

2017 Session Descriptions



General Session 1

Legal and Legislative Update: Report of the 2017 legislative session impacting schools - Margaret Buckton (Partner, ISFIS, Legislative Analyst, UEN and Professional Advocate, RSAI) and Larry Sigel (Partner, ISFIS)
Actions of the 2017 Legislative Session Impact on School Revenues and Expenditures. State revenue policy and REC Estimates, appropriations impacting schools (SSA, TLC, cuts to AEAs and pilot projects), education policy changes (retention/summer school, assessment, computer science initiative), overhaul of collective bargaining and workers compensation rules, and flexibility legislation, with three significant policy bills providing a game changer for local decision-making. **(SBO Beginner/Contemporary Issues Track)**

Breakout Session 1

Decision-making Paradigm Shift: New opportunities from home rule, categorical flexibility and local authority to think differently - Margaret Buckton and Larry Sigel

The 2017 legislative session delivered three pieces of legislation focused on school district authority and flexibility. Learn the specific details of HF 564 Categorical Flexibility, HF 565 Super Flex Fund, and HF 573 Home Rule, including which funds offer new possible expenditures, requirements which must be met before repurposing ending balances, and learn about a whole different lens through which to look at policy choices in a Home Rule rather than Dillon's Rule environment. Margaret and Larry will also share perceptions about monitoring school authority behavior and considerations for avoiding an overstep that might upset either local stakeholders or state level policy makers. **(SBO Beginner/Contemporary Issues Track)**

Best Practices in School Security - Eric Phillipson (Overwatch International)

Our world is changing and horror stories of shooters in a school or individuals gaining inappropriate access to children on school grounds abound. Parents are expecting and schools are reasonably concerned with providing a reliable measure of security practices to protect staff and students. Hear from Eric Phillipson, a security specialist with extensive experience writing and implementing plans in the fields of school and public venue security, about considerations necessary for finding the balance of school security and community accessibility to our public schools.

Engaging Parents in Advocacy for Public Schools - Rose Green (Parents for Great Iowa Schools), Louisa Dykstra (Des Moines Community Legislative Action Team), Cindy Elsbernd (School Board Vice Chair, Des Moines Public Schools) assisted by Tom Lane (Lobbyist, AEAs of Iowa and former Carlisle Superintendent)

Hear these two parents talk about their advocacy during the 2017 Legislative Session, building a team of engaged parents around the state who are informed and ready to step up and reach out to legislators about the priority of public education. The non-partisan Parents for Great Iowa Schools is providing information about school choice, funding for public schools (including the importance of sound tax policy to adequately fund education), and specific support for extending the sunset of the state penny for school infrastructure. Learn about their adventures in growing this new organization to nearly 5,000 members in just a few months' time. Take home strategies for getting parents on board in your district.

5-4-3-2-1 What Great Schools Leaders Do - Susie Olesen (ISFIS School Improvement Enthusiast)

Susie will share her 5 reflections of what great school leaders do. Susie has served in each of the last 4 decades in 3 public school roles (teacher, school administrator, and school board member.) She has since worked in 2 leadership positions in the private sector (the latest as ISFIS School Improvement Enthusiast.) She is now 1 crazy lady, returning to the trenches as a substitute teacher this school year as she continues her support of WritetoLearn™ by Pearson, which is a fully automated online literacy tool for building writing skills and developing reading comprehension for students in grades 4-12, which your school can access through ISFIS. In addition to serving on her local school board, you will leave with concrete ideas you can implement in your school district next fall. Susie has served on several school improvement efforts at the state level, and she is a recipient of the Milken National Educator Award. Join Susie to consider her 5 reflections. This session will be fun, thought provoking, and interactive.

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General Session 2

Collective Bargaining Panel Discussion of Those Who Lived to Tell - Steve Murley (Superintendent, Iowa City), Joe Stutting (Superintendent, North Scott) and Brett Nitzschke (Attorney, Lynch Dallas P.C.)

Learn from two now-Iowa superintendents who were leaders in Wisconsin school districts when Act 10 became law, stripping employees of collective bargaining rights five years ago. They will talk about impact on local employee relationships, on teacher recruitment and retention, and on the different approaches to teacher pay that happened after the state limited union benefits. School Attorney Brett Nitzschke will be on hand to help add context of Iowa labor law changes in light of the 2017 collective bargaining policy overhaul. **(SBO Beginner/Contemporary Issues Track)**

Breakout Session 2

School Finance 101 - Larry Sigel

From spending authority to property tax rates, find out how the Iowa finance formula operates in one fast paced session. Covering where the funds come from and allowable expenditures from each fund, you'll have an overview that provides a solid base of understanding Iowa school finance. If you are new to Iowa school finance, this is a must have breakout session for you. The PowerPoint presentation for this session can be used in your district to explain school finance to your board, administration or public. **(SBO Beginner Track)**

Contemporary Issues and Trends in the Employee Benefits - Nataliya Boychenko (Holmes Murphy)

Nataliya, an employee benefit and compliance expert from Holmes Murphy, will discuss the latest trends and the most pressing issues under the uncertainty of federal legislation facing all organizations in the employee benefits area. Nataliya will focus on the specific dynamics of school districts and observable trends in the market that could help the bottom line and the trajectory of the claims cost. **(SBO Contemporary Issues Track)**

School Board Election Changes: Impact on special elections, board training and other critical leadership timelines -

Margaret Buckton

Margaret will explain the transition to November school board regular elections coinciding with city elections, first required in November 2019. Expect a domino-theory of other impacts on school planning, budget, labor and training timelines at the local level. Learn about the process of filling vacancies, petition signatures required for various ballots, and a review of the organization meeting requirements to get you ready for the September election of 2017.

Collaborating with Iowa Reading Research Center to Improve Literacy - Dr. Deborah Reed (Director, IRRRC) and Dr. Sandy Schmitz (Assistant Director, IRRRC)

Drs. Reed and Schmitz of the IRRRC will share findings from their work conducted in partnership with Iowa schools. These projects include creating professional development on literacy strategies and the structure of the literacy block, piloting materials being considered for adoption, and evaluating a redesigned summer reading program. Learn what initiatives show promise and how you can tap into the resources and support available through the IRRRC.

Breakout Session 3

Understanding Iowa's Changing Property Tax System - Jon Muller (Partner, ISFIS)

Jon will explain the basics of Iowa Property Taxes, in light of recent disruptive reforms. Jon will review tax increment financing and dig deeper into the impacts of the commercial property tax reform of 2013, including how that will play out for residential property taxpayers down the road. **(SBO Beginner Track)**

RSAI Sponsored - Making Learning Real and Relevant: Agriculture in the classroom - Will Fett (Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation)

Education becomes real and relevant for students when they can connect learning to something they are already familiar with – like food! Agriculture in the Classroom helps educators teach the farm-to-fork process by utilizing science, social studies, and language arts standards. Come learn how your school can take advantage of this unique and engaging program with curriculum, grant opportunities, and more!

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More About Collective Bargaining: Implementation, local policy and best practices to support employees while exercising new management rights - Brett Nitzschke and Holly Corkery (Attorneys, Lynch Dallas P.C.)

Accomplished school attorneys, Brett and Holly, will help school leaders better understand the implications and opportunities of HF 291 enacted in the 2017 Legislative Session. They will help you think of transitional considerations, explain the elevated importance of the employee handbook and administrative regulations to anticipate employee rights and benefits, as well as cover school board policy changes required as a result of the labor law overhaul. They will also cover the role of the Public Employee Relations Board in conducting employee association recertification elections and answer questions attendees have about best labor practices.

(SBO Contemporary Issues Track)

Will State Budget Get Worse Before it Gets Better? - Larry Sigel

Bi-partisan tax reform and growth of tax credits at the state level is impacting the availability of revenue growth and resources for Iowa public schools. Larry will share his analysis of property tax, sales tax and other credits, including the recent emphasis on commercial and industrial property taxes and sales tax exemptions, so attendees can learn the whole story. Leave this session with the knowledge and facts to engage stakeholders and legislators in advocating for sound and stable tax policy that will support education in Iowa.

Breakout Session 4

ISFIS/Piper Jaffray Comprehensive 5-Year Projection Model - Matt Gillaspie, Travis Squires, and Tim Oswald (Piper Jaffray, Inc.) and Larry Sigel

Learn about long-term budget and finance planning modeling to minimize guesswork and maximize productivity. Piper Jaffray will explain the concepts of long term general fund budget planning and financial projections. Piper and ISFIS have developed together a new projection model to minimize your work in this effort. Matt, Travis and Tim will demonstrate how this model takes the guesswork out of your long term planning. This model is simple to use, allows for input of assumptions, either district-developed or developed by third party (such as enrollment projections). The model gives district leaders and your board easy access throughout the year to multi-year budget projections based on real data, thus fostering better policy-level decision making, in an easy to use, intuitive interface.

(SBO Beginner Track)

School Fees & Debt Collections: What fees are legal, how does home rule impact fees and what is the best way for schools to collect unpaid fees owed to your district? - Brandon Hansel (CFO, Fort Dodge CSD) and Matt Carver (J.D, Legal Services Director, SAI)

Although fees are waived for students/families that meet certain low-income thresholds, not all eligible families enroll and not all families from higher income levels are current on debts to the school. In this session, participants will get a review of fees that school districts can legally charge students and their families, actions they can take (and those they can't) regarding unpaid fees, and thoughts about how Home Rule legislation may impact fees. For schools in particular, collections done wrong can have a negative impact on relationships with families that need to be nurtured for student success. Learn tips and action steps to successfully collect past due accounts without burning bridges with parents. **(SBO Contemporary Issues Track)**

Looming Iowa Teacher Shortage: Recruiting challenges and suggested best practices for finding and keeping great teachers in rural and urban schools - Margaret Buckton

Margaret will dig deep into the research on teacher shortages across the country, showing data about Iowa demographics of the teacher pool, and tie in the policy changes at the statehouse that may further impact the ability of school districts to recruit and retain teachers. She will also share some innovative strategies unfolding in Iowa school districts and across the nation, from growing your own teachers locally to creating cool social spaces for new teachers while connecting them to community to build lasting loyalty.