

INCREASE SSA AND BASE PRESCHOOL FUNDING ON 2019 ENROLLMENT

- 1.) *The Community Legislative Action team recommends the State of Iowa maximize the increase to Supplemental State Aid (SSA) for K-12 and therefore minimize the reliance on property taxes to fund districts on the budget guarantee.*
- 2.) *For pre-school only, the Community Legislative Action Team recommends the State of Iowa increase Supplemental State Aid (SSA) and base it on 2019 certified enrollment for districts instead of the COVID-19 impacted enrollment in 2020.*

Background

- Most Iowa school districts (66%) have experienced enrollment loss due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Hundreds of parents statewide did not enroll their kindergarten-aged students, others opted for alternative learning to avoid the possibility of sending their child into a potentially unsafe environment.
- Because SSA funding is based on the previous year's certified enrollment, districts will face a large budget deficit as a surge of kindergarten students enter schools and other students return to public school districts for the 2021-22 school year but are not counted in the funding allocation.
- Likewise, a larger influx of preschool students is expected. Preschool is not covered under the budget guarantee.
- The budget impacts every aspect of school learning, including class sizes and the ability to purchase new materials to educate students.
- Many students will need additional supports to recover from COVID-related learning loss.
- Districts are incurring largely unsupported expenses in the purchase of personal protective equipment, facilities upgrades related for air safety, technology equipment to support virtual learning and pay for substitute teachers as staff fall ill or are quarantined during the ongoing pandemic.
- Schools have had to supplement enterprise funds with money from the general fund to retain employees for childcare and food services.
- The State of Iowa offers a budget guarantee that provides schools with a 1% increase in spending authority over the previous year. However, for many school districts, that the budget guarantee is partially borne on the backs of property taxpayers.

Why This is a Good Investment

- Lessen the Impact of COVID-19 on Iowa Families. Increasing SSA by a larger number will mean schools have the resources they need to educate the anticipated influx of students in the Fall of 2021, more students have the supports they need to recover from COVID-related learning loss and their families and other taxpayers will not bare the additional burden of increased property taxes.

Why This is Urgent

- The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to impact student learning through the end of the 2020-21 school year as teachers and students fall ill or are quarantined, and the stress of learning in an unprecedented classroom setting with distance requirements and mask wearing deprives students of normal social interaction and emotional supports essential to adequate academic growth. The stress of the pandemic on staff, students and families means most students will continue the COVID slide through at least the end of this school year. Unprecedented support will be needed to fill the learning gap in school year 2021-22.