

2018 Session Descriptions



General Session I

Legislative Update: Report of the 2018 Legislative Session - Margaret Buckton and Larry Sigel (Partners, ISFIS)

Margaret and Larry will describe details of the 2018 session important to your district's future. State revenue policy and REC Estimates, appropriations impacting schools (SSA, TLC, Assessment, transportation and formula equity, cuts to AEA's), tax policy changes impacting the state's general fund resources, education policy changes (suicide prevention, CTE technical correction, high school collision sports, school meal shaming, financial literacy mandate, education data collection, lease purchase bidding requirements, electronic wage statements), and continued efforts at flexibility legislation, with two major bills providing additional authority for school district funding and educational delivery flexibility.

Breakout Session 1

Collective Bargaining/Chapter 279 One Year Later - Emily Ellingson (School Attorney, Lynch Dallas P.C.)

Learn from School Attorney Emily Ellingson, Lynch Dallas P.C., Cedar Rapids, about statewide impact of Iowa Code Chapter 20 changes from the 2017 session, changes and impact on the negotiations process now one year (and at least one bargaining cycle) beyond the enactment of HF 291. Emily will also share changes to teacher evaluation and intensive assistance, and probationary periods in Iowa Code Chapter 279 that were also part of the Iowa labor law 2017 collective bargaining policy overhaul.

School Finance 101 - Larry Sigel (Partner, ISFIS)

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. Whether a school leader is new to Iowa school finance or experienced but wanting a content refresher, this is a must have breakout session. The PowerPoint presentation for this session can be used in any school district as a presentation to explain school finance to the school board, administration, or public.

State Assessment, Writing Expectations, and Computer-based Scoring - Susie Olesen (School Enthusiast, ISFIS) and Brad Baker (MS Principal, Creston CSD)

Susie Olesen, ISFIS School Improvement Enthusiast, and Creston CSD Middle School Principal, Brad Baker, will explain about the changes to Iowa Assessments coming in the Fall of 2019 which will now include writing. The district will show how use of a computer-based scoring of writing tool (in this case, WriteToLearn) has provided valuable information for teachers regarding student writing performance and reports to focus instructional strategies to improve writing, and talk about how writing on a computer elevates student frequency and quality of writing. Susie will also provide a list of various resources to help pay for assessments, writing software and professional development.

ISFIS/Piper Jaffray Comprehensive Financial Projection Model - Travis Squires (Managing Director, Piper Jaffray)

Learn about long-term budget and finance planning modeling to minimize guesswork and maximize productivity. Experts from Piper Jaffray and ISFIS developed this model to explore the concepts of long term general fund budget planning and financial projections. This new projection model will minimize your work in this effort. The team 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 school boards 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. *This session will repeat three times throughout the conference, allowing for a smaller class size, so each SBO in attendance can enter assumptions into the model, see the impact of those changes on taxes and spending authority, and work with their line-item budget tab to determine how best to track expenditures.*

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General Session II

Tax Policy Panel: Experts Share Sound State Tax Policy Recommendations - Randy Bauer (Director, PFM Group Consulting LLC) and Dave Swenson (Associate Scientist, Iowa State University)

Learn from two economics and tax policy experts about state tax policy as they share their recommendations for Iowa in comparison to the tax cuts legislation enacted during the 2018 session. Randy Bauer and Dave Swenson will share tax policy trends from around the nation, explain the economic impact of tax policy changes, anticipate what impact recent Iowa legislation will have on the state's revenues, and correspondingly, the legislature's ability to adequately fund education in the future.

This information is critical for school business officials to understand and best inform their work in long-range planning and projections, as well as being able to support school administrators and school board members in their advocacy work with state policy makers on behalf of the staff and students in their school districts.

Breakout Session 2

Emergency Planning: Legislative Requirements and Best Practices - Kevin W. Techau (Attorney, Scheldrup Blades)

Kevin W. Techau will share his history in leading the Iowa Department of Public Safety in implementing emergency procedures changes after the 9/11 bombing of the world trade center. Kevin will also share his understanding of critical planning steps to prevent incidents as well as planning to deal with the unknown, such as an active shooter, or food borne pathogens and viruses. Kevin will discuss the new Iowa law requiring emergency preparedness plans, including working with local law enforcement and other stakeholders, and prepare district leaders to take their next planning steps to keep staff and students safe.

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

Jon will explain the basics of Iowa Property Taxes, in light of recent disruptive reforms. This session will review the commercial and industrial property tax reform of 2013, including how that is playing out for residential property taxpayers down the road. Jon will also show how the state's recent practice to assume all of what would otherwise be property taxes in the formula will continue to demand more of the state budget every year and how school budgets will be affected. Recent research on how Agriculture assessments are currently undervalued and how there may be some errors with the application of State Law on assessments will also be highlighted.

Communicating the Value of Leadership and Administration - Margaret Buckton (Partner, ISFIS)

Margaret will share her insights about the challenges of investing in and appropriately compensating school leaders when many voices critical of education champion reduced administration and investments directly into classrooms. This session includes data and research about the valuable role of administrators to student learning, and the heavy workload of Iowa school administrators compared to other states' educational system and the private sector. Leave with talking points and information that local leaders can use to explain the importance of administrative leaders, whether with the school board, with local constituents or with state-level policy makers.

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(Repeat session)

Breakout Session 3

Expanded Local District Authority and Flexibility - Margaret Buckton (Partner, ISFIS)

Margaret will share information about the continued legislative effort to build local control. The 2018 legislative session passed new bills which drastically expand school district expenditure flexibility and local authority. This builds on the efforts of 2017, (Categorical Flexibility, Super Flex Fund, and Home Rule). Margaret will explain the new opportunities, provide new information about last year's efforts, share resolution templates and other resources needed to take advantage of the new flexibilities, explain the requirements which must be met before accessing flexibility, warn of some pitfalls to avoid, and answer questions.

Student Lunch Shaming Legislation Including Debt Collections - Ann Feilman (Chief, Bureau of Nutrition and Health Services, Department of Education)

Ann Feilmann will help attendees learn about legislation preventing district actions that identify students who owe lunch money, requirements of state and federal law regarding student fees and school lunch processes, and new options for collecting unpaid lunch debt owed to your district.

School Solar Landscape: New Laws, Opportunities, and Land Mines - Jon Muller (Partner, ISFIS)

Jon will share an update on the state of solar energy with respect to Iowa schools. A number of changes in state law have made it easier for some districts to finance projects, but these opportunities are not right for every district, depending on the district's capital structure as well as the type of utility that services the district. Jon will explain the primary factors your district needs to consider with respect to the economics of solar projects, as well as how to structure RFPs and financing to maximize benefit to each district's particular circumstance.

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Breakout Session 4

Debt Management Financial Policy Considerations - Tim Oswald (Managing Director, Piper Jaffray)

Tim Oswald will share their philosophy of debt management policy development, including strategies to ensure district financial flexibility without over-regulating district financial choices. Tim will discuss sample language from real policy examples that will help local leaders comply with financial regulatory requirements while preserving options for the most advantageous future financing of bonds and other debts.

State Penny Extension Proposal and Advocacy Next Steps - Margaret Buckton (Partner, ISFIS)

Margaret will explain the details of proposed state penny extension legislation HF 2481, that was approved by 95 Representatives, but did not receive floor debate in the Iowa Senate in the 2018 session. Margaret will share successful strategies for continued advocacy, helping district leaders take the next steps to collaborate with other entities that care about this legislation moving forward. Leave with talking points and resources for local leaders to connect with candidates before the November 2018 election so they will arrive at the statehouse in the 2019 Session supportive of the proposal.

AEA Services: Looking Forward - Tom Lane (Executive Director, Area Education Agencies of Iowa)

Dr. Tom Lane will share ideas that surfaced during the 2017 Legislative Session about AEA restructuring, AEA services, AEA investment, dispel some myths about AEAs, and discuss where the AEAs are headed now, with priorities of continuing to support school districts in providing special education services to students, in generating new mental health options and services, and working with school districts to effectively share and provide cooperative services that will help overburdened school leaders work efficiently and effectively for students.