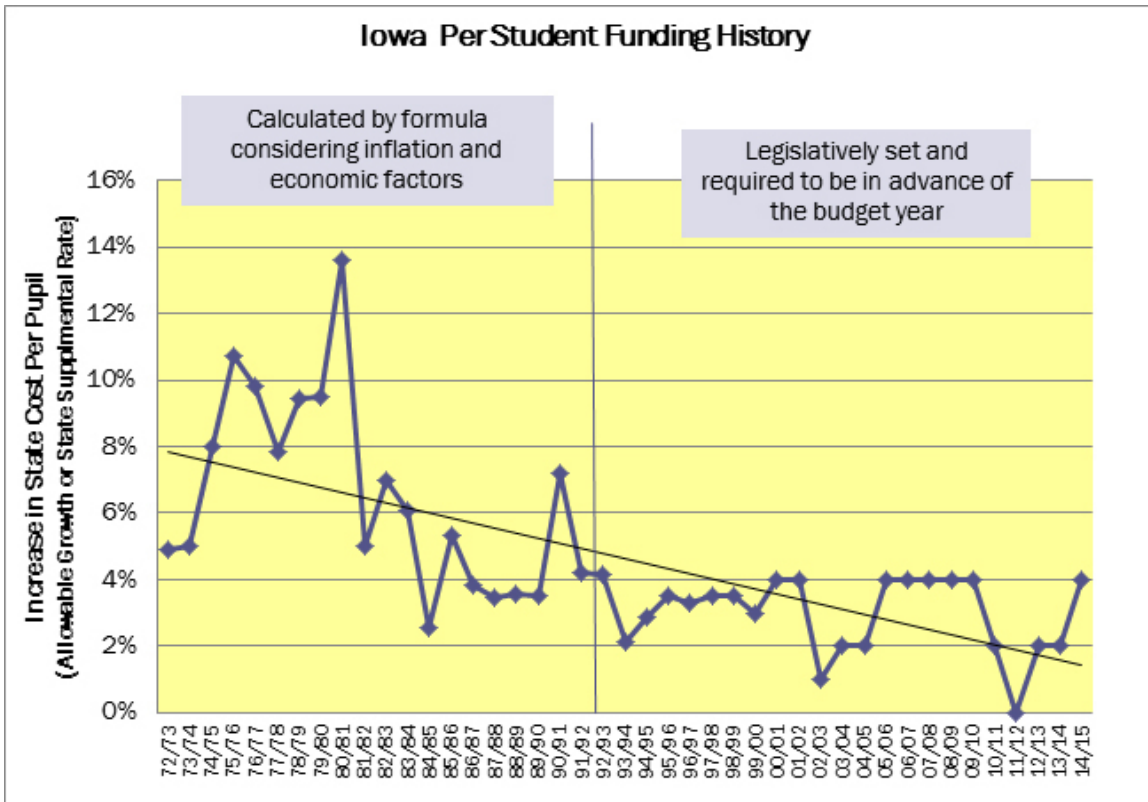


Education Funding Information

Maquoketa Valley Schools, as well as all other Iowa schools, is again facing another year in which funding proposals at the state level make it nearly impossible to deliver the high quality education that we all expect for our children. Two facts listed below support the negative impact on Iowa education in recent years:

- Iowa's percent change in spending per student, inflation-adjusted, from FY 2008 through FY 2014, is down **\$641** per student. Thirty-seven states have managed to do better for their schools and students despite a recovery from the recession less robust than Iowa has experienced. (Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, May 20, 2014, "Most States Funding Schools Less Than Before the Recession," <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=4011>)
- Currently Iowa ranks 35th in the nation in educational funding per student, which is **\$1,612** below the national average.

Iowa's commitment to increase education funding per pupil has plummeted, as evidenced by the history below, especially since 1993 when the legislature started setting the rate each year rather than an automatic increase based on economic and inflationary factors.



In recent years, schools experienced record low increases in per pupil revenue that have not kept pace with cost increases of running Iowa schools. Those schools that have experienced declining enrollment, such as MV, and the lack of commitment and funding to our schools from our state has led to teacher,

associate and administrative reductions, increased class sizes and reduced bus routes, which has increased student riding time, and fewer course offerings at the secondary level.

But this doesn't have to be. We can appropriately fund education because Iowa's economy is strong. The states reserves are full. The CRF is full at \$522.3 million, EEF is full at \$174.1 million, the surplus for FY 2015 prior to vetoes was \$612.6 million and the Governor vetoed of SF363 added another \$140 million. To further support the notion that our state is in a very strong financial standing, the Revenue Estimating Conference (REC), estimate of general fund receipts, (which the legislature builds their budget based on this conferences future revenue estimates) that there will be an increase of 4.8% for FY 2015 and an increase of 5.1% for FY 2016.

So as a state, this is a strong indication that we are fiscally sound and we can and should invest in our children, which is obviously an investment in our future.

Because the Governor has chosen to not appropriately fund education the Education Coalition calls on our Governor and Legislature to prioritize the education of Iowa children and set a 6% growth rate per student for the 2015-16 school year. Setting the 2015-16 per pupil rate needs to be done very quickly. The 2016-17 rate should be set within 30 days of the release of the Governor's budget, returning to the practice required in Iowa law (Iowa Code 257.8). Setting the rate in advance demonstrates the priority of education, as explained by this Cedar Rapids Gazette Opinion, Feb. 6, 2014:

(<http://thegazette.com/2014/02/06/lawmakers-should-follow-laws/#ixzz2segdgF38>)

- “The not quite 20-year-old state law directs the Legislature to set state per-pupil funding two years in advance, and within 30 days of receiving a governor's budget. The goals are pretty simple. Make school funding a top priority, give school districts ample time to plan ahead and make it less likely that critical school bucks will get tangled up in all the budgetary horse-trading that happens late in a session.”

Unfortunately, recent departures from the requirements of Iowa Code 257.8 have become the norm, which has had a negative impact on our schools. Note the following instances in which the cost per pupil hasn't been set timely as required by Iowa law:

- FY 2003, originally set at 4% timely, but lowered to 1% on 3/28/02
- FY 2012, the FY 2011 rate remained unchanged due to no Legislative Action
- FY 2013, the 2% increase was enacted 7/27/2011, providing 13 months' notice
- FY 2014, the 2% increase was enacted 6/3/2013, less than one month before the fiscal year took effect
- FY 2015, the 4% increase was enacted 6/3/2013, providing almost 13 months' notice.

Maquoketa Valley, as well as all schools across Iowa, need sufficient notice to anticipate revenue, make timely staffing and curriculum decisions and thoughtfully plan to invest the funds wisely for student learning. The future of Iowa's students and our state's continued success depend on a solid investment in the priority of public education.

Although funding has not been a priority with our Governor and legislative body, all of our educators at Maquoketa Valley continue to work harder than ever with less. We have been able to produce significant results, but without a reasonable funding stream we cannot continue to expect the same results. To name a few of our accomplishments at Maquoketa Valley:

- The four-year cohort graduation rate for MV class of 2012 was 97%. For the 2013 MV cohort group, it was 100%. The state graduation rate for 2012 was 89% and for 2013 school year it was 89%. MV and Iowa continue to have one of the highest graduation rates in the nation.
- 2013 ACT data indicates again that Iowa students continue to score well on the ACT. Among 28 states for which ACT is the primary college entrance exam (greater than 50%), Iowa's average composite score (22.1) continues to rank second. MV's composite score is 22.2.
- Maquoketa Valley's concurrent (dual) enrollment courses, qualifying for community college credit, (college credit saving parents and students tuition payments later) continue to grow. Currently MV students have an opportunity to take advantage of up to 37 credits on-campus and 132 possible credits with our partnership with Kirkwood Community College located in Monticello.
- Maquoketa Valley's overall performance on the Iowa Assessments continues to excel. Listed below is our reading, math and science data:

2014 IOWA ASSESSMENT DATA – READING

3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th
93%	90%	84%	91%	85%	74%	94%	90%	79%

2014 IOWA ASSESSMENT DATA – MATH

3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th
93%	96%	88%	76%	92%	81%	85%	88%	74%

2014 IOWA ASSESSMENT DATA – SCIENCE

3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th
93%	96%	88%	89%	92%	96%	87%	93%	89%

The Governors goal for education is to make Iowa schools world class. All of us strongly agree and want this as a goal. But with the Governors proposal of

1.25% for next school year and a 2.45% increase for FY 2016 and if it is passed by our legislators we cannot expect schools to be world class, let alone be tops in this country. Because of our values and work ethic Iowa's educational system is one of the best in the nation. But without adequate funding, this can no longer continue. The frustrating piece of all of this is the data clearly indicates that our economy is strong, state reserves are full, and future revenue estimates continue to increase. We can afford to invest in our kids. Now is the time to make education a top priority so we can continue the work to become world-class. If you believe that that our schools are underfunded and our children deserve better, it is imperative that you contact our local representatives, senators, and the Governor's office immediately. Without your voice being heard, education funding will not be a priority. The Governor can be contacted at <https://governor.iowa.gov/contact/> or a call can be made to 515-281-5221. Representative Hein can be emailed at lee.hein@legis.iowa.gov or you can place a call to the House Switchboard and leave a message at 515-281-3221. Senator Zumbach can be emailed at dan.zumbach@legis.iowa.gov or a message can be left for the senator at 515-281-3371.