

**House File 535 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE 535  
BY GEARHART

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act requiring the legislative council to enter into an  
2 agreement with a qualified person to conduct a review of  
3 Iowa's public education system, and including effective date  
4 provisions.

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

unofficial

1 Section 1. COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF IOWA'S PUBLIC EDUCATION  
2 SYSTEM.

3 1. The legislative council shall enter into an agreement  
4 with a qualified person to conduct a comprehensive review of  
5 Iowa's prekindergarten through grade twelve public education  
6 system. For purposes of this section, "qualified person" means  
7 an independent, nonpartisan individual, research organization,  
8 or educational think tank, that is not affiliated with, or  
9 represented by, any political party, special interest group, or  
10 Iowa school district.

11 2. a. The qualified person's comprehensive review of Iowa's  
12 prekindergarten through grade twelve public education system  
13 shall include all of the following:

14 (1) An examination of trends in Iowa's public education  
15 system over at least the previous thirty years to determine the  
16 factors that contributed to the changes in the quality of Iowa's  
17 public education relative to other states.

18 (2) A full audit of Iowa's funding of public education  
19 funding sources and expenditures.

20 (3) An evaluation of the existing funding streams used by the  
21 Iowa public education system.

22 (4) A proposal related to simplifying the funding streams  
23 used by the Iowa public education system and distributing moneys  
24 more effectively and equitably.

25 (5) Identification of potential cost-saving measures that  
26 maintain or improve the educational outcomes of students enrolled  
27 in Iowa's public education system.

28 (6) An assessment of the current structure of school  
29 districts to determine whether a realignment is necessary based  
30 on student population and regional needs.

31 (7) An analysis of the potential impact of school district  
32 realignment on transportation costs, staffing, and student  
33 performance.

34 (8) Proper consideration for the different needs of schools  
35 in rural areas and schools in urban areas.

1 (9) An evaluation of the financial and operational challenges  
2 that are unique to schools in rural areas and schools in urban  
3 areas.

4 (10) A proposal for equitable funding and policy solutions  
5 for schools in rural areas and schools in urban areas.

6 (11) Input from Iowa's teachers, administrators, and other  
7 education professionals.

8 (12) A study of high-quality public education systems in  
9 other countries to determine policies or strategies that could be  
10 incorporated into Iowa's public education system.

11 (13) Proper consideration of evidence-based teaching models  
12 and other methods to improve curricula.

13 (14) An exploration of potential areas of innovation that  
14 could be pursued to provide transformative solutions to  
15 improve Iowa's public education system, which shall include an  
16 exploration of all of the following:

17 (a) Alternative education models such as competency-based  
18 learning, microschoools, and hybrid education systems.

19 (b) The role of technology in modernizing education,  
20 including using artificial intelligence to provide personalized  
21 learning experiences.

22 (c) Utilizing different teacher training and credentialing  
23 models to attract and retain high-quality educators.

24 (d) Alternative funding mechanisms, including  
25 performance-based funding and public-private partnerships.

26 (e) Innovative school structures that optimize learning  
27 environments.

28 b. The qualified person shall provide periodic updates to  
29 the legislative council while conducting the comprehensive review  
30 of Iowa's prekindergarten through grade twelve public education  
31 system.

32 c. After conducting the comprehensive review of Iowa's  
33 prekindergarten through grade twelve public education system,  
34 the qualified person shall prepare a report containing findings  
35 and recommendations. The recommendations must be based on

1 the qualified person's research and shall not be influenced by  
2 current educators or administrative bodies. The report must also  
3 contain all of the following:

4 (1) Clear, actionable recommendations that, if adopted, would  
5 improve student outcomes, operational efficiency, and funding  
6 mechanisms.

7 (2) Short-term and long-term strategies for reform, the  
8 estimated costs associated with the short-term and long-term  
9 strategies, and the funding sources that could be used to support  
10 the short-term and long-term strategies.

11 (3) Multiple strategies to reform Iowa's public education  
12 system, including strategies for incremental improvements and  
13 strategies for transformative changes.

14 d. The qualified person shall file the report with the  
15 general assembly on or before January 1, 2026, which shall be  
16 made available on the general assembly's internet site.

17 3. After the qualified person files the report with the  
18 general assembly, the majority leader of the senate and the  
19 speaker of the house of representatives shall arrange for the  
20 qualified person to present the final report in a joint session  
21 of the general assembly.

22 4. After the qualified person files the report with the  
23 general assembly, the chairperson of the senate committee on  
24 education and the chairperson of the house committee on education  
25 shall arrange for public forums to discuss the report, gather  
26 feedback on proposed changes to Iowa's public education system,  
27 and determine appropriate steps for implementation of the  
28 recommendations in the report, including the potential creation  
29 of pilot programs.

30 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act, being deemed of immediate  
31 importance, takes effect upon enactment.

32 EXPLANATION

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

35 This bill requires the legislative council to enter into an

1 agreement with a qualified person to conduct a review of Iowa's  
2 public education system.

3 The bill defines "qualified person" to mean an independent,  
4 nonpartisan individual, research organization, or educational  
5 think tank, that is not affiliated with, or represented by,  
6 any political party, special interest group, or Iowa school  
7 district. The bill requires the legislative council to enter  
8 into an agreement with a qualified person to conduct a  
9 comprehensive review of Iowa's prekindergarten through grade  
10 12 public education system. The bill establishes what the  
11 comprehensive review is required to include.

12 The bill requires the qualified person to provide periodic  
13 updates to the legislative council while conducting the  
14 comprehensive review. After conducting the comprehensive review,  
15 the qualified person is required to prepare a report containing  
16 findings and recommendations and file the report with the general  
17 assembly on or before January 1, 2026.

18 After the qualified person files the report with the general  
19 assembly, the bill requires the majority leader of the senate and  
20 the speaker of the house of representatives to arrange for the  
21 qualified person to present the final report in a joint session  
22 of the general assembly. Additionally, the chairperson of the  
23 senate committee on education and the chairperson of the house  
24 committee on education are required to arrange for public forums  
25 to discuss the report, gather feedback on proposed changes to  
26 Iowa's public education system, and determine appropriate steps  
27 for implementation of the recommendations in the report.

28 The bill takes effect upon enactment.