



Action Line

IASB Legislative Activity

Federal Stimulus Package Details

We're learning more details about the federal funds directed to Iowa, including \$386.9 million for a state stimulus education package. IASB staff have thoroughly read the federal legislation and are planning a conference call to explain what we know to members on Monday, March 2, at 10 a.m.

Allowable Growth to the Governor

SF 217 and SF 218 were passed by the Senate on Feb. 25 and HF 415 and 416 are scheduled for debate yet this evening in the House. SF 217 and HF 416 set a 2 percent allowable growth rate for the categorical funds that were rolled into the foundation formula (Teacher Quality Basic Salary, Professional Development, Phase I and Class Size/Reading Initiatives) for the school year beginning June 30, 2010, which is FY 2011. SF 218 and HF 415 address the regular allowable growth within the school foundation formula. These bills maintain the 4 percent allowable growth for FY 2010 and establish a 2 percent allowable growth for FY 2011. Neither of these bills addresses the mix of state aid and property tax or spending authority for FY 2010. That issue will be addressed in a later budget bill if changes are to be made. Iowa law requires the Legislature to set the FY 2011 rate within 30 days of the release of the governor's budget, which is Feb. 28.

Thank legislators for maintaining the cost per pupil at 4 percent allowable growth for FY 2010. See the Feb. 4 Allowable Growth *Action Network* for details of the governor's budget recommendation and additional background and talking points at www.iasb.org/Publications.aspx?id=6566.

After the Revenue Estimating Conference meets on March 20 and details of the federal stimulus package become clearer, IASB may encourage legislators to revisit the FY2011 allowable growth rate.

Bills on the Move

HF 333 – Prevailing Wage by Labor: Status

HF 333 is still on the House calendar, being held by a motion to reconsider, as supporters look for a 51st vote in favor. IASB remains concerned about the inequitable treatment of school districts in setting a lower threshold for projects compared to other public projects (cities, counties, etc.) contained in an amendment that was attached during the House debate last week. IASB is opposed to this bill. See a complete bill description in the Feb. 19 *Action Line*.

SF 81 – Schools Disaster Recovery

For a complete bill summary, see the Jan. 29 *Action Line*. The bill was amended to allow the AEA administrator to waive the competitive bid law for school districts when necessary to ensure the continued use of a school, not just the closure of a school, which is current law. The bill also allows the AEAs to utilize the same provision if the AEA gets the approval of the DE director. This bill was passed by the Senate and is now assigned to the House Education Committee. IASB supports it.

SF 177 – Open Enrollment Transportation

This bill addresses those instances when there is a change in the path of a road that requires a school bus to travel through a neighboring school district to pick up students on its route. While the DE has said that the school district can travel through a neighboring district to pick up resident students without the neighboring district's consent, there wasn't authority for a receiving school district to continue to pick up open enrolled students at that same spot used prior to the road re-routing. This bill allows the receiving district to pick up open enrolled students on the route, without the neighboring school district's consent. This bill only affects those instances where a re-routing of a road impacts a bus route. IASB supports this bill, approved by the Senate and now assigned to the House Education Committee.

SSB 1231 - Open Meetings/Public Records by Appel

The Legislature is, once again, working on bills to amend Iowa's open meetings and public records law. The bill, as proposed, does not differ significantly from the bills filed last year. IASB is monitoring the bill, which is on the Senate calendar and while senators say the "bill is a work in progress" it needs a lot of work before public bodies find it acceptable. IASB's concerns are:

- We don't need a complete rewrite of the public records law. It is working now.
- If the new definition of public record is adopted, e-mails or other documents on private computers or not on school grounds, which are in direct relation to the employee or board member's performance of duties, will be public records.
- The definition of "serial meeting" is too broad. A "serial meeting" is when a board never meets with a quorum but discussions by elected officials go on without public notice of a meeting. While IASB supports the concept, the definition is too broad to be workable.
- The bill considers applicant files public records, unless the applicant has asked they be confidential. But, when the hiring authority is down to five finalists, the information must be disclosed.
- While adding the new enforcement agency, the statute does not eliminate the role of the Attorney General or county attorneys in the enforcement. It also does not change the role of the State Ombudsman who has also investigated, but not prosecuted, alleged open meetings/public records violations.

Bill Tracker

HF 351 – School Start Date

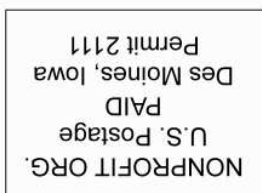
This bill requires schools to start no earlier than the fourth Monday in August, requires the return to the state penalizing schools 1/180th of state aid for every day school starts early, and eliminates the DE authority to grant the traditional start date waiver. If enacted, the earliest school can start is Aug. 22 and the latest Aug. 28. The bill exempts schools that have a three-semester, year-round calendar. The major justification for the bill has been explained as increasing tourism, attendance at the State Fair and energy savings since school districts have to run their air conditioners in August but likely not in June. IASB members have consistently opposed this legislation as violating local control and the local community's ability to determine when they will start school. The bill is in the House Education Committee. For more information see the Feb. 25 *Action Network* at <http://www.ia-sb.org/Publications.aspx?id=6754>.

Save the Date! Legislative ICN Update: March 19

Attend this free ICN session to hear from IASB lobbyists about the issues impacting you in the 2009 Legislature and what you can do. www.ia-sb.org/assets/7a391c67344349b490b611e2bca26655.pdf.

Other Resources

Please visit www.ia-sb.org to view this week's **Capitol Cast** video clip from Margaret Buckton.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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