



**Background:** The RSAI Legislative group talked about a one page 30,000-foot view of themes that would help define the organization and drive lobbying responses to proposals. They asked ISFIS to draft that document and take it to the Leadership Group meeting. The following is a first draft for the RSAI board to consider

## **RSAI Essential Values (DRAFT)**

### **(Considerations when formulating positions on Legislative Issues):**

- **Students first:** State policies and resources are designed to support schools in providing opportunities and success for students in all districts of all sizes.
- **State mandates:** School district's plates are full. Any new mandates ought to be founded on a principal of state public purpose with evidence that voluntary goals and suggestions haven't worked. If the state compels school district action, the costs of that action must be funded.
- **Flexibility:** In education policy, one size does not fit all school districts or classrooms. Districts need maximum flexibility to provide a great education to all students. The state role is to define what outcomes are necessary for all students, leaving flexibility to schools in expenditures and policy to best determine how to deliver those intended outcomes.
- **Recognize need and capacity:** Formulas for funding should be needs driven rather than exclusively defined based on enrollment. Per pupil funding alone does not recognize the challenge of maintaining capacity for supporting and improving education during continuous enrollment decline.
- **School General Fund revenues drive instruction:** since these dollars pay for education, any inequities on the expenditure side of the General Fund deprive districts of resources to pay for education. School transportation costs are a prime example.
- **Local control:** Local leaders will typically make the best decisions for students, especially when they have adequate flexibility and resources to make those decisions. The state should exhaust other tools to correct local district mistakes when they believe those happen, rather than legislating for all districts (such tools may include but are not limited to DE review, set accreditation expectations, AEA support, SBRC request for a conversation, etc.)
- **State program sustainability:** funding for state initiatives should be defined and planned, including providing a plan for adequately funding the basic cost of education along the way, while defining sustainable sources of revenue for new state reforms and initiatives.
- **School sustainability:** Decisions about school sustainability should be based on the inability to deliver student success, rather than assumptions about the size of a school district. Sharing, reorganization, consolidation and dissolution decisions are best made locally. The state provides support through the provision of incentives to help eliminate barriers to those conversations.