



# PEI

**PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS OF IOWA**

February 8, 2011

**Last week at the state capitol**, legislative focus was centered on a large budget debate that will likely take the session into May. Both house and senate education committees were faced with the difficult decision of where to set allowable growth for Iowa's school districts. Iowa's budget is facing \$700 million in cuts, forcing our lawmakers to make some difficult decisions. These decisions will be even more difficult than they have been in the past since Iowa is switching over to a two year budget. By the end of the week, the house and senate went in different directions.

**In the House** Education committee allowable growth was set at 0% for 2012 and 2013 as recommended by the governor. Last Wednesday [HSB28](#) passed the Education Committee on a straight party line vote. Republicans claim that they hate the bill, but in order to get the state's budget in order this bill is necessary and will be good for K12 education in the long term. They do not want to promise money to districts now and have an across the board cut like last year. All Democrats voted against the bill.

**In the Senate** Education committee the allowable growth has been set at 2% for 2012 and 2013. The senate felt this was the minimum so that the districts losing students can maintain the same level of funding. Yesterday [SSB1075](#) passed in committee on a straight party line vote.

Both of these bills will now be heading to their respective chambers where they are expected to pass. Following the passage the bills will likely fail in the opposing chambers. This will force both bills into a conference committee where the house and senate will have to agree. Predictions are that allowable growth will be set at 1% by the time session ends.

House Republicans in the Ways and Means committee led a bill in response to the 0% allowable growth to help replace lost money to the property tax levy. This bill will grant property tax relief for local communities by providing extra money for school districts freeing them from having to raise property taxes. Republicans believe that funding growth is the best way to provide property tax relief. [HSB41](#) passed with bipartisan support last Wednesday.

Other education related bills include a passage of a bill that allows schools to require uniforms for their dress code. [HF77](#) passed with a 20-2 vote in committee receiving bipartisan support. The bill comes from Waterloo Community Schools where uniforms are required in efforts to break up gangs. So far this has proven to be successful. This bill allows, but doesn't mandate local districts the option.

**Right-to-Work** had a large victory on Wednesday evening as well. [HF3](#) passed easily in the house and is on its way to the senate. [HF3](#) requires the Department of Economic Development to market Iowa as a Right-to-Work state on all of the promotional materials. This reverses the Vilsack decision to remove RTW facts on the existing materials.

Even with the debate on the budget, **PEI was the talk of the hill**. Numerous members of the house and senate are very pleased to see that Moravia and Earlham decertified from the ISEA/NEA and have declared their independence. Some legislators have even sent the word home to their districts encouraging them to do the same. Much praise was given to PEI and the membership for your courage and hard work. It is greatly recognized at the state house.

As the session continues, count on PEI to update you every week on major legislation. We promise to represent our membership and stick to the issues involving education. Be ready for a quick survey at anytime.

Greg Baker  
PEI Lobbyist and Representative

## SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER

You have until April 1, 2011 to apply.

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