

To: Iowa State Senators

From: Iowa State Superintendents

Date: March 17, 2024

Subject: Support for Two-Tier Teacher Salary Legislation and Passage of AEA Reform

As superintendents representing school districts across Iowa, we write to express our strong support for advancing the tier-two teacher salary legislation and passage of AEA reform. We believe that such legislation is essential to ensuring fair compensation for educators and maintaining our state's high quality of education.

We are in favor of a two-tiered system that acknowledges the needs of both new teachers and veteran educators. This approach not only incentivizes young individuals to enter the teaching profession but also recognizes the invaluable experience and expertise that veteran teachers bring to our schools. By implementing a two-tiered system, we can attract and retain talented educators while also honoring the dedication of those who have served in our classrooms for years.

Furthermore, we advocate for AEA reform in this session. We recognize the valuable role that AEAs play in supporting our schools and educators. Also, as advocates for the well-being of our students, we believe it is essential for educational systems to continually evaluate their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. We look forward to being at the table for future conversations about Iowa's education system.

We are writing today to express our support for this initiative because we believe significant progress has been made through collaborative efforts to refine the original bill. One notable improvement is the extended timelines which allow special education services to remain at the AEA for the full first year.

We understand the challenges and complexities involved in advancing this legislation, and we acknowledge the efforts and considerations required by all parties involved. We appreciate the time and attention that you, as senators, have devoted to listening to the perspectives of those who will be impacted by this legislation.

Furthermore, we advocate for the release of education service dollars and media dollars to schools in the first year. As leaders chosen by our locally elected school boards, we firmly believe in local control over these funds and the property taxes that generate them. Empowering those in charge of the tax levy ensures that resources are allocated in a manner that best serves the needs of our students and communities.

We strongly encourage these decisions to be made this year to provide stability and certainty in our educational systems. Taking action in this session will allow us to move forward with confidence and will stabilize the AEA workforce.

Stabilization within the AEA system is particularly crucial for serving our special education students effectively. We fully understand that in the first year, no changes would be made to our control over the special education dollars.

In conclusion, we urge you to support the advancement of a two-tiered minimum teacher salary legislation and to pass meaningful AEA reform this session. These initiatives are critical for the success of our schools and the well-being of our students. Thank you for your dedication to serving the best interests of our education system and the people of Iowa.

Signed,

Stacey Cole, Storm Lake

Jeff Dicks, Albert-City Truesdale, Newell-Fonda

Jim Murray, Humboldt, Twin Rivers

Josh Porter, Fort Dodge

Joe Carter, Algona

Corey Seymour, Clear Creek Amana

Terry Hemann, Spencer

Brett Abbotts, Greene County

Brian Johnson, Southeast Valley

Doug Gee, Clear Lake

Doug Wheeler, College Community

Denny Olhausen, Alta-Aurelia

Matt Berninghaus, Webster City and Stratford

Vickie Murillo, Council Bluffs

Todd Abrahamson, Okoboji

Kevin Wood, Sioux Central, Clay Central Everly & Laurens

David Smith, Spirit Lake

Joe Nelson, Clarion-Goldfield