

**House File 2370 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE 2370

BY MATSON

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act requiring the director of the department of education to  
2 establish a low-income student and poverty weighting work  
3 group.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. POVERTY WEIGHTING WORK GROUP.

2 1. School funding has grown increasingly inequitable as  
3 it relates to supporting socioeconomically disadvantaged  
4 students. In order to meet the needs of such students and  
5 to ensure access to the same opportunities that economically  
6 advantaged school districts offer, school districts with higher  
7 percentages of students in poverty spend more per pupil to  
8 cover the cost of the students' increased needs as compared  
9 to economically advantaged school districts. Children from  
10 economically disadvantaged homes often enter school with a  
11 more limited vocabulary and fewer educational life experiences  
12 than those from economically advantaged homes. According  
13 to the child and family policy center, children living in  
14 poverty are more likely than their peers to experience stress  
15 and deprivation that hinders development and readiness for  
16 school and life. Significant levels of poverty exist in  
17 all ninety-nine counties of this state and, therefore, the  
18 general assembly should consider additional ways to close the  
19 opportunity gap within the funding formula.

20 2. According to the 2018 condition of education annual  
21 report, forty and one-half percent of Iowa students are  
22 eligible for free and reduced price meals under the federal  
23 National School Lunch Act and the federal Child Nutrition Act  
24 of 1966, 42 U.S.C. §1751-1785, the most widely used measure  
25 of student poverty, including within Iowa's methodology for  
26 funding at-risk and dropout prevention programs.

27 3. The school finance formula review committee established  
28 under section 257.1, subsection 4, met on December 13, 2019,  
29 and recommended to the general assembly the creation of a  
30 poverty weighting study committee.

31 4. The director of the department of education shall  
32 establish and appoint members to a work group to examine Iowa's  
33 current methodology for determining levels of student poverty  
34 and alternative methodologies available, including examination  
35 of relevant studies and testimony of relevant experts,

1 determine if the current methodology effectively measures  
2 the needs of low-income students, and make recommendations  
3 for funding methodologies to provide additional funding to  
4 school districts for students from low-income households. The  
5 department of education shall work cooperatively to provide  
6 staffing assistance for the work group. The work group shall  
7 be composed of at least all of the following:

- 8 a. One member representing the Iowa association of school  
9 boards.
- 10 b. One member representing the area education agencies.
- 11 c. One member representing the Iowa state education  
12 association.
- 13 d. One member representing the school administrators of  
14 Iowa.
- 15 e. One member representing the urban education network of  
16 Iowa.
- 17 f. One member representing the rural school advocates of  
18 Iowa.
- 19 g. One representative of the school district with the  
20 highest basic enrollment under section 257.6 for the school  
21 budget year beginning July 1, 2020.
- 22 h. One representative of a school district with a basic  
23 enrollment under section 257.6 for the school budget year  
24 beginning July 1, 2020, that is ranked in the highest one-third  
25 among all school districts in the state.
- 26 i. One representative of a school district with a basic  
27 enrollment under section 257.6 for the school budget year  
28 beginning July 1, 2020, that is ranked in the middle one-third  
29 among all school districts in the state.
- 30 j. One representative of a school district with a basic  
31 enrollment under section 257.6 for the school budget year  
32 beginning July 1, 2020, that is ranked in the lowest one-third  
33 among all school districts in the state.
- 34 k. One representative of a school district located in whole  
35 or in part less than one hundred miles from the eastern border

1 of this state.

2 1. One representative of a school district located in whole  
3 or in part more than one hundred miles from both the eastern  
4 border of this state and the western border of this state.

5 m. One representative of a school district located in whole  
6 or in part less than one hundred miles from the western border  
7 of this state.

8 n. Four ex officio, nonvoting legislative members  
9 consisting of the following:

10 (1) Two state senators, one appointed by the majority leader  
11 of the senate and one appointed by the minority leader of the  
12 senate.

13 (2) Two state representatives, one appointed by the speaker  
14 and one appointed by the minority leader of the house of  
15 representatives.

16 5. By January 2, 2021, the work group shall submit  
17 recommendations to the general assembly and the governor for  
18 new or modified funding methodologies to provide additional  
19 funding for students from low-income households.

20 EXPLANATION

21 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
22 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

23 This bill directs the director of the department of  
24 education to establish a work group to examine Iowa's current  
25 methodology for determining levels of student poverty and  
26 alternative methodologies available, including examination of  
27 relevant studies and testimony of relevant experts, determine  
28 if the current methodology effectively measures the needs of  
29 low-income students, and make recommendations for funding  
30 methodologies to provide additional funding for students from  
31 low-income households. The bill directs the department of  
32 education to work cooperatively to provide staffing assistance  
33 for the work group and establishes the minimum persons  
34 comprising the work group. By January 2, 2021, the work group  
35 is required to submit recommendations to the general assembly

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1 and the governor for new or modified funding methodologies  
2 to provide additional funding for students from low-income  
3 households.