



Laura Belin <laurarbelin@bleedingheartland.com>

RELEASE: Governor Reynolds, Legislators making progress on AEA reform bill

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Thu, Jan 18, 2024 at 9:12 AM

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Governor Kim Reynolds★ Lt. Governor Adam Gregg

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, January 18, 2024

CONTACT: Kollin Crompton, (515) 745-2840, Kollin.Crompton@Governor.iowa.gov

Governor Reynolds, Legislators making progress on AEA reform bill

DES MOINES – Based on feedback from parents, legislators, school superintendents, and teachers, Governor Reynolds has met with House Speaker Pat Grassley, Senate Majority Leader Jack Whitver, and House and Senate education committee chairs and members, to discuss SSB 3073/HSB 542. The bill proposes reforming Iowa's Area Education Agencies (AEAs) to improve special education services and supports for students with disabilities to close concerning achievement gaps.

An amendment will propose automatically shifting control of state and federal special education funding from the AEAs to Iowa's public school districts. It will also allow schools to retain their share of AEA funding for general education services.

AEAs will continue to provide all special education services they do now, including Child Find and Early ACCESS for children from birth to three years of age. AEAs will also provide general education services and media services if requested by schools and approved by the Department of Education.

Also under the governor's bill, special education oversight will shift to the Iowa Department of Education to ensure accountability, transparency, and improved outcomes for Iowa students with disabilities.

"Student success is my central focus, and the goal of my bill is to ensure Iowa's students with disabilities receive the world class education they deserve. Since introducing it, I've been able to discuss the details with parents and education stakeholders and meet with legislators about what they're hearing from schools and families in their districts," said Governor Reynolds. "Schools and parents know their students best, and this bill ensures they are in the driver's seat in deciding how best to support their students. This model will give schools control over their money and create more transparency in the system, while also ensuring AEAs can provide the education support some schools rely on. I appreciate the House and Senate education committees' willingness to work together on the bill and I look forward to subcommittee hearings as soon as possible."

"The legislative process generates feedback from parents, teachers, and students," Senate Majority Leader Jack Whitver stated. "Their input has been helpful in adjusting this legislation to meet its goal of improving the services provided to students with disabilities, improve student achievement, and ensure

value to taxpayers.”

“We all share the goal of ensuring this bill improves outcomes for Iowa students with disabilities and empowers school districts to decide how best to suit the needs of their schools,” remarked House Speaker Pat Grassley. “We will continue to seek feedback from Iowans and do our due diligence as this bill works its way through the legislative process.”

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