**UEN Legislative Update   
March 12, 2021**

In this UEN Weekly Report from the 2021 Legislative Session, find information about:

* Charter Schools in the House
* Bills on the Move this week
* Three items still pending

**Legislative Funnel Deadlines**   
The second funnel deadline is April 2, by which time bills must be approved by a committee in the other chamber (House Files out of the Senate Education Committee and vice versa.) There are some exceptions, including appropriations bills, ways and mean (tax policy) bills, leadership bills and oversight committee bills. With that deadline approaching, much of this past week was spent on floor work in both chambers.

[**HF 813**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf813) **Charter Schools.** UEN is opposed to this bill. If the second chartering option of charters founded by outside entities without school board approval is removed, UEN would register in support. See the February 26 Weekly Report for a complete bill description. The bill is on the House Calendar awaiting possible amendment and debate.

See the UEN Legislative Website for an [updated Call to Action](https://www.uen-ia.org/call-action-charter-schools-house-calendar) with talking points and directions to reach out to House of Representative members now through when the bill is debated.

See [ISFIS Analysis of NAPCS Report](https://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/system/files/members/Public/ISFIS%20-%20NEPC%20Review%20of%20NAPCS%20Report%20Summary%20-%20Feb%202021.docx) linked here, which includes additional information about the impact of charter schools across the country. This information is useful in responding to Representatives who reply to you with assurance that the Charter schools are public, that they can’t discriminate, and that they provide additional options for parents.

**Bills on the Move**

**Bills on the Governor’s Desk or Signed by the Governor**

* [**SF 130**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf130) **Temporary Exemption to Income Limit for Board Member Conflict of Interest** (signed 3/8/21) UEN supports
* [**SF 160**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf160) **100% in-person Learning Option** (signed 1/29/21) UEN undecided
* [**SF 231**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf231) **Special Minor’s Drivers’ License** (signed 3/8/21) UEN undecided
* [**SF 261**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf261) **College Student Aid Commission Nonprofit Authority** (awaiting signature) UEN undecided
* [**SF 269**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf269) **SSA at 2.4%** (Signed 2/23/21) UEN opposes
* [**SF 285**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf285) **All Iowa Opportunity Scholarships** – suspension or delay of participation (signed 3/8/21) UEN undecided
* [**SF 289**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf289) **Powers and Duties of School Boards** (signed 3/8/21) UEN supports
* [**HF 308**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf308) **Eligibility for Senior Year Plus** (signed 3/8/21) UEN supports
* [**HF 386**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf386) **Strikes School Reporting of Nonprofit Organizational Membership** (signed 3/8/21) UEN supports

**Senate Floor or Committee Action**

* [**SF 466**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf466) **Providers for Concussion Management** approved in the Senate, 48:0, over to House. UEN is undecided
* [**SF 478**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf478) **First Amendment Rights and Prohibitions**; 33:14, over to the House. UEN is undecided.
* [**SF 544**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf544) **Tiered ELL Weighting** (.21 and .26) is on the Senate Calendar. UEN supports.
* [**SF 545**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf545) **Learning Recovery Task Force** is on the Senate Calendar. UEN supports.
* [**SF 546**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf546) **Private Instruction/Drivers’ Education** 28:17, over to the House

**House Floor of Committee Action**

* [**HF 228**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf228) **Voluntary Diversity Plans**: Subcommittee of Sens. Sinclair, J. Smith and Zaun met 3.11.2021 and recommended to move the bill forward, 2:1. HF 288 is on the Senate Education Committee agenda for Monday, March 15. UEN is opposed.
* [**HF 294**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf294) **Telehealth Reimbursements Billing Parity:** Approved by the House 95-1, goes to the Senate. Assigned to the Senate Human Resources Committee with a Subcommittee of Sens. Edler, Costello and Mathis assigned. UEN supports.
* [**HF 318**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf318) **Preschool for young 5-year-olds**: Begins with the 2022-23 school year. Approved by House 96-0. In Senate Ed Committee Subcommittee of Sens. J. Taylor, Cournoyer, and Quirmbach assigned. UEN supports.
* [**HF 602**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf602) **School Activity Fund Transfers:** Passed 94-2. In Senate Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Sens. Goodwin, Giddens, and Kraayenbrink assigned. UEN supports.
* [**HF 604**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf604) **Deaf Language Acquisition:** Approved by the House 96:0. In Senate Ed Committee with a Subcommittee of Sens. Rozenboom, Sweeney, and Trone-Garriott assigned. UEN is undecided.
* [**HF 605**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf605) **Tiered ELL Weighting** (.21 and .26 funding), Effective for 2021-22. 96:0, goes to the Senate where it is attached to companion bill SF 544 on the Senate Calendar. UEN supports.
* [**HF 642**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf642) **Special Education Director Operational Sharing**: Appropriations Subcommittee of Reps. Brink, Kerr and Winckler recommended to move the bill forward, 3:0 on March 11. UEN is undecided.
* [**HF 675**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf675) **Substitute Certification Flexibility was** approved 93:0 in House. It is now in the Senate Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Sens. Sinclair, Goodwin and J. Smith assigned. The Subcommittee is scheduled to meet on Monday, March 15. UEN supports.
* [**HF 734**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf734) **Advanced Dyslexia Specialists IRRC Approps:** In House Appropriations Committee with a Subcommittee of Reps. Kerr, Latham, and Steckman assigned. UEN supports.
* [**HF 770**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf770) **Teacher PD** counts for CEUs was approved 92:0 in the House awaiting assignment to Committee in the Senate. UEN supports.
* [**HF 778**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf778) **School Building Demolition Fund** is assigned to the House Appropriations Committee with a Subcommittee of Sorensen, Brink, and Konfrost assigned. The bill originally was funded by diverting SAVE revenue, but that provision was removed in the House Economic Development Committee. UEN is registered as undecided.
* [**HF 793**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf793) **ROTC as PE Credit** originated in the House Veterans Affairs Committee. It was approved in the House, 92:0, and is now over to the Senate. UEN is registered in support.
* [**HF 795**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf795) **Seizure Disorder Individual Health Plans** and Training Work Group was approved 91:1, now moves to the Senate. UEN supports the addition of the workgroup to study all health-related PD requirements, but still opposed the bill due to the training mandate.
* [**HF 796**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf796) **Broadband Grants** is in the House Appropriations Committee. The Subcommittee of Reps. Sorensen, Hall, Thompson, Williams and Wills met on March 11, recommending full committee discussion, 4:0. UEN is registered in support.

**Three Items Still Pending: Online Learning/Virtual Snow Days, One-time Instructional Supplement, Educational Practices/Open Enrollment**

[**SF 467**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=sf467) **Online Learning/Virtual Snow Days:** this bill is on the Senate Calendar and would allow school boards to offer online/virtual instruction under certain conditions and allow up to 5 virtual days in place of inclement weather cancellations. The bill is awaiting an amendment to clarify that conditions of virtual learning, allowing districts to continue practices in place before the pandemic, and to specify infrastructure emergencies (such as a broken water main or natural disaster) to be added to inclement weather as a reason for virtual days. UEN supports this bill.

[**HF 532**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf532) **Funding Supplement for In-person Instruction.** This bill is in the Senate Education Committee with a Subcommittee of Sens. Sinclair, Goodwin, and Quirmbach assigned. The bill appropriates $27.2 million for a one-time supplement, and then prorates the funding on a per pupil based on the budget enrollment count on Oct. 1, 2020 for instructional days served. The proration formula counts 100% in-person instruction of greater than 6 hours as one day, between 3-6 hours as a half day. If districts were in hybrid learning models, a day of more than 6 hours counts as half a day. There is no funding associated with 100% virtual instruction. The bill provides an exception for school districts impacted by the derecho storm requiring virtual instruction or a delayed start. Rep. Hite, floor manager of the bill in the House and House Education Committee Chair, explained the intent of the bill was to provide funding for the additional costs of providing 100% in-person instruction safely during the pandemic. UEN appreciates the provision of funding for COVID-19 costs, but opposes the proration formula. UEN school districts all had costs associated with the pandemic regardless of their Return-to-Learn model. UEN opposes this bill. The Subcommittee will meet at 12:30 on Tuesday, March 16, to discuss the bill.

[**HF 808**](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=hf808) **Education Practices and Open Enrollment:** this bill is on the House Calendar and received no action this week. UEN is registered opposed, although we support aspects of the bill. Key provisions:

**Flexibility:** the bill allows school boards to transfer TLC ending balances to the Flexibility Account once the provisions of Chapter 284 are met. The bill also allows school districts to apply to DE for waivers of existing rules and statutes to try innovative practices. The flexibility initiatives may be funded with flexibility account balances or any other allowable funding. UEN supports this provision.

**Education Tax Credits and Deductions:** The bill expands the tuition and textbook tax credits at a scaled-back amount compared to the earlier version of the bill. The bill expanding the tax credit to 25% of the first $2,000 and expands the eligibility to claim the credit to home school families. UEN is opposed to this provision but appreciates this more modest approach than what was suggested in SF 159 Governor’s School Choice.

**Open Enrollment:** The amendment changes the varsity athletic eligibility wait period for students open enrolled from 90 school days to 90 calendar days, strikes that requirement that summer school days do not count toward the waiting period, and allows a student’s eligibility waiting period to be waived if agreed to by both the sending and receiving district. UEN is undecided on both of these provisions. The amendment also adds to good cause for a late open enrollment that a student’s district of residence has a voluntary diversity plan in effect on January 1, 2021, and the open enrollment out of the district is for the school year beginning July 1, 2021. UEN is opposed to this provision.

**School Board Role:** the bill specifies that it’s the school board’s responsibility for improving student achievement. UEN is neutral on this provision.

**Work-based Learning Coordinator:** the billadds a work-based learning coordinator to shared operational functions. UEN is neutral on this provision.

**Connecting with Legislators:** Find biographical information about legislators gleaned from their election websites on the ISFIS site here: <http://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/legislative_bios> Learn about your new representatives and senators or find out something you don’t know about incumbents.

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>

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.

**Advocacy Resources:** UEN recently launched a new website. More tools and resources will be added, but go to [www.uen-ia.org](http://www.uen-ia.org) to find Advocacy Resources such as Issue Briefs, UEN Weekly Legislative Reports and video updates, 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](http://www.uen-ia.org/blogs-list). Check out the [UEN Advocacy Handbook linked here](https://www.iowaschoolfinance.com/system/files/members/Public/UEN/UEN%20Advocacy%20Handbook%20-%20Jan%202021.pdf), and also available from the subscriber section of the UEN website

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

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