

The Governor has stated that our AEAs are not working. [HSB 542](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find) aims to limit the scope of AEA responsibilities, allow districts to opt in to AEA services and choose to contract with private companies, and place the oversight of special education firmly within the Department of Education. Contact your Legislators NOW <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>.

To help with your communications, ISPA's Legislation and Advocacy Committee put together the following information. We provide sample introductions to help you introduce yourself to your legislators and some talking points you can use in your communication. We strongly encourage you to **personalize your communications** because legislators are less likely to take your communication seriously if it looks the same as many others. If you have personal stories you can share, please share those, these are the most impactful statements you can share. Also, use bullet points and concise language. They are reading many emails, so **keep it simple and keep it short**.

HSB 542 was proposed on January 9th, and many feel that the process of reviewing and passing this bill will go quickly. **Please write or call your legislators along with [Senate Education Committee Members](#) and [House Education Committee Members](#).**

Sample Introductions for your emails to legislators:

As your constituent, a taxpayer, and Iowan who is passionate about our public schools and the future of our state, I am writing to express my concern with HSB 542

As a constituent and school psychologist, I am vehemently opposed to any legislation that limits the ways AEAs can serve their local communities...

As a constituent and school psychologist, I am writing in respectful opposition to...

Information to use in your communication to legislators:

- Before the bill has passed, the Department of Education has listed job postings related to the bill and has sent districts the proposed deadline from the bill to opt in or out of AEA services. This feels incredibly premature given that the bill has not passed and causes undue panic among AEA and district staff.
- Limiting AEAs to exclusively special education services eliminates AEA involvement in crisis response. Local crisis response is necessary when schools experience crises, such as the school shooting in Perry on January 4th of this year. Schools want people who they already have relationships with coming to their school during a crisis. Moving crisis intervention to Des Moines will eliminate those relationships.
- Eliminating media libraries means districts will have limited access to learning materials and must spend more of their money buying these resources rather than borrowing them. In practice, that will mean less access to up-to-date interventions and curricula. It will also mean students have less access to high quality materials.
- Smaller districts will be impacted the most, as they benefit the most from free supplementary services that will no longer be covered if the AEAs are exclusive to special education and if their pool of special ed money goes exclusively to contracting

out special education professionals. Special education professionals are necessary but not sufficient for access to a free and appropriate public education.

- **The director of the state education department can decide to reorganize or dissolve AEAs independently.** So they could get rid of the AEAs without an act of legislation.
- Rather than AEAs negotiating for their own needs, the lead negotiator is delegated to the department of administrative services. So, they are negotiating with themselves to determine what we receive.
- There is no need to add a Dyslexia specialist in each AEA. Based on the IDEA, we do not diagnose Dyslexia, so having a Dyslexia specialist seems unnecessary. We already have literacy consultants that help support evidence-based reading instruction and school psychologists who are well versed in serving reading needs as well. The proposed bill would eliminate these literacy specialists from our AEAs and hinder services to students who are struggling readers and limit the coaching and professional development teachers receive to address reading challenges.
- This bill will shift the power away from AEAs and toward those who have little understanding about our work. This bill moves away from local control towards control of special education by the Department of Education.
- School psychologists, who generally work for AEAs, provide much more to school than just special education services. They serve school through crisis support, MTSS support, and provide professional development across the tiers to help support those in special education. When we remediate academic and behavioral skills, we leave more room for students who truly need special education services. Removing these services and the relationships these AEA employees have with school districts, will negatively impact teachers, students, and families.
- Schools will no longer have local resources for professional development. School leaders and teachers depend on their local AEA to provide them with training, coaching and support. Trying to get that from Des Moines will lead to delays in training and training that does not meet the local needs of each school.
- There are not enough private providers for schools to contract with. Rural schools will suffer the most because there are not readily available private providers to replace all of the services provided by the AEA this bill cuts.