**RSAI Call to Action March 28, 2018: Extension of Operational Sharing Incentives is Critical to Rural Schools**

**HF 633** **Operational Sharing** was approved unanimously in the House in the 2017 Session and currently is stuck in the Senate Appropriations Committee. It extends the operational sharing incentives indefinitely and eliminates the 5-year limitation on any shared position. It maintains the cap of funding at the maximum of 21 student weighting for any district. ***Although the 2019-20 school year is the final year for the incentives, the 2018-19 school year is effectively an end for many of the positions that were limited to 5 years for those districts that shared in the first year of the incentives.*** Without extension this year, rural schools will experience a reduction in funding of essentially $19 million in the 2020 school year. Talking points:

* Action is needed this session since the October 1, 2019 enrollment count will determine the 2019-20 weighting.
* Sharing incentives create the capacity for districts to discuss efficiencies that may not otherwise be politically viable. The incentives promote good working relationships with neighboring districts and help smaller districts continue to meet accreditation demands with limited general fund resources. Sharing also allows expertise to be concentrated in positions and provides more oversight and capacity for complying with Iowa laws.
* This program has been a life line for rural school districts, especially those with declining enrollment, during several years of low per pupil funding increases in the formula.
* This funding provides resources for students, helps to continue teaching positions and programs that would otherwise not be financially possible, and provides for needed curriculum and operations support that helps rural schools keep up with changing demands, mandates and accreditation requirements.
* Rural schools are grateful for the start of transportation equality assistance provided with SF 455, which provides some funding to an estimated 130 school districts. Many of these beneficiary districts do not participate in operational sharing. Of the 228 districts receiving operational sharing incentives, well over 100 will receive no additional funding from SF 455 transportation grants. These two policies are both necessary for rural student equity and rural school quality.

**Advocacy Actions:** Find your legislators here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>

Call or email your Senator today and tomorrow. Senate Switchboard # 515.281.3371

* Ask them to continue operational sharing, which has improved business functions and student opportunities in our rural school districts. Let them know what positions you share and how that has improved your operations. Also let them know what the loss of funding will mean to students in your district. Either email or call the Senate Switchboard # 515.281.3371 and ask to speak with your Senator or leave a message.
* Contact your state Representatives and thank them for their unanimous support for HF 633 last year. Ask them to connect with your Senator and help. Either email your representative or call the House Switchboard 515.281.3221 and ask to speak with them or leave a message.

See the RSAI Operational Sharing Incentives Position Paper [here](http://nebula.wsimg.com/6a2c1097022a45a9a169ec2796f226a4?AccessKeyId=D081CCCCA2DCE3941176&disposition=0&alloworigin=1) for more background, research and talking points.

Margaret Buckton, RSAI Professional Advocate, margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com 515.201.3755 Cell