**RSAI Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes**

**August 11, 2021**

**10:30 – 2:00, ISFIS Office**

**1201 63rd Street, Des Moines, IA 50322**

**Legislative Committee Members Present at ISFIS Office:**

NE - Barb Schwamman, Osage CSD & Riceville CSD

NW – Brian Johnson, Prairie Valley CSD & Southeast Webster Grand CSD

SE – Joel Pedersen, Cardinal CSD

SW – Tim Mitchell, Riverside CSD

At-Large – Scott Williamson, Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont CSD

At-Large – Dan Peterson, Central DeWitt CSD

At-Large – Paul Croghan, CAM CSD & Nodaway Valley CSD

**RSAI Staff:**

Margaret Buckton, Dave Daughton

Margaret Buckton convened the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

1. **Introductions, share contact information, discuss key legislative contacts:**

The group made introduction, shared contact information and discussed current challenges with opening school and masking requirements. The group discussion took item #9 below regarding Advocacy Supports:

* 1. Need outreach and increased collaboration with Farm Bureau (Buckton will provide a list of county farm bureau presidents to the RSAI Legislative Committee members) and the ability to work with Ag Teachers who are communicating more regularly with Farm Bureau members.
  2. Members also discussed the difficulty of negative (and incorrect) messages about school leaders not listening to constituents and also discussed the need for positive messages about public education in rural schools. They suggested RSAI help districts to be strong champions for rural schools.
  3. Members of the Committee also discussed the need for advocacy tools/messages around the priority of adequate funding, that SSA isn’t a sexy issue to put on a campaign brochure, but is the life blood of school districts. The discussion moved to teacher pay in rural districts, lower due to low SSA over many years. The current teacher (and all staff) shortage in rural Iowa is very frightening, with potential for small schools closing due to lack of qualified staff. Rural school leaders need supports to explain the teacher shortage related to school funding and the economy and advocate for more teacher pay, as many rural Iowans believe teachers are paid enough in comparison to others in their community. Also mentioned working with ISEA on showcasing great teachers. Suggested a weekly advocacy zoom less than 15 minutes on hot topics during the Session (here’s the issue, why it matters, quick advocacy steps to take.) Shared titles of two books to read: High Conflict: Why We Get Trapped and How We Get Out, by Amanda Ripley and Think Again: The power of knowing what you don’t by Adam Grant.

1. **Review Legislative Committee Responsibilities:**

Buckton reviewed the duties of the committee members from the bylaws.

1. **Elect Legislative Committee Chair, VC and Secretary:**

Schwamman nominated Croghan as chair of the Committee. Johnson seconded. No other nominations. Approved unanimously. Johnson nominated Mitchell as Vice Chair/Secretary. Schwamman seconded. No other nominations. Approved unanimously for Paul Croghan to be the Legislative Committee Chair and Tim Mitchell as Vice Chair/Secretary.

1. **Review RSAI Membership and Organization (Map and Key Values):**

Buckton reviewed the maps and members discussed the regions and membership growth. Committee members reflected on the key values and shared consensus that those values accurately describe the focus of RSAI advocacy.

1. **Consider RSAI Bylaws Committee Recommendation:**

Peterson moved approval of the by-laws recommendation to increase RSAI region representatives to the Legislative Committee to no more than one per AEA in the region (current bylaws limit to no more than one representative per region.) Schwamman seconded. Discussion showed consensus that increasing leadership of the committee to have at least one representative per AEA was a worthy goal. Approved unanimously.

1. **Discussion & Report from RSAI Regional Meetings:**

The group reviewed the minutes of the regional meetings and the subsequent survey of membership on important priorities for the 2022 session.

1. **Establish 2022 Session Priorities to recommend to RSAI Leadership Group and Annual Meeting:**

The following priorities were discussed and presented as a slate of priorities for the 2022 Session. Mitchell moved the slate of priorities. Peterson seconded. After much discussion, the list was approved unanimously. The group recommendation does not include three of the 2021 priorities in the list for 2022 (remote learning/instructional time, school safety and simple majority bond vote). The second column of the table is the average membership rating from the priority survey (scale of 0-7, with 7 being high priority), and assignment of each Committee members’ leadership responsibilities for the annual meeting:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority** | **Membership Rating** | **Annual Meeting Leader** | **Annual Meeting Back-up/second** |
| Adequate Resources/SSA | 6.5 | Peterson | Williamson |
| Local School Board Authority | 6.4 | Mitchell | Johnson |
| Educator/Staff Shortage & Quality Instruction | 6.4 | Schwamman | Mitchell |
| Sharing & Reorg Incentives | 5.9 | Johnson | Schwamman |
| Assessing/Addressing Staff and Student Social, Emotional and Behavioral Health | 5.8 | Williamson | Peterson |
| Quality PK (1.0 full day weighting) | 5.8 | Schwamman | Pedersen |
| Broadband/High Speed Internet Access and Affordability | 5.8 | Johnson | Mitchell |
| Formula and Transportation Equity | 5.6 | Mitchell | Johnson |
| Opportunity Equity/Formula weighting for at-risk/poverty | 5.3 | Pedersen | Schwamman |

1. **Plans for October 26th RSAI Annual Meeting (select Leadership roles for priorities):**

Committee members volunteered to take the lead role or back-up for each of the recommended priorities (see table above). Additionally, as Chair, Croghan will have responsibilities to report on this Legislative Committee meeting and recommendations and lead the discussion on the Bylaws proposal.

1. **Advocacy Supports and Questions for Legislators:**

This agenda item was discussed with introductions – see minutes above in agenda item #1.

1. **Next Steps/Other Business:**

Peterson asked about invoices for those districts in each region/AEA that have not yet joined RSAI. Albers will prepare a list and invoices after ISFIS sends out the reminders for any outstanding current member districts. Expect that information in September. Johnson and Mitchell both talked about the difficulty of approaching legislators after this last difficult Session and stated that a list of things that the legislature did for rural schools would help prepare members to have the tools to engage in a positive conversation. Peterson also discussed some hesitancy to join RSAI from some districts who already are ISFIS subscribers, so requested a list of RSAI member benefits. ISFIS staff will prepare both of those lists and distribute to committee members and the Leadership Group.

1. **Adjourn:**

Croghan moved and Williamson seconded adjournment. Approved unanimously. Committee adjourned at 2:00.

Minutes submitted August 18, 2021  
Margaret Buckton, RSAI Professional Advocate