

Comment Report

HSB 240

A bill for an act relating to educational programs, information, funding, tax credits and deductions, open enrollment, supplementary weighting, and including effective date and retroactive applicability provisions. (See HF 808, HF 847.)

Subcommittee Members: Brink-CH, Bossman, Winckler

Date: 02/25/2021

Time: 08:15 AM

Location: RM 15

Name: Margaret Buckton

Comment: UEN and RSAI are registered opposed to HSB 240 but with a few changes, could easily move to support. See attached document

Division II Sections 1-3: **Statewide single student information system:** “designed for the purpose of establishing standardized electronic data collection and reporting protocols that facilitate compliance with state and federal reporting requirements, improve school-to-school and district-to-district information exchanges, and maintain the confidentiality of individual student and staff data.” We aren’t aware of a problem related to current data collection and reporting. Schools use SIS for significant work, grading which involves teachers/counselors/registrars and communicating with parents about student progress, tracking the 8th grade career plans, scheduling, tracking which students received interventions and the success of those interventions. Schools have invested training everyone in the district to use the system they have. Districts of different sizes need different functionality. If the state picks one provider and negotiates details, the system will no doubt have more bells and whistles than some small districts need and be lacking the tools that drive our largest systems. Competition of different providers makes those providers continue to improve to earn or keep each school’s business. If there’s one state system, the vendor is accountable to the state for these purposes rather than accountable to local school leaders for what they need to accomplish. If this system is designed to make data collection and reporting for the state, it should save the DE money, not requiring school districts to pay for additional administrative costs. Current Code requires DE to have a comprehensive data management system which Sec. 3 strikes. This authority should be sufficient for the DE to improve data collection to coordinate reporting between stakeholders. We are opposed to this provision.

Section 4-8 **Flexibility:** We support the waiver from state requirements for innovation and use of ending balances from TSS and TLC remaining after meeting the requirements of the program for the Flex Account.

Division II: Education Tax Credits and Deductions: The FN to SF 159 estimates the impact of the tuition and textbook tax credit expansion to be \$51.4 million. That alone is more money for private school education than was just approved for public schools which educate 94% of Iowa’s children. If public schools receive about 43% of the state’s budget, we would expect a loss of \$22 million for public schools down the road associated with this revenue reduction. We are opposed to this Division of the bill.

Division II: School District Enrollment Working Group: We support this provision and appreciate the inclusion of school leaders and interest groups included in this conversation.

Division III: Open Enrollment: We are neutral on the provisions that are technical or clarifying in nature (section 20, the first part of section 21, and section 23). We oppose the additional of the ESSA designation as a school in need of comprehensive support and improvement to the good cause list for open enrollment. Schools stay on that list for three years, even though they have improved sufficiently that they would no longer be on the list. We believe that the addition of criteria on page 13 line 7, of failure of the resident district to reasonably respond to a student’s failure to meet basic academic standards better addresses the intent of this provision. Section 24 raises income eligibility for districts to cover transportation costs for open enrolled students up to **at least** 200% of the federal poverty level. We are concerned that the state board could expand the eligibility further and would prefer the legislature define the limit. We would be neutral on this provision if an amendment would strike the word “minimally” from page 14 line 34. We support sec. 26, regarding academic ineligibility but that should also include good conduct ineligibility. An amendment should add to page 5 line 28, after “performance” or violation of good conduct rules.

Division V: We already thought school boards were responsible for improving student achievement, so have no opinion on this provision.

Division VI: Adds work-based learning coordinator to shared operational functions. RSAl supports this provision. UEN is neutral.