

IHS Class of 1976 to hold reunion

BY AILIS MCCARDLE
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The Independence High School Class of 1976 will be holding their 50th reunion during homecoming this fall.

According to class member Fred Smock, there are approximately 20 classmates who have moved out of town and reunion organizers are having trouble reaching out to inform them of the upcoming reunion. If you

have a loved one who was part of the IHS Class of 1976, please pass along Smock's information so they may attend their reunion if they wish.

Fred Smock can be reached at 319-327-0007.

AREA OBITUARIES

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Lawrence "Larry" Craney

Lawrence "Larry" Craney, 77, formerly of Independence, IA passed away Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at the Iowa Veteran's Home in Marshalltown. Larry was born on November 9, 1948, in Independence to Cecil H. and Rita C. (Moroney) Craney. Mass of Christian Burial will be 10:30 a.m., Monday, March 16, 2026, at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Independence. A visitation

will be held one hour prior to service beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the church. Inurnment will follow the service at St. John's Cemetery in Independence. A luncheon will be held in the church fellowship hall following burial. Anderson Funeral Homes of Marshalltown has been entrusted with the arrangements. Online condolences may be sent to www.andersonfhs.com.

Iowa Legislature hits first 'funnel' deadline of 2026. Here's which bills survived

BY ROBIN OPSAHL
BROOKLYN DRAISEY
CAMI KOONS
IOWA CAPITAL DISPATCH

The Independence Bulletin Journal will be running the Iowa Capital Dispatch's legislative update on bills that survived the funnel as a three part series. See the third and final part in the Wednesday, March 4 paper.

Iowa lawmakers took on hundreds of bills in the first six weeks of the 2026 legislative session, though several measures named as top priorities heading into the year, like eminent domain and property taxes, have yet to find consensus.

What survived Education

Antisemitism at schools: House File 2544 would require the Iowa Board of Education to publish an annual antisemitism report, identifying "each complaint or incident of antisemitism" and outcomes of investigations, at regents universities, community colleges and public school districts. The bill would use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism to define these claims, which Democrats said could lead to students protesting Israel or Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu being characterized as antisemitic.

Athletic scrimmages: Senate File 2392 would allow public and nonpublic schools to hold athletic scrimmages with home school sports organizations, as long as the event is voluntary, agreed upon with a written agreement and limited in its duration and intensity. The scrimmage could not have official scorekeeping or play-by-play announcements and would not apply to regular season athletic statistics. The Iowa Senate Education Committee approved the legislation Feb. 18.

Banned concepts: Sen. Sandy Salmon, R-Janesville, told the Iowa Senate Education Committee Feb. 18 that Senate File 2405 closes loopholes in current law prohibiting certain defined concepts in public school education and would allow school district residents to file civil suit against their district for violating Iowa without needing to demonstrate harm done to the complainant.

Behavioral issues: Senate File 2404 would establish a pilot program in the Department of Education allowing a rural school district and urban school district to develop attendance centers that would offer educational services to certain students with special education needs or with behavioral issues. Sen. Kerry Gruenhagen, R-Walcott, told the Iowa Senate Education Committee Feb. 18 he expects an amendment to be filed addressing how the pilot program would be funded.

Board of Educational Examiners citizenship checks: One of the measures introduced in the aftermath of the immigration arrest of former Des Moines Public Schools superintendent Ian Roberts, Senate File 2218 would direct the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners to have applicants for new and renewing educational licenses provide information about their lawful presence in the country, and to submit proof of their legal presence and work eligibility to the board every five years to remain licensed. Public and charter school boards, as well as authorities in nonpublic schools, would be required to verify the identity and work eligibility of people who accept job offers at their schools.

Cameras in special education classrooms: House File 2218 would require special education

classrooms in public and charter schools to have video recording systems, paid for by school districts from the state School Foundation Aid. These cameras and the recordings created would have to follow state and federal privacy laws. Lawmakers indicated in the House Education Committee the measure will likely be amended, including more information about the definitions of "special education classroom" and making changes to how this measure would be funded.

Cardiac emergency response: Senate File 2390 seeks to establish an Iowa Department of Education competitive grant program for school districts to use in developing cardiac emergency response plans focused on athletic events and physical education. Sen. Lynn Evans, R-Aurelia, told the Iowa Senate Education Committee in its Feb. 18 meeting he is waiting to receive data on how many schools have automated external defibrillators and hopes to have it before the bill comes up for debate.

Charlie Kirk: House File 2512 proposes having the Iowa BOEE disqualify applicants and revoke licenses or certificates for people identified as "publicly celebrating any act of politically motivated violence, including the unlawful killing of Charles J. Kirk." The measure would be effective retroactively, beginning Sept. 10, 2025, the day Kirk was fatally shot.

The measure was amended by the House Education Committee to also include language requiring school boards to extend their school calendar by one day for each day a student protest occurs at any school in the district. The proposal would also require education licenses to be revoked for teachers and administrators "leading or encouraging" student protests.

Charter schools: Education committees in both the House and Senate approved measures, Senate File 2175 and House Study Bill 676, related to charter school funding changes. The measure would add costs for the teacher salary supplement state cost per pupil to payments to charter schools. The measure would also require more athletic and extracurricular activities to be available to charter school students within the public school districts where they reside.

There are some differences between the two measures – the Senate bill would also require charter school teachers be included in the Iowa Public Employee Retirement System, and would establish charter school boards as local education agencies to receive federal funding. The House measure would also direct funding from public schools to charter schools related to Area Education Agencies services, including special education and media services.

Senate File 2406, formerly Senate Study Bill 3170 and proposed by Reynolds, also tackles charter schools and includes many of the same sections as the other Senate and House bills.

Civics education: Bills to expand civics education in public higher education have passed out of the Iowa House Higher Education Committee and Senate Education Committee. Senate File 2232 and House File 2361 would require state universities to include three-credit-hour courses in U.S. history and government in general education standards.

The Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa, Center for Cyclone Civics at Iowa State University and Center for Civic Education at the University of Northern Iowa would designate courses that fit the new requirements, the bill stated, and

develop lecture and debate series.

Classic Learning Test: House File 2339 would require the Iowa Board of Regents to include the Classic Learning Test in its regent admission index, joining the ACT and SAT as factors in admission to Iowa's public universities. For students who don't qualify through the index, the bill states universities can only factor "merit and likelihood of employment in Iowa after graduation" in their admission decision. The legislation has passed out of subcommittee and the Iowa House Higher Education Committee.

Classroom removal: Senate File 2044 would require school attendance centers to form review committees to determine whether a student removed from the classroom should be returned to it, with the ability to override teacher consent if a student's disruptive behavior was nonviolent. Students removed from the classroom would be placed with the principal or other designated person, and if the incident that led to the removal was violent, the teacher's consent would be required to bring the student back in. The legislation was approved by the Iowa Senate Education Committee Feb. 18.

Closing U.S. Department of Education: Senate Joint Resolution 2012 passed out of the Iowa Senate Education Committee Feb. 18. It supports federal efforts to close the U.S. Department of Education and encourages Congress to cooperate with the elimination.

Community college bachelor's degrees: House File 2649, as amended, would establish a pilot program in which community colleges would be allowed to offer certain baccalaureate degree programs as long as they are located at least 50 miles away from public or private universities that offer that same program. The new degrees would need to be not entirely online, be categorized in one of eight academic areas and lead to high-demand and unmet state workforce needs.

While Iowa's community colleges have signaled their support for the legislation, private higher education institutions and their advocates have expressed to Iowa lawmakers that, if the bill passes, it could lead to the closure of colleges and universities in the state.

Continuing education: House File 2246 would prohibit state licensing boards, including the Iowa Board of Education and Iowa Supreme Court, from requiring continuing education credits not directly related to their profession unless otherwise required by law. An amendment approved by the Iowa House Higher Education Committee added language stating someone wanting to take the bar exam is not required to have graduated from an American Bar Association-accredited law school.

Course framework: Senate File 2391 would require the Iowa Department of Education, in cooperation with Iowa community colleges and the Iowa Board of Regents, to establish "statewide lower division general education framework and common course numbering systems" for community colleges would also need to replace "traditional, prerequisite remedial coursework" in English and math with "corequisite developmental education," the bill stated. It also saw approval from the Iowa Senate Education Committee Feb. 18.

Credit transfers: House File 2547, renumbered from House Study Bill 572, would expand credit transfers for career and technical education, change

STORM from A1

This program will explore the science, theories, and history behind the use of psychic insight in law enforcement. Come learn what psychic mediums do and how their methods intersect with investigative work.

We are looking for photos that capture the wonder and power of storms for our Catch the Storm Photo Contest! Participants may enter one photo for consideration between March 1-14. The photo must be of a storm or weather event (thunderstorm, blizzard/snow storm, ice storm, storm clouds, etc.) The photo can be from any location. For the official contest rules, please see our website www.independenciaia.org/library. You will find complete information regarding the contest under the Program & Services tab. You can also email iplprograms@independenciaia.gov, or call us at 319-334-2470.

One Book Indee runs through the end of March. Don't miss your chance to be part of this shared literary experience that brings our community together. Pick up your copy of "To Catch a Storm" at the library today. We hope to see you at the library!

Stay updated on all things One Book Indee by visiting the library's website at www.independenciaia.gov/library, following social media pages, contact us via email at iplprograms@independenciaia.gov or call 319-334-2470.

RELAY from A1

capable of doing and demand action for us. In fact, we are all running marathons every day. Some of us are dealing with work pressures. Others are dealing with doubt. Some are fighting a disease they didn't ask for. The key to running a marathon is to KEEP moving. It's okay to walk. And it's okay to stop for food and drink. IN FACT, you have to stop for food and drink and to walk. See, the people on the sidelines are running with you. It's just the runner that gets all the attention. Don't focus on the finish. Stay in the present. Stay in the minute, the second. Smile often. Laugh even more. You're going to get blisters. And you're going to get cheers. So take the blisters with the cheers. Just keep running. You can put your hands up when you cross that finish line. And we'll all be there to congratulate you." Nathan Smith, Sept. 7, 2025. I sincerely hope this makes you stop and think of all those you know who have been in or are in that marathon. Thank you for taking the time to read all this.

Vicki Bishop Wilson
Cancer Survivor and Relay for Life Committee Member.

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