension of Reorg and WGS Incentives
SF 445 Early Childhood and Child Care Continuum (Governor's Bill)
SF 446 Iowa HS Athletics Conference Realignment Committee
SF 448 School Bus Drivers (district determines if they need certification/training)
SF 450 Mathematics Initiative and Civics Requirements (Governor's Bill)
SF 458 Public Funds Investment
SF 472 Recertification Elections
SF 493 Local Government Prohibition from paying a lobbyist or paying an instrumentality organization (like League of Cities or IASB) which then employs a lobbyist
SF 516 School Technology Work Group
SF 517 Requires DHHS to Investigate Child Abuse by School Employees
SF 518 Mandatory Administrative Leave while Investigated for Child Abuse
SF 520 Community College Reporting and DE oversight on Blind and Deaf Schools
SF 525 School Nutrition and curriculum (animal protein and locally sourced food, waiver from feds for FRPL standards)
SSB 1099 School Threat Assessment Teams and Information Sharing
SSB 1151 Construction Surety Bonds Required

Some Notable Dead Bills: See tracking for the entire list (100s)

HF 221 Bond Limitations at 80% of Total Project
HF 332 Administrator Teaching Requirements
HF 335 School Activity Fund transfers
HF 445 ESA Applications (December Deadline for Second Semester)
HF 451 Contracts Prohibited with Giant Tech Companies Which Sensor Speech
HF 587 Mandate to Offer Jr. Firefighter Program
HF 621 Firearms on School Property
HF 730 Special Education Weightings Work Group
HSB 219 Advanced Math / Algebra in 8th Grade
HSB 276 180 days of instruction (no flex for hours)
HSB 278 PE Requirements, mandatory weight lifting and cardio for boys, extracurricular participation required for all high school students.
SF 280 Local Board Policy Allowing Religious Instruction by Private Organizations
SF 335 DEI Teaching Limitations, Age-Appropriate Content for High School and Civil Actions
SSB 1056 IPERS Pension Fiduciaries and Investment Requirements

UEN Advocacy Resources

Check out the 2025 Session Advocacy Handbook, which has everything advocacy beginners and experienced pros can use to advocate with legislators, at the Statehouse or back in your district. Find the handbook on the UEN Advocacy Website here: <https://www.uen-ia.org/advocacy-handbook>

Advocacy Actions This Week

Adequate School Funding: Contact legislators regarding SSA every week until it's done. Find teachable moment to trigger a message. For example,

- School districts sent budgets to the county on March 5 to create taxpayer statements and notify taxpayers of public hearings. The information in those notices will is not likely accurate pending the final SSA decision.
- School districts will hold public hearings to get input from taxpayers on the proposed budget. Again, not accurate.
- Decisions to continue teaching contracts and register students for preschool are all hanging in the balance, until school districts know about the budget (and additionally, the DE has not released information about Shared Visions preschool grants.)

The House's 2.25%+ is a preferable policy and UEN is registered in support. The teacher salary investment last year was a really good start to attract future teachers, but SSA has to keep pace or our staff and programs for students will be compromised. Diverting the small increases that UEN districts will get for TSS to charter schools will further stress public school budgets (See last week's report for details on HSB 108 TSS for Charter Schools). See the [UEN 2025 Adequate School Funding Issue Brief](#) for additional information.

Advocacy for one-time money: Although not ideal, the \$26 million one-time supplemental appropriation in the House proposal will help school districts through several transitions, including higher teacher pay minimums, higher inflation, phase-out of federal funds, and of course, the cost of any unfunded mandates that might be approved this Session and there are many. Reach out to Senators and ask them to support the House amendment including the one-time funding appropriation. Reach out to House members and thank them for voting to invest more.

Preschool: Encourage both Representatives and Senators to not forget public schools when considering the Governor's Child Care Continuum bills. Public schools need funding for initial preschool programs to expand access to preschool. Research shows that quality preschool for enough hours has great benefits (Perry Preschool Project, with \$17 returned benefit for every \$1 invested, had a minimum of 15 hours a week, which is 50% more time that Iowa's current SVPP funds). Your own district data on the benefits for those students in full-day preschool is really important to share. Iowa's neediest students not currently accessing either PK or child care might be best served in an all-day PK program. Serving these neediest students well will go far in achieving state priorities, including literacy and math outcomes. The Governor's grants and 1.0 weighting for most at-risk 4-year-olds are compatible policies, both necessary to

establish a full continuum of care and instruction. Express thanks to House HHS and Senate Education Committee members for amending the bills to require licensed teacher in the new community provider authorized programs. See the [UEN 2025 Quality Preschool Issue Brief](#) for additional information.

Unfunded Mandates and Implementation Timelines: remind legislators that any bill requiring staff training or rewriting curriculum costs districts time and money. Unfunded mandates such as the mandatory Civics Test, creating individual math plans with intensive interventions, creating a new tracking software to catalog all instructional materials (including teacher time weekly to update the database) and Career Education curriculum in middle school require resources that take away other key issues of district focus. Each mandate should allow time and include funding to implement or at least an adequate increase in SSA so school districts do not have to make tough choices. Many new requirements are already on our curriculum directors' and teacher plates. State BOE has approved new standards (ELA, Science, Math) and the new literacy initiative is currently being implemented. Any additional mandates for changing instruction that require training need thoughtful time and compliance expectations. Recent examples include cell phone policy/social media instruction, adding career exposure, planning and experience to middle school grades, a new math initiative or civics initiative, seizure disorder training and plans, and the list goes on with every new bill. Please allow the time it takes to do good work, to benefit students.

Connecting with Legislators: To call and leave a message at the Statehouse during the legislative session, the House switchboard operator number is 515.281.3221 and the Senate switchboard operator number is 515.281.3371. You can ask if they are available or leave a message for them to call you back. You can also ask them what's the best way to contact them during session. They may prefer email or text message or phone call based on their personal preferences.

Find out who your legislators are through the interactive map or address search posted on the Legislative Website here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>

Other UEN Advocacy Resources:

Check out the UEN Website at www.uen-ia.org to find Issue Briefs, these UEN Weekly Update Reports and Videos, UEN Calls to Action when immediate advocacy action is required, testimony presented to the State Board of Education, the DE or any legislative committee or public hearing, and links to fiscal information that may inform your work. The latest legislative actions from the Statehouse will be posted at: www.uen-ia.org/blogs-list.

Bill Action This Week

Check out our separate Bill Tracker for all the bill actions and details for the week.


Contact Us

Keep in touch with your questions, comments, and let us know about your advocacy actions.

Margaret Buckton
UEN Executive Director
margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com
515.201.3755 Cell

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