

2016 RURAL SCHOOL ADVOCATES OF IOWA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Transportation

A cost equalization formula should compensate for excess cost of transporting students in rural districts. Transportation funds compete with educational programs in the school's general fund.

State Penny for School Infrastructure

Extension or repeal of the sunset.

At-Risk Funding

Appropriate sufficient funds to address an increasing At-Risk population and change the formula so that it reflects the actual number of At-Risk students.

Standards, Assessment and Technology

RSAI supports the Iowa Core Content Standards and an aligned test, including technology and bandwidth required to adequately administer the assessment.

Per Pupil Funding

Set state supplemental rate of growth no lower than 6% for the 2016-17 school year and 2017-18 school year.

Operational Sharing Incentives

Maintain the incentives and provide additional capacity to school districts to improve educational outcomes for students.

Equity in the Formula

Raise the state cost per pupil to the maximum district cost per pupil of all districts in the formula.

WE ARE

RURAL SCHOOL ADVOCATES OF IOWA

OUR MISSION

Advocate for students in rural schools to assure a fair, equal and quality education.

WE WILL

Collaborate with others to promote legislation that strengthens rural education for students.

OUR COMMITMENT

Telling the stories of success and opportunity that rural schools provide to students.

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Our collective voices are
stronger together.



We represent the students,
staff, taxpayers and
communities in rural Iowa.

Lend your voice to the
movement for quality
rural education.

www.rsaia.org

WE WILL

Educate others about the value of rural education to the state's economy and future of Iowa as an educational leader in the nation and the world;

Build the capacity and understanding of other groups with similar interests on legislative and educational issues to create a strong voice;

Share best practices of great education programs while under the budget constraints of fewer students, how best to innovate, share and promote efficiency;

Secure adequate resources, academic and financial, to provide first class educational opportunities for students in rural communities; and

Maintain local control through the flexibility and authority of locally elected School Boards.

How

Locally through the advocacy of like-minded individuals and groups with our Legislators at home

AND

At the Capitol through the services of a Professional Advocate to organize our collective voice and keep members informed.

FUNDING CONCERNS

- Funding of education is based on enrollment, which, in rural Iowa, has been slipping for a long time. As enrollment declines, funding follows.
- Iowa population growth of 2% from April 2010 to July 2014 is behind the national average of 3.3%.
- In Iowa, we have 51.5 persons per square mile compared to the national average of 87.4, yet the Iowa funding system has no acknowledgement of population sparsity, transportation costs or understanding of necessarily rural schools in the school foundation formula like other rural states.
- 38 districts no longer exist at the end of 2015, reorganized or dissolved since 2000...all from rural communities.
- The challenge of attracting and retaining great teachers and staff, with many teaching positions declared "shortage areas", is even more difficult in rural communities.

EVERY GENERAL FUND PENNY RURAL SCHOOLS SPEND FOR NON-EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES, EXAGGERATED ON A PER PUPIL BASIS IN RURAL SCHOOLS, IS A PENNY OR MORE WE CANNOT USE TO EDUCATE OUR STUDENTS! ALL IOWA STUDENTS DESERVE A GREAT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY, REGARDLESS OF THEIR ZIP CODE.

TRANSPORTATION CONCERNS

- Large geographic districts with relatively fewer kids combined with mandated busing siphons money from our educational fund.
- In some rural districts, transportation costs exceed 10% of the General Fund Budget.
- Budget pressures including sharing and consolidation efforts demand even more spent on transportation.

LOCAL CONTROL

- Required to pay out of General Fund for Early Retirement of those 65 or older.
- Cannot repair the very things we use PPEL/SAVE funds to buy such as buses with the same funds.
- Flexibility in drop out prevention plans to target at-risk students' needs as determined locally.

At-Risk

- Significantly rising poverty among rural Iowa families is creating additional pressures on schools where funding has not changed in years.
- From 2008 to 2015, Free & Reduced eligibility increased from 33% to 41% of total school enrollment.
- Meanwhile, drop out prevention changes capped districts at 2.5% - 5% of regular program district cost.