Week of May 29th:

**ACT Releases Study Results**

On May 20 ACT, the Iowa City-based college entrance exam company, released the *College Choice Report: Part 3 – Persistence and Transfer* report on a study conducted with the 2013 ACT-tested high school graduates. The report suggested that nearly half of second-year college students declare a different major than the one they chose in high school. Study results suggested that students who choose a major in high school that matches their interests are more likely than students who don’t to remain in that major, persist in college and complete their degree in a timely manner. The study also determined that academic achievement level and certainty of planned major also impact planned-declared major consistency. Students with higher level achievement levels were more likely than those with a lower achievement level to stay with their planned major, as were students who indicated a higher level of certainty about their choice of major compared to others. The findings of the study showed that frequency with which students actually declare their intended major in college varies significantly by specific majors and college levels.

The highest consistency rates in planned majors were found in business, engineering, repair, production and construction, and health sciences and technologies majors. The lowest consistency rates were found with students in health administration and assisting, ethnic and multidisciplinary studies, engineering technology and drafting, and architecture majors.

ACT released *Part 1* and *Part 2* of the report in November 2013 and July 2014, respectively.

For more information: [http://www.act.org/collegechoice/13/](http://www.act.org/collegechoice/13/)

**Iowa’s Jobless Rate Declines**

On May 27, Iowa Workforce Development released the unemployment numbers for April, which reflected a drop in the state’s jobless rate to 3.8 percent, in comparison to 4.0 percent in March. The level of unemployment represents a total of 65,500 Iowans unemployed, which is the lowest rate in 7 years. The jobless rate was reflected by the following areas:

- The total number of working Iowans increased to 1,647,700, 600 higher than March and 23,700 higher than April 2014.
- There was a loss of 1,700 jobs in the non-farm sector.
- Manufacturing reduced 3,200 jobs in April and the trade and transportation sector shed 1,000 jobs.
- The construction sector added 2,400 jobs due to strong hiring by the highway industry and some construction for certain infrastructure state projects.

The national unemployment rate for April was 5.4 percent.

For more information: [http://www.iowaworkforce.org](http://www.iowaworkforce.org)

**529 College Savings Day**

The Iowa State Treasurer’s Office has designated “529 College Savings Day” on Friday, May 29. Iowa’s savings plan is known as the “529” plan and provides opportunities for anyone to open an account with a savings designated for college expenditures.

The Iowa Treasurer’s Office is promoting the day with an opportunity for individuals to sign up for an account and register to win an account worth $5,290 on the College Savings Iowa website. Based on the plan, individuals can start savings for the future college costs, get a state tax deduction (based on $3,163 per beneficiary amount), and have the interest on the account deferred until they make a withdrawal of the funds. If the account is used for the qualified expense, there are no federal or state taxes paid on the...
income earned on the account. See www.CollegeSavingsIowa.com for more information.

2015 Legislation

ACTIVE – SF 510 – Standings Bill – Voted out of Senate Appropriations May 12 and voted out of the Senate on May 14. Voted out of the House on May 20 with House amendments 1365 and 1370. SF 510 was referred to a conference committee on May 27 with Senators Dvorsky, Gronstal, Jochum, Dix, and Whitver and Representatives Soderberg, Paulsen, Upmeyer, Hall and Running-Marquardt.

NEW LAW – SF 501 – An act relating to interstate student tuition agreements involving certain postsecondary educational institutions, creating a tuition refund fund, and appropriating money from the fund. SF 501 passed out of the Senate on May 12 and HF 663 passed out of the House on May 12. HF 663 was substituted for SF 501 in the House on May 12. Signed by the Governor on May 22.

ACTIVE – HF 658 – Education Appropriations – Passed the out of the Senate with Senate Amendment 3150 on May 6. HF 658 was referred to the House which refused to concur with House Amendment 1339 and sent to a conference committee for compromise on May 6. A conference committee was established on May 11 with Senators Schoenjahn, Horn, Quirmbach, Sinclair, and Kraayenbrink and Representatives Dolecheck, Forristall, Nunn, Winckler and Bearinger.


ACTIVE – HF 650 – Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF) Appropriations – Passed out of the Senate with Senate amendments 3176 and 3172 and House refused to concur with the Senate on May 11. Conference committee members are Senator McCoy, Bowman, Petersen, Kapucian, and Chapman and Representatives Huseman, Maxwell, Stanerson, Cohoon and Dawson.

NEW LAW - SF 486 – An act relating to the approval and imposition of the facilities property tax levy and the equipment replacement and program sharing property tax levy for a merged area. SF 486 was voted out of the House on May 12. Signed by the Governor on May 22.

ACTIVE – HF 121/SF 258 – An act relating to the eligibility requirements for the GAP Tuition Assistance Program. HF 121 was referred back to the House Education Committee and SF 258 passed out of the Senate 49-1 on March 18 and was sent to the House for consideration. Language in both bills is included in SF 493 (Education Appropriations) which passed out of the Senate on April 29 and included in Senate Amendment – 3150 in HF 658, which is in a conference committee assignment.

NEW LAW – HF 167 – An act concerning access to documents during the competitive bidding process for public improvement contracts (involves government entities). Signed by the Governor on March 4.

NEW LAW – HF 421 – An act relating to qualifications for community college career and technical education instructors. Signed into law by Governor on April 17.

NEW LAW – SF 130 – An act making changes to certain limitations within the Iowa National Educational Assistance Program. SF 130 was signed by the Governor on March 30.

NEW LAW – HF 205 – An act that extends reporting requirements of postsecondary educational institutions regarding Veterans to include certain members of the reserves and
National Guard. Signed by Governor on March 4.

**FAILED FUNNEL – HF 387** – An act relating to interstate reciprocity agreements entered into, administered, or recognized by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission. HF 387 was referred back to House Education and failed the funnel. Language will be prepared by the Iowa Attorney General’s Office to create a fund that will provide refunds to students who cannot acquire refunds from certain postsecondary institutions and for-profit organizations. The language will be included as a leadership bill and incorporated in the final Standing Bill for the session. (See HF 663 and SF 501).

**FAILED FUNNEL – SF 384** – An act relating to governmental bodies and advisory bodies and public notice requirements under the Iowa Open Meetings Law. SF 384 was referred to the House State Government subcommittee of Bacon, Branham, and Berry on March 17.

**ACTIVE – HSB 236/SSB 1178** – An act creating a student debt reduction organization tax credit available against the individual and corporate income tax, providing for the exclusion of student debt reduction grants from the individual income tax, and including retroactive and other applicability provisions. Filed by the Governor’s Office. HSB 236 was referred to the House Ways & Means subcommittee of Forristal, Baltimore, and Steckman on April 15 and SSB 1178 was referred to the Senate Ways & Means subcommittee of Bolkcom, McCoy, and Feenstra on Feb. 12.

**NEW LAW – HF 172** – An act relating to corporations’ powers and duties, document filings, meetings, mergers, voting procedures, and the functions of directors and officers. Signed by the Governor on April 17.

**NEW LAW – Senate File 227** – An act relating to the school start date and eliminating the waiver. Signed by the Governor April 10.

**Events of Importance**
- **June 24 – 26** – The Midwest Educators Forum on Entrepreneurship Conference sponsored by the U.S. DOL Technology Grant on the NIACC campus. Registration is online at http://www.niacc.edu/mefe. The registration fee is $175.
- **June 22 – 23** – The Iowa ASCD Summer Institute is coordinated by the Iowa Department of Education at the Iowa Events Center to spotlight high-impact learning for students and addressing the Iowa Core standards, academic disciplines, literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies. Registration is online at http://iowaascd.org/index.php/events/event-registration/
- **July 22 – 24** - Reminder of the 2015 IACCT Conference hosted by IHCC on their Ottumwa campus
- **June 25 – 27** – Preserve Iowa Summit coordinated by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs in Winterset. Register online at www.preserveiowasummit.com.

For more information about the final activity of the 86th General Assembly, contact: Cindy Schulte, Director of Governmental Affairs

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