

Legislative Session Update

Issue No. 13-25, 04/04/2025



A Senate subcommittee discusses legislation to allow chaplains in public schools. (Photo by The Capitol Group.)

Second Session Milestone Arrives

The second procedural hurdle of the 2025 Session of the Iowa Legislature arrived on Thursday at the conclusion of chamber business for the week.

The so-called “second funnel” is the date by which a bill has to be approved by a committee in the opposite chamber - meaning a House File must be approved by a Senate committee and a Senate File by a House committee to remain eligible for further consideration this year.

Appropriations, Ways and Means and Government Oversight committee bills are the exceptions to the “funnel” rules, as they are exempt from procedural deadlines.

Just a reminder that the 110th calendar day of the session, which is the unofficial end of the 2025 Legislative Session, arrives on May 2. It is also the day on which daily lawmaker “per diem” payments end.

Bills of Interest

(HF - House File, HSB - House Study Bill, HR House Resolution, SF - Senate File, SSB - Senate Study Bill, SR - Senate Resolution) (F - For, A - Against, M - Monitoring)

(PLEASE NOTE: Bills which were not approved by at least one standing committee in the opposite chamber of origin are no longer eligible for consideration this Legislative Session. They are noted by the bill number and title being ~~struck~~ through.)

SF 538 - Threat Assessment Teams (M) - The bill allows covered entities that provide services to students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 who are experiencing or at risk of an emotional disturbance or mental illness, or who pose an articulable and significant threat to the health and safety of any person, to share records or information that are reasonably necessary to ensure access to appropriate services for such students, or to ensure the safety of such students or others, with any other such covered entity. The bill authorizes all such covered entities to communicate, collaborate, and coordinate efforts to best serve students. The bill defines "covered entity" to include nonpublic schools, charter schools, innovation zone schools, the judicial branch, a criminal or juvenile justice agency, political subdivisions, state agencies, and any service or support provider that contracts with such persons.

The bill authorizes school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, charter schools, and innovation zone schools to establish a multidisciplinary threat assessment team. The multidisciplinary threat assessment team is required to coordinate resources and assess and intervene when a student enrolled in the school exhibits behavior that may pose a threat to the safety of the school, school employees, or other students enrolled in the school.

On Senate debate calendar (attached to HF 163)

~~SF 172 - Child Sexual Abuse and Assault Prevention~~ (F) - The bill requires the director of the Department of Education to develop and distribute to school districts and accredited nonpublic schools model guidelines related to how to best provide instruction to students enrolled in kindergarten through grade six in child sexual abuse and child sexual abuse awareness and prevention. The bill establishes requirements related to the model guidelines. The bill requires school districts and accredited nonpublic schools to provide instruction related to child sexual abuse and child sexual assault awareness and prevention that is consistent with the model guidelines to students enrolled in kindergarten through grade six. The bill also requires the Board of Educational Examiners to adopt rules that establish continuing education requirements for renewal of a license, certificate, authorization, or statement of recognition. The bill establishes that continuing education activities may include participating in or presenting at in-service training programs related to child sexual abuse and child sexual assault awareness and prevention.

On Senate debate calendar

~~SF 168 (formerly SSB 1022) - Supplemental Weighting Modification~~ (M) - The bill provides that the supplementary weighting associated with a shared operational function in the area of a master social worker, an independent social worker, a mental health professional, or a school resource officer shall not count toward the maximum amount of additional weighting for budget years beginning on or after July 1, 2025.

On Senate debate calendar.

HF 948 - Public Assistance Programs (M) - This bill relates to work requirements for the Iowa health and wellness plan (IHAWP), public assistance programs, an information technology fund, the public assistance modernization fund, and the Medicaid for employed people with disabilities program and program review and report.

Approved by the Senate as SF 615, 33-15. Amended and approved by the House 61-35.

HF 865 - Student Bullying (M) - This bill modifies provisions related to the harassment or bullying of students enrolled in school districts or accredited nonpublic schools.

Approved by the House 64-33. On Senate debate calendar.

HF 844 (formerly HF 334) - Allowing Schools To Hire Chaplains (A) - This bill authorizes school districts, charter schools, and innovation zone schools to employ chaplains, or engage volunteer chaplains, to provide support, services, and programs for students. The bill provides that such chaplains are not required to have a license, endorsement, certification, authorization, or statement of recognition issued by the Board of Educational Examiners.

HF 883 (formerly HF 543) - Hygiene Products in Schools (M) - This bill requires school boards to ensure that feminine hygiene products can be accessed by students without cost in at least half of the restrooms in school buildings in the district where students in grades 6 through 12 are educated and that the supply of feminine hygiene products is refilled regularly. The bill defines “feminine hygiene products” as sanitary napkins, tampons, or other similar items used for feminine hygiene.

The bill appropriates an amount necessary to fund the full cost of compliance with the bill by school districts from the general fund of the state to the department of education for the period beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2028.

On House debate calendar

HF 782 (formerly HSB 106) - Cell Phones in Schools (M) - Commencing with the school year beginning July 1, 2025, the bill requires school districts, charter schools, and innovation zone schools to adopt policies regarding student use of personal electronic devices during school hours. The bill establishes what the policies are to include. The bill requires the director of the Department of Education to develop and distribute to schools model policies that, if adopted, would satisfy the school’s responsibilities under these provisions. However, schools may adopt policies that are more stringent than these model policies. The bill defines “personal electronic device” to include electronic communication equipment, mobile phones, smart phones, video game devices, and portable media players. These provisions take effect upon enactment.

Approved by the House 88-9. Amended and passed the Senate 49-0.

~~HF 522 (formerly HF 114) - Special Foods For Therapeutic Classroom Students (M) - This bill relates to the therapeutic classroom incentive program by authorizing the expenditure of monies for certain nutritional items. The bill provides that the support provided by a therapeutic classroom may include supporting student access to micronutrients and vitamins, assessing the macro-nutritional needs of students, providing minimally processed whole foods, restricting the use and availability of certain artificial or synthetic food additives, remediating the negative impacts of excessive use of digital screens, increasing student exposure to natural light or the light emitted by full spectrum lighting fixtures, and carrying out any other scientifically supported initiative that a school district reasonably believes will improve student health.~~

~~Approved by the House 66-32. Referred to Senate Education. Approved by subcommittee.~~

HF 385 (formerly HF 124) - Discharge Plans For Those Involuntarily Committed (M) - The bill requires that, prior to the discharge of a person that was committed for a substance use disorder or hospitalized for inpatient care for a serious mental impairment, that the facility treating the person refer the person to an administrative services organization for evaluation, case management, and post-discharge services; assess the person for suicide risk; provide the person with a 30-day supply of all medications prescribed for the person before or during the person’s treatment; provide the person or the person’s legal representative with a discharge report; and notify certain persons listed in the bill.

Approved by the House 89-0. On Senate debate calendar

HF 330 (formerly HF 5) - Autism Spectrum Coverage (F) - This bill relates to insurance coverage for covered individuals for the treatment of autism spectrum disorder. The bill also changes the definition of autism under current law to align with the American Psychiatric Association’s diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders.

Approved by the House 92-0. On Senate debate calendar.

~~HF 312 (formerly HF 123) - Psych Deterioration Treatment Orders (M) - Under current law, a court may order the treatment of a person if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the person is seriously mentally impaired. The bill allows a court to also order the treatment of a person if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the person is experiencing psychiatric deterioration. The bill defines “psychiatric~~

deterioration” as a deterioration of a person’s mental health such that based on that person’s history the person is unlikely to seek treatment, the person is unable to understand the need to treat the person’s mental health condition, and, within a reasonable degree of medical certainty, the person is likely to continue to deteriorate until they have a serious mental impairment unless they receive treatment.

Approved by the House 91-1. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services. Approved by subcommittee

HF 163 (formerly HSB 47) - Threat Assessment Teams (M) - The bill allows covered entities that provide services to students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 who are experiencing or at risk of an emotional disturbance or mental illness, or who pose an articulable and significant threat to the health and safety of any person, to share records or information that are reasonably necessary to ensure access to appropriate services for such students, or to ensure the safety of such students or others, with any other such covered entity. The bill authorizes all such covered entities to communicate, collaborate, and coordinate efforts to best serve students. The bill defines “covered entity” to include nonpublic schools, charter schools, innovation zone schools, the judicial branch, a criminal or juvenile justice agency, political subdivisions, state agencies, and any service or support provider that contracts with such persons.

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On the House debate calendar. (Attached to SF 583)