



# PEI

**PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS OF IOWA**

## NEWS AND LEGISLATION

April 11, 2011

The 2011 legislative session is beginning to approach the end. April 1 marked the end of the second funnel week where bills had to be moving through both chambers. April 1st brought the end to a lot of bills we have been discussing with all of you the past few months. The instructional hours bill that moved schools over from 180 days to 1080 hours died in a senate subcommittee. A year that looked to have several major pieces of legislation that would have greatly changed education has changed into a legislative year with very few changes. This brings forth questions of what next year's session with the same legislators will look like.

Though there has been little progress this session, some things are still getting done. This week the governor's appointments to the board of regents were approved by the senate. Allowable growth still needs to be set, which can range anywhere from 0%-2%. This will likely be determined in the last week. On Wednesday the house took a major step towards adjournment by passing appropriations bills. The education appropriations bill has been passed in the Iowa House and the governor's preschool program was added in as an amendment along with funding for the program. The preschool bill had never made it to a committee in the senate. The education appropriations bill is currently on its way to the senate, where major amendments are expected. The debate over preschool will occur all the way to the governor's final approval for the budget. The governor and the house are both pushing for a two year budget and the senate plans to pass a one year. The governor has promised to veto any one year budget, which will only draw the session out longer. One thing is certain, a budget will be passed and as April comes to a close look for a lot more compromising. All labor bills of concern to educators are dead.

The teacher tax credit is still alive. A compromise was reached to get the tax credit to a ways and means subcommittee. The number for the new teacher tax credit bill is HSB 212. PEI gave a presentation to Iowa House lawmakers that served on the subcommittee encouraging them to pass the tax credit. HSB 212 gives teachers a \$250 tax credit on classroom supplies that were not reimbursable by any other source. This is one of the most generous tax credits the state would offer since it is a 100% reimbursement. We will continue to keep you posted as the bill moves through the house chamber. Thank you to all the members that submitted a write up advocating for the credit.

The remaining portion of the session will now all be focused around the state budget as both parties work to come to an agreement and close the 2011 session. A debate is also occurring around different forms of tax cuts the state can offer in order to entice businesses to relocate to Iowa. Caterpillar, for example, is leaving Illinois after their legislature instituted tax increases, and a tax cut might encourage a company such as this to consider Iowa as their new base of operations. Both parties have different ideas on how to allocate such breaks, but it does appear Iowans should be looking at some form of relief on their taxes.

As the session comes to a close we will continue to update you on any further statehouse developments. This is the time of the session where bills that you once thought were dead come back to life and get slipped in somewhere in

the form of an amendment. PEI will work hard to monitor any new-coming amendments and update you on what the legislature plans to send across the finish line.

Best Regards.  
Greg Baker

PEI Representative and Lobbyist

## Pleasant Valley PEI Member Honored

Witness first hand why we all entered the profession of education. PEI member, Bill Grothus recently received the Channel 8 *My Favorite Teacher Award*. This award is given annually to 5 teachers throughout the Quad Cities. Christine Ehlers's winning essay clearly articulated how Bill's kindness and willingness to help all students impacted her and changed her life. Prior to junior high she viewed herself as an outcast but Bill allowed her to experience success and to believe in herself.



After taking drafting/electricity and woods, Christine imagined she would become an architect or engineer. As graduation day approaches, she has since decided to become a special education teacher so that she too can make a difference in the lives of other young children. Please join us in congratulating Bill! In addition to the honor, Bill now will have the opportunity to be on the selection team for next years five teachers.

As Bill approaches his retirement, we are sure that he has had the same impact on countless numbers of students. As a long time PEI member, he has been a great support and encourager over the years.

If you would like to catch the airing of this special moment, please tune in to WQAD Channel 8 news on Thursday. The program will be showcased at 5:30 AM, 6:30 AM and 6:30 PM. It will also be posted on their website after Thursday, [www.wgad.com](http://www.wgad.com).

Jim Hawkins, Director  
Professional Educators of Iowa