



Interim Updates from the Capitol

DECEMBER 19, 2024

AEA Taskforce Summary

As required by HF 2612, the AEA Task Force met on Dec. 9 to discuss a multitude of issues relating to AEA services, costs, and staff. IASB [submitted public comment](#) to address our concerns with the new law. Task force members include teachers, superintendents, parents, Department of Education staff, a representative from the governor's office, and Heartland AEA Chief Administrator Cindy Yelick.

A few prominent themes emerged from the day-long discussion:

- A list of core services to be offered by all AEAs needs to be established to ensure equity across districts and for all students.
- Adequate staffing at both AEAs and school districts would ensure special education students are supported and make progress toward their goals.
- How the new 60-40 split of educational and media services funds to AEAs and districts is working in practice.

The task force made only one recommendation at the end of the meeting. They will meet again, most likely in February, after they gather data and information on services provided by the AEAs from each funding source (educational, media, and special education), AEA expenses, and services requested by school districts from the AEAs.

School Safety Taskforce

The legislature passed legislation, HF 2652, which Governor Reynolds signed into law that established a school safety task force to make recommendations on changes to the state building code to make schools safer for students and staff. The task force was comprised of representatives from the departments of public safety, homeland security and education in addition to representatives of public and private schools, the construction sector and a school resource officer. A big shout out to our representatives on the task force:

- Tom Messinger, Superintendent, Newton Community School District
- Jean Saveraid, Board Member, Ballard Community School District

- Mary Poulter, Board Member, Colfax-Mingo Community School District
- Delane Galvin, Superintendent, Southeast Warren Community School District

These four individuals spent countless hours representing the interests of Iowa's public schools during this lengthy process and did a masterful job of articulating the concerns that boards and districts have as they consider how to better protect their students and staff.

The task force formally approved their [recommendations](#) which are to be submitted to the legislature by December 31. The debate and discussion on these recommendations evolved over time and at the end of the day, recognize that funding for public and private schools to implement any recommendations enacted into law will be a key issue. And, while mental health was not a charge of the task force, the final report does reference that we need to address this issue to minimize the potential for violent events in schools.

The recommendations can be summarized into three areas:

- Actions to better protect students and staff if the individual is already in the building (i.e. student, staff member etc.).
- Actions to make it more difficult for an individual to enter a school with the intent of doing harm
- Actions to improve communications with first responders in the event an incident occurs.

We anticipate the legislature will work on legislation to implement some or all of these recommendations during the 2025 legislative session.



Our four members with Matt Anderson of the School Safety Bureau

School Finance Interim Study Committee

Every five years, the school finance interim study committee meets to discuss issues related to the school finance formula. The committee is entirely comprised of legislators and receives presentations from the department of management and education. IASB was the only organization representing PreK-12 public schools invited to present, showing once again that IASB is THE pre-eminent organization providing input on school finance issues.

IASB Deputy Executive Director for Government Relations and School Finance Mike Guanci and IASB Lobbyist Emily Piper presented on behalf of our members. They covered three topics:

- Expansion of the state's voluntary preschool program to provide funding for full-day programming for low-income students
- Variances between state cost per pupil and district cost per pupil and the impact this has on districts' ability to provide for their students
- Drop-out prevention disparities that provides some districts with more resources to address critical issues like chronic absenteeism than other districts.

IASB made three policy recommendations:

- Support additional preschool weightings, as research demonstrates that children participating in early childhood education and early literacy programs are more likely to succeed.
- Continue to equitably fund public education on a per-pupil basis by equalizing districts' cost-per-pupil amounts for categorical funds and AEAs; and increase the SCPP for the teacher salary supplement to better fund annual salary and benefit changes.
- Increase the Dropout Prevention cap for each district below five percent to equalize the ability of all districts to generate dropout prevention funds.

You can view the full presentation and supporting documentation [here](#). The school finance interim committee had a robust discussion but ultimately made no recommendations for the legislature to consider.

Questions? Contact IASB Government Relations Director Michelle Johnson at mjohnson@ia-sb.org or IASB Lobbyist Emily Piper at epiper@ia-sb.org.