

RSAI 2026 Legislative Priorities: Leadership Group Amendments and Next Steps

See the list of priorities approved at the meeting on [RSAI's website](#). The Leadership Group reviewed at their meeting on Nov. 13 and made some of the following changes as recommended by attendees at the annual meeting:

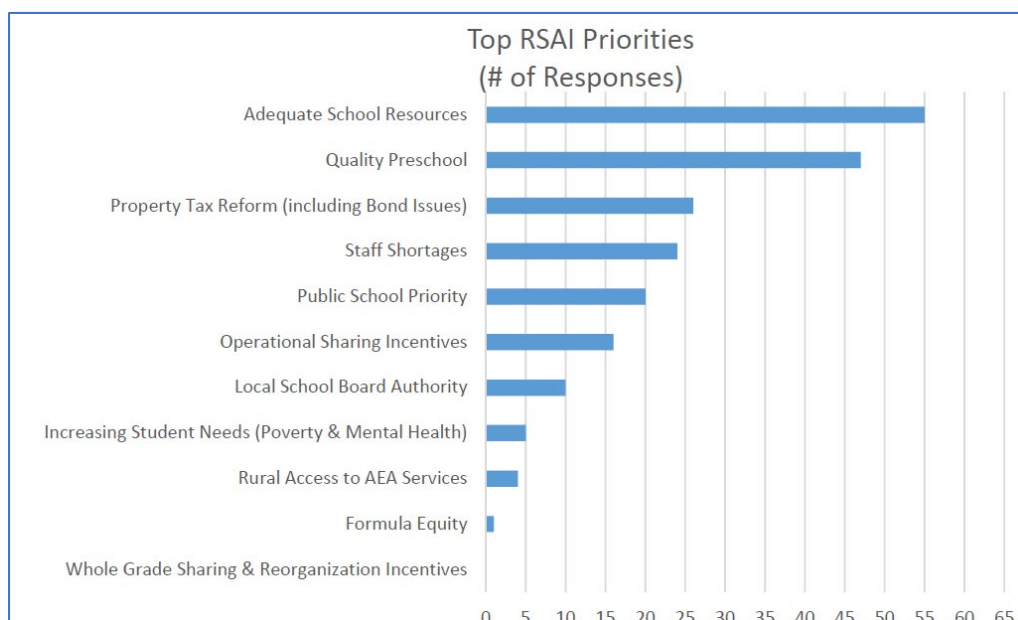
- Minor amendment to the Rural Access to AEA Services priority, adding the following paragraph:
“The Legislature should reconvene the Task Force mandated in HF 2612 to study AEA services and impact on students. The Task Force was required to define a set of core services that all districts must be able to access. In addition, the Task Force should consider options for school districts that have exhausted education, media and special education funding, but are still required to provide services for students. RSAI supports a continued commitment to regionalization of critical staffing and services which many rural districts are too small to support individually. AEAs should continue to receive 90% of special education funding generated per pupil by school districts.”
- Clarification and specificity were added to the Property Tax Reform priority re Management Fund:
“RSAI opposes any limitation or restriction on the management fund, since costs associated with risk management in the future are unpredictable. If taxpayers are concerned locally, they can elect new school board members. Taxpayers also have the authority under Iowa Code 24.27 to contest a school district's budget, including their management levy, by petitioning the county auditor who prepares a report and submits it to the State Appeal Board.”

Advocacy resources, including position papers and talking points, will be posted on the RSAI website soon. If you have a meeting scheduled with legislators, please reach out and ask us for assistance and resources.

The 2026 Session will begin on Jan. 12. The Governor's budget is typically released in the middle of the first week of Session, and it will set the Governor's recommendation for SSA percentage increase per pupil. That starts the clock ticking on the Iowa Code requirement to enact school spending early within 30 days. Since it is an election year, the Session is scheduled to last 100 calendar days.

From the RSAI Annual Meeting in October, participants were allowed to select their priorities with a process of spending 6 RSAI priority stickers, 3 on their top priority, 2 on their second and 1 on their third choice (although they were allowed to spend all of their stickers on just one or two). The results of this activity are shown below, with adequate resources, quality PK and property tax reform as the top three. School staff shortage was very close to property tax reform, coming in fourth.

Encourage your school board members to discuss the list of priorities and let us know what is most important to your district using the [Prioritization Survey linked here](#).



Next Advocacy Actions: Check RSAI Website for additional advocacy resources, including a strategy to build coalitions and engage community members in advocating for public school funding. Review the [Legislative Actions and Advocacy Update PPT](#) from Oct. 3 sharing RSAI 2025 actions, successes and advocacy steps in preparation for 2026.

Reach out to your local legislators and ask what their plans are for adequate school funding and property tax reform. Engage in discussion about what problem they are trying to solve, what impacts will property tax reform have on different classes of property, and what limitations on local revenue could mean for your district and students.

Reach out to your local legislators and discuss implementation of new policies approved over the last several years (examples: attendance policy, cell phone policy, new reading and math initiatives, civics test mandated for graduation, etc.) Let them know how it's going. We encourage school advocates to specifically ask legislators for adequate timelines for implementing anything new. Something becoming law on July 1 provides very little preparation time to coordinate with the many plans schools already have in place for a school year that starts just 6-7 weeks after the start of the fiscal year.

Is the Staff Shortage Over? Continue to share information about staffing challenges and keep reminding legislators that Iowa's work in attracting and retaining school staff is not done. Google Iowa Teacher Shortage 2025 to see many news stories as school started, reporting 660 vacant positions this Fall. Remind legislators about the issue of salary compaction related to new teacher salary minimums, too, which may impact on your school's ability to keep the teachers you have.

Contact us with any questions, feedback or suggestions to better prepare your advocacy work.

Thanks to all of you for your energy and voice on behalf of the students in your schools!