



Healthy Kids Act

The "Healthy Kids Act," which passed the House Education Committee this week, would require the Department of Education to establish nutritional standards, based upon USDA dietary guidelines, for any food or beverages sold (including vending machines) on the grounds of any public or private K-12 school. The department would be required to monitor compliance. (State rules would not govern any federal school food program nor any fundraiser or food concession sales.)

The legislation would require the education department to convene a nutrition advisory panel to report nutritional recommendations to the department and update the recommendations every five years. Every area education agency would be required to contract with a licensed dietitian to help with nutritional provisions of educational plans for disabled students, and to assist school nutrition coordinators.

Beginning with the 2009-10 school year, all physically-able students from kindergarten through fifth grade would be required to engage in a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity each school day. Students in grades six through twelve would be required to engage in at least 120 minutes of physical activity per week. Students involved in extracurricular sports would be exempted, as would any students who produce a letter from a parent indicating that such activity conflicts with religious beliefs.

The department of education would convene a working group of educators, fitness professionals and other stakeholders to assist the department in developing model ways to promote proper physical activity requirements for students. Also starting in 2009-10 school year, every student would have to complete a cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification course by the time they complete high school, unless the school determines that a particular student is physically unable to complete the training. This legislation, which still needs approval by the full House, is managed by Rep. Art Staed of Cedar Rapids.

Another legislative proposal, Senate File 2319, would establish a Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Nutrition to help develop strategies and promote physical fitness and wellness efforts in communities across Iowa. The council would work to develop a statewide plan to promote increased physical activity and fitness, improved nutrition, and healthy behaviors. The legislation also authorizes the awarding of grants to help local communities develop projects that improve wellness.



One of my goals as Speaker of the Iowa House of Representatives is to keep community leaders and organizations informed about the issues facing the Iowa Legislature.

Legis.News is my way of giving you a brief insider's look at what is happening at the State Capitol. I hope you will find it interesting and informative.

Pat Murphy

Statewide Penny for Schools

Legislation to extend the current penny sales tax for K-12 school infrastructure and property tax relief was approved with bipartisan support by the House Ways and Means Committee. This legislation would replace the current one cent local option sales tax (which has been approved by every county in Iowa) with a statewide one cent sales tax, so the overall sales tax rate would remain at six percent.

Schools across Iowa, especially in rural areas, have requested the change to fix inequities in the current system because some districts receive as little as \$575 per student and others receive as much as \$1396 per student. If approved, the tax would be distributed on an equal basis with each school district receiving \$872 per student. The new proposal would also provide \$28 million for property tax relief in the first year and \$175 million over six years. The statewide penny tax would expire in 2029 and motor vehicle sales would be exempted from the statewide penny tax.

Under current law, county local option taxes expire ten years after approval by county voters. Similar to current law, revenue from the statewide penny could only be used to pay for K-12 school infrastructure projects such as construction costs, reduction of a school district's bond indebtedness, or for property tax relief. Under this legislation, districts could follow their existing spending plans crafted under their local option sales tax or revise those plans.

House File 2663, managed in the House by Rep. Mike Reasoner of Creston, still needs to be approved by the full House and Senate, but the bill is clearly picking up momentum.

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