



2022 RSAI ANNUAL MEETING

October 25, 2022

**FFA Enrichment Center, DMACC Campus
Ankeny, IA**

4:30 – 7:30 pm

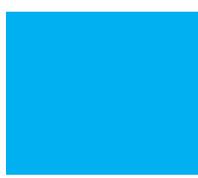


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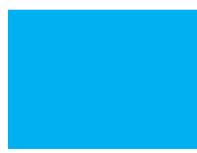
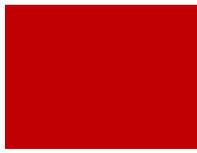
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RSAI Annual Meeting Agenda

October 25, 2022

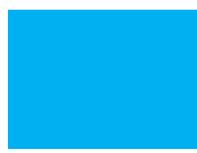
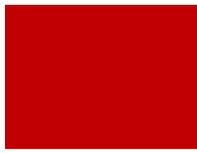
4:30 – 7:30 pm

FFA Enrichment Center, DMACC Campus, 1055 SW Prairie Trail Parkway, Ankeny, Iowa 50023
(There will be a working dinner during the meeting)

1. Call Annual Meeting to Order: *Paul Croghan, RSAI Leadership Group Chair*
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Introduction of Meeting Attendees (share your name, role, district and something you love about rural schools)
4. Annual Meeting Business: *Laurie Noll, Secretary/Treasurer, RSAI Leadership Group*
 - 2021-22 Annual Audit
 - 2022-23 Budget & Professional Advocate Payment
 - 2022-23 RSAI Membership Dues
5. Amendments to Bylaws: *Scott Williamson, RSAI Legislative Committee Chair*
6. Report Results of Election of SW Region Representative to the Leadership Group for a three-year term through Sept. 2025. (Welcome back Paul Croghan, CAM CSD and Nodaway Valley CSD)
7. Election of RSAI At-Large Representative to the Leadership Group for the expiring three-year term, through Sept. 2025 (Previously held by Dennis McClain, AC/GC CSD, and vacancy filled by Kimberly Lingenfelter, Cherokee CSD)
8. (5:15pm) Presentation on “Rewriting the Rural Narrative”: *Benjamin Winchester, Rural Sociologist, University of Minnesota Extension, Center for Community Vitality*

[short break for meal at 5:45pm]

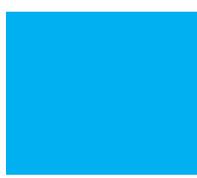
9. November 8th General Election & 2023 Session Preview: *Margaret Buckton & Dave Daughton, RSAI Advocates*
10. Report of the Aug. 30 Legislative Committee Meeting: *Scott Williamson, Legislative Committee Chair*
11. Discussion and vote to approve RSAI Priorities for the 2023 Legislative Session (simple majority of member districts participating, one vote per member district): *Scott Williamson, Legislative Committee Chair*
12. Focus Area Prioritization: *Margaret Buckton & Dave Daughton*
13. Press Release
14. Adjourn (*please note: RSAI Leadership Group convenes short organizational meeting upon conclusion of the RSAI Annual Meeting*)



Background: The following themes provide a concise 30,000-foot view to help define the organization and drive lobbying responses to proposals outside the boundaries of defined RSAI legislative priorities.

RSAI Essential Values: (Considerations when formulating positions on Legislative Issues):

- **Students First:** State policies and resources should be designed to support schools in providing equal opportunities and success for students in **all districts of all sizes and locations**.
- **State Mandates:** Any new mandates ought to be founded on a principal of state public purpose. If the state compels school district action, the costs of that action must be initially funded and continually supported with a long term sustainability plan.
- **Flexibility:** In education policy, one size does not fit all school districts, classrooms or students. District leaders 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 based on student needs 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:** General Fund 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.



RSAI Leadership and Contact Information

RSAI Professional Advocates

Margaret Buckton, margaret.buckton@rsaia.org, cell: (515) 201-3755, office: (515) 251-5970

Dave Daughton, dave.daughton@rsaia.org, phone: (641) 344-5205

2021-22 RSAI Leadership Group

The RSAI Leadership Group is comprised of representatives from all four regions of Iowa, plus three at-large members.

- Paul Croghan, CAM/Nodaway Valley CSD, Superintendent, (Acting-Chair, SW Region 3 Director), paul.croghan@rsaia.org
- Laurie Noll, Fairfield CSD, Superintendent, (Secretary/Treasurer, SE Region 4 Director), laurie.noll@rsaia.org
- Justin Daggett, Manson NW Webster CSD, Superintendent, (NW Region 1 Director), justin.daggett@rsaia.org
- Kimberly Lingenfelter, Cherokee CSD, Superintendent, (At-large Director), klingenfelter@ccsd.k12.ia.us
- Dan Peterson, Central DeWitt CSD, Superintendent, (At-large Director), dan.peterson@rsaia.org
- Nick Trenkamp, Central CSD, Superintendent (NE Region 2 Director), nick.trenkamp@rsaia.org
- Scott Williamson, Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont CSD, Superintendent, (At-large Director), scott.williamson@rsaia.org

2022-23 RSAI Legislative Committee

The RSAI Legislative Committee is comprised of the at-large Leadership Group members, plus at least one representative per AEA within the four RSAI regions, elected at the Regional Meetings.

- At-Large - Dan Peterson, Central DeWitt CSD, Superintendent
- At-Large - Scott Williamson, Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont CSD, Superintendent (Committee Chair)
- At-Large - Kimberly Lingenfelter, Cherokee CSD, Superintendent
- NE - Barb Schwamman, Osage CSD and Riceville CSD, Superintendent
- NE - Mike Kruger, West Fork CSD, Superintendent
- NW - Brian Johnson, Prairie Valley CSD and Southeast Webster Grand CSD, Superintendent (Committee Secretary)
- NW - Ken Kasper, Garner Hayfield Venture CSD, Superintendent
- NW - Mike Pardun, Denison CSD and Schleswig CSD, Superintendent
- SE - Janet Stutz, Grinnell-Newburg CSD, Superintendent
- SE - Joel Pedersen, Cardinal CSD, Superintendent (Committee Vice-Chair)
- SE - Michelle Havenstrite, PCM CSD, Superintendent
- SE - Mike Van Sickle, Louisa-Muscatine CSD, Superintendent
- SE - Pam Ewell, Benton CSD, Superintendent
- SW - Deron Stender, Creston CSD, Superintendent
- SW - Sharon Dentlinger, Interstate 35 CSD, Superintendent



TO: RSAI Leadership Committee
FROM: Laurie Noll RSAI Secretary/Treasurer
DATE: September 25, 2022
RE: RSAI Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2022

1. SUMMARY

Rural School Advocates of Iowa (RSAI) concluded its most recent fiscal year on June 30, 2022. During the 2021-22 fiscal year, RSAI consisted of 158 member districts and the addition of all of Iowa's Area Education Agencies as Affiliate Members. Membership of 158 districts is up from 129 members during FY 2021, and 111 members during FY 2020. Revenues for the fiscal year totaled \$126,800 which came 94% from memberships and 6% from corporate sponsorships. Total expenses for the fiscal year were \$111,525, with payments for association management and professional advocate services totaling \$100,000. Net revenue for the fiscal year was positive \$15,275. RSAI assets as of June 30, 2022 totaled \$43,774. Due to the limited number of transactions during the fiscal year, it was decided by the RSAI Leadership Group to again forego the expense of a formal external audit and instead conduct an internal review of the financial transactions.

2. SCOPE

As RSAI Treasurer, I have conducted an internal review of the financial transactions of the Rural School Advocates of Iowa (RSAI). The time period covered by this review is July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. In my opinion, the internal review procedures conducted are sufficient to evaluate the accuracy of the financial report that follows this memo.

2. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

RSAI day-to-day financial transactions are performed by staff members of Iowa School Finance Information Services (ISFIS). The financial review was conducted on the basis of questionnaire, inquiry, observation, and verification of supporting documentation and identified processes.

3. FINDINGS

After the internal review was conducted, I have identified no significant findings requiring adjustments to the financial statements presented.

Rural School Advocates of Iowa (RSAI)
Interim Balance Sheet
June 30, 2022

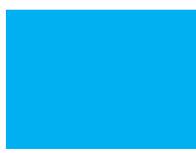
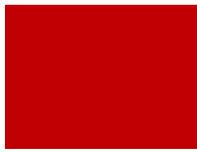
<u>Current Assets</u>		
Cash - Wells Fargo Checking	40,929	
Accounts Receivable	1,000	
Prepaid Items	1,845	
Total Current Assets	<u>43,774</u>	
<u>Other Assets</u>		
Other	-	
Total Other Assets	<u>-</u>	
Total Assets		<u><u>43,774</u></u>
<u>Liabilities</u>		
Accounts Payable	-	
Advances from/Amounts Due to ISFIS	3,071	
Deferred Income	20,000	
Total Liabilities	<u>23,071</u>	
<u>Equity</u>		
Retained Earnings	5,428	
Net Income	15,275	
Total Equity	<u>20,703</u>	
Total Liabilities & Equity		<u><u>43,774</u></u>

Rural School Advocates of Iowa (RSAI)
Interim Income Statement
For the Twelve Months Ended June 30, 2022

	YTD Actual June 2022	Annual Budget 2021-22	
<u>Income</u>			
Membership Dues	112,300	86,000	
Affiliate Membership Dues	6,750	6,750	
Corporate Sponsorships	7,750	5,000	
Other	-	-	
Total Income	126,800	97,750	
<u>Expenses</u>			
Advertising/Promotion	815	1,500	
Postage	505	750	
Supplies/Printing/Signage	1,626	1,000	
Computer Hardware/Software	860	755	
Insurance	750	750	
Dues, Subs & Ref Matls	750	750	
Consultation Fees - Assoc Mgmt/Professional Advocate	100,000	83,088	
Consultation Fees - CPA Services	-	-	
Legal Fees	-	-	
Hosting, Domain & Website Fees	434	755	
Professional Development	780	-	
Travel Expenses	1,097	1,000	
Annual Conference	2,284	1,500	
Regional Meetings	926	850	
Program Fees - NASDTEC	700	700	
Other	-	4,353	
Total Expenses	111,525	97,751	
Net Income	15,275	(1)	

Rural School Advocates of Iowa (RSAI)

	Budget 2022-23
<u>Income</u>	
Annual Meeting	\$ -
Membership Dues	\$ 107,250
Affiliate Membership Dues	\$ 6,750
Corporate Sponsorships	\$ 8,000
Regional Meetings	\$ -
Other	\$ -
Total Income	\$ 122,000
<u>Expenses</u>	
Advertising/Promotion	\$ 1,500
Postage	\$ 750
Supplies/Printing/Signage	\$ 1,500
Computer Hardware/Software	\$ 860
Insurance	\$ 750
Dues, Subs & Ref Matls	\$ 750
Consultation Fees - Assoc Mgmt/Prof Advocate	\$ 100,000
Hosting, Domain & Website Fees	\$ 755
Professional Development	\$ 1,000
Travel Expenses	\$ 1,750
Annual Meeting	\$ 2,300
Regional Meetings	\$ 1,000
Program Fees - NASDTEC	\$ 700
Other	\$ 8,385
Total Expenses	\$ 122,000
Net Income	
	\$ -



2022-23 Membership Pricing (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)

RSAI Standard District Pricing: \$750 per school district

Whole Grade Sharing Arrangement: \$550 per district (if both join)
(approx. 25% discount)

Final Year of WGS before Reorg: \$375 per district (if both join)
(approx. 50% discount)

DISCOUNTS

District with Negative Spending Authority 100% discount off standard pricing
(fee waived with approval from RSAI Leadership Group for financial hardships)

ISFIS Board/Policy Hosted Website \$100 discount off standard pricing
(discount paid by ISFIS on district's behalf)

AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP

\$750 per government entity, AEA or community college entity



RSAI BYLAWS

Name: The name of the organization shall be the Rural School Advocates of Iowa and shall be referred to below as "RSAI".

Mission:

RSAI will advocate for students in rural schools to assure a fair, equal, and quality education.

Vision:

Member schools will collaborate to promote legislation that strengthens rural education for students, by;

1. Educating 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 and unique challenges rural schools and communities face;
2. Building the capacity and understanding of other groups with similar interests on legislative and educational issues to build a stronger voice;
3. Securing adequate resources, academic and financial, to provide first class educational opportunities for students; and
4. Maintaining local control through the flexibility and authority of locally elected School Boards.

Membership:

Membership of RSAI shall be open to School Districts in Iowa that share the values and mission of RSAI in advocating for students in rural schools to assure a fair, equal, and quality education. Affiliate membership is extended to other organizations/entities sharing the values and mission of RSAI, as approved by the RSAI Leadership Group. Input from affiliate member organizations is valued but such organizations are non-voting affiliate members of RSAI. Affiliate membership shall be open to Governmental Entities, AEAs, ~~and~~ Community Colleges, and Universities.

Membership in RSAI shall not be considered in lieu of membership in other organizations serving students in the state of Iowa. RSAI will work closely with all organizations sharing its Mission, Vision and Legislative priorities.

Member School Districts shall be responsible for advocating for students; creating local networks to support RSAI identified Legislative priorities; and assisting Legislators in gaining a better understanding of rural student and school needs.

Member School Districts are encouraged to create a Liaison responsible for Legislative advocacy from among its Board members to fulfill its RSAI responsibilities and act as a direct contact within the School District for RSAI.

Commented [M1]: U of I Educational Leadership Program has requested affiliate membership for clinical assistance professor charged with supporting rural educational leadership.

Membership dues shall be provided each year at the ~~RSAl Annual meeting~~ Meeting of RSAl. Dues shall be the same for all member school districts regardless of certified enrollment. However, school districts engaged in whole grade sharing prior to the final year preceding reorganization may receive a discount of 25% each. Districts sharing in the final year prior to reorganization may each receive a 50% discount. In both cases, the two districts may determine the ratio of responsibility for payment. The Leadership Group may waive dues for districts with financial hardship. Affiliate membership fees shall be set by the Leadership Group for each year, and shall not be less than school district membership dues.

Commented [M4]: Consistency of Annual Meeting reference

Member School Districts can withdraw membership at any point through written notification to the RSAl Leadership Group. Dues paid are non-refundable.

Member School Districts shall be entitled to participation in RSAl as follows in these By-Laws.

Voting:

Unless otherwise specified in these By-Laws, all voting is to be done in person and may be done electronically if identity of the individual is determined. Active electronic attendance is permitted via internet technologies or in response to survey or other electronic communication as approved by the RSAl Leadership Group. Proxy voting by School Districts is not allowed. Each District in attendance shall be entitled to one vote on all issues addressed at the RSAl Annual Meeting or as needed between RSAl Meetings as determined by the RSAl Leadership Group.

Quorum:

Unless otherwise specified in these By-Laws, Quorums are not required.

Meeting Procedures:

The latest version of Roberts Rules of Order shall be used to determine procedural questions except as otherwise directed by the membership.

Agendas:

Unless otherwise specified in these By-Laws, agendas must be forwarded to participants no later than 7 days prior to meetings and must include a date, time and location in addition to actions required at each meeting as per these By-Laws. Unless otherwise specified, creating agendas will be the joint responsibility of the Secretary/Treasurer and Chair of the Leadership Group and must be posted by the Secretary/Treasurer or the Secretary/Treasurer's designee.

Vacancies:

If the Leadership Group determines it is unnecessary to appoint to fill a vacancy, a vacancy shall remain vacant until the next election cycle.

Representation:

RSAI shall strive for diversity in representation of all leadership and elected positions within RSAI, including both elected Board members and Superintendents.

Good Standing:

~~Only School Board members and Superintendents in Good Standing in their respective School Districts are eligible to hold elected office in RSAI. Eligible office positions can only be held by school board members and superintendents in good standing with their district's RSAI membership.~~ Changes in status such as but not limited to failure of Board members to gain reelection to their local School Board or changes in School District employment to a nonmember district or outside of regional boundaries for the office in the case of Superintendents shall be deemed vacant.

Commented [M5]: Clarity to define that good standing means in a member district and within required regional borders, if applicable.

RSAI Regions:

Member School Districts shall be divided into 4 Regions known as RSAI Regions. These Regions shall be defined as per the map in Appendix A - "RSAI Regions". Should a merger between one or more districts occur and both districts do not occupy the same RSAI Region, the reorganized district shall be included in the RSAI Region of the district which had the greatest land area prior to the reorganization.

RSAI Regions shall meet annually in the summer and as deemed appropriate and necessary by the RSAI Leadership Group. Each District shall be entitled to one vote on all issues addressed at RSAI Regional Meetings. A shared superintendent present at the meeting may cast one vote for each member district he/she represents.

The RSAI Region meeting participants shall elect an RSAI Region Representative to serve a term as specified later in these By-Laws on the RSAI Leadership Group and shall act as Chair of the Region meetings during their term. The RSAI Region Representative will be responsible for making all arrangements necessary for RSAI Region meetings during their term, ensuring that staff share an Agenda with members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

The RSAI Region meeting participants shall elect at least one Liaison but no more than one per AEA within the RSAI Region to the RSAI Legislative Committee. It shall be the responsibility of the RSAI Region Liaison, with assistance by staff, to present the RSAI Region's Legislative priorities at to the Legislative Committee meeting each year. The term of office of the RSAI Region Liaison shall be one year.

Commented [M6]: To clarify to the legislative regional liaison that there will be staff assistance in this responsibility.

At the RSAI Region meeting, amendments to these By-Laws may be presented for consideration. In order for an amendment to move forward to the RSAI Legislative Committee for consideration, a 2/3 majority is required.

At the RSAI Region meeting, Legislative priorities for the upcoming Iowa Legislative Session

shall be established and forwarded for consideration to the RSAI Legislative Committee. Determination of Legislative priorities shall be based on a simple majority vote.

RSAI Legislative Committee:

RSAI Region Liaisons shall gather with the At-Large Leadership Group members as the RSAI Legislative Committee annually, but in no event later than 4 weeks prior to the RSAI Annual Meeting.

The Legislative Committee will select a Chair and Vice-Chair/Secretary from among its members to conduct the RSAI Legislative Committee meeting. The term of office for both will be one year.

The RSAI Legislative Committee will be responsible for reviewing, amending as necessary and finalizing the Legislative Priorities as identified at the RSAI Region meetings.

The RSAI Legislative Committee shall present a set of recommended Legislative Priorities for consideration at the RSAI Annual Meeting. The recommended legislative priorities are presented as a draft with responsibility for finalizing the determination of RSAI's legislative priorities on the body of the RSAI annual meeting participants.

The RSAI Legislative Committee shall present any Amendments to these By-Laws for consideration at the RSAI Annual Meeting. In order for an amendment to be included on the agenda at the RSAI Annual meeting for consideration, a 2/3 majority of the RSAI Legislative Committee is required. Such proposed amendment shall be submitted to the RSAI Leadership Group at least 14 days prior to the Annual meeting.

RSAI Annual Meeting

All member School Districts shall gather annually as determined by the Leadership Group. This meeting shall be known as the RSAI Annual Meeting. An Agenda of the Annual Meeting shall be sent to all member school districts no less than 30 days in advance of the Annual Meeting by the RSAI Leadership Group Chair.

At the RSAI Annual meeting, three At-Large members will be elected for membership in the RSAI Leadership Group who in conjunction with the 4 RSAI Region Representatives shall comprise the RSAI Leadership Group. RSAI Region Representatives and At-Large members will take office at the conclusion of the Annual meeting in the year in which they were elected.

At the RSAI Annual Meeting, members will approve a slate of Legislative Priorities for the upcoming State Legislative Session.

At the Annual Meeting, amendments to these By-Laws may be adopted by a 2/3 majority vote.

At the Annual Meeting, the budget for the upcoming fiscal year shall be shared with membership. The budget shall include the payment for association member services including advocacy for the upcoming year.

At the Annual Meeting, the RSAI Leadership Group Secretary/Treasurer shall present an Annual Audit or an annual financial report for the most recently completed fiscal year.

RSAI Leadership Group:

As specified, 4 Region Representatives and 3 At-Large members shall comprise the RSAI Leadership Group.

The Election cycle shall be maintained to ensure continuity of a rotating three-year cycle:

- RSAI SW Region & 1 At-Large
- RSAI NE Region & 1 At-Large
- RSAI NW Region, RSAI SE Region & 1 At-Large

It shall be the responsibility of the RSAI Leadership Group to direct operations of RSAI; select, retain and evaluate the services of the Professional Advocate; establish dues for the upcoming fiscal year, coordinate local network efforts with member school districts and the Professional Advocate; create and conduct School District network training; conduct the RSAI Annual Meeting; coordinate annual legislative activities and encourage membership in affiliate associations where appropriate.

Members of the RSAI Leadership Group will select the following positions from among its membership by vote annually: Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary/Treasurer.

It shall be the responsibility of the Chair to create agendas for meetings as required in these By-Laws; act as the official spokesperson for RSAI; sign warrants and preside at meetings.

It shall be the responsibility of the Vice-Chair to act as temporary Chair when the Chair is absent, or in the case of the Chair vacating the office, to act as Chair until the next election of officers.

It shall be the responsibility of the Secretary/Treasurer to monitor all appropriate records and warrants or drafts drawn from the treasury; conduct an annual audit or annual financial report for presentation at the Annual Meeting; maintain minutes of each meeting; and file (or confirm that staff has filed) any reports necessary with the Iowa Secretary of State and State Legislature regarding non-profit status and lobbying activities as required.

Commented [M7]: Staff files necessary reports and notifies the Treasurer of the filings. This helps the Treasurer understand their responsibility.

A majority of members is required in order to conduct business at the RSAI Leadership Group meetings.

A vacancy in the Leadership Group may be filled by the Leadership Group at its next regular

meeting or subsequent meeting by majority vote. Vacancy of a Region Representative must be filled by a member school district in the same RSAI Region. At-Large vacancies may be replaced by any member school district. Notice of vacancy and intent to appoint a replacement shall be sent to all appropriate member districts soliciting interest.

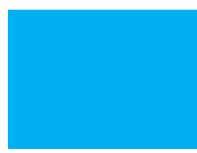
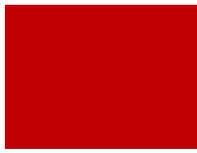
The RSAI Leadership Group shall be responsible for determining legislative positions responding to legislation that arises between annual meetings that the RSAI Legislative Committee and list of legislative priorities did not anticipate or address.

The RSAI Leadership Group may appoint Committees as deemed necessary. These Committees shall be tasked with a specific objective. The duration of the Committee shall be limited and end with a report to the Leadership Group on a specific date to be established at their inception. Committees shall make recommendations to the RSAI Leadership Group, but shall not adopt policy, take independent action or endorse any entities that will do either.

Regular meetings of the RSAI Leadership Group shall occur monthly or as otherwise directed. A meeting schedule of all meetings shall be developed by the RSAI Leadership Group for the year following the Annual Meeting. At the discretion of the RSAI Leadership Group, regular meetings may be held electronically but must include an interactive format and may be recorded.

An Agenda including the time and location of a Regular meeting shall be forwarded to all members of the Leadership Group at least 1 week in advance of the meeting by the Chair of the Leadership Group or the Chair's designee.

Adopted: January 18, 2014
Amended: October 25, 2014
Amended: June 15, 2015
Amended: October 12, 2016
Amended: October 25, 2017
Amended: October 24, 2018
Amended: October 21, 2020
Amended: October 26, 2021
Proposed: October 25, 2022



2023 Draft RSAI Legislative Priorities

Approved by Legislative Committee 8/30/22 & Leadership Group 9/14/22

Adequate School Resources: the increase in SSA provides the resources for Iowa schools to deliver an educational experience for students that meets the expectations of Iowa parents, communities, employers and policy makers. What schools can deliver is dependent on the level of funding provided, which begins with the 2023-24 school year and requires a consistent and sustainable commitment:

- **World Class Education:** An investment of at least 10% SSA (\$741 per pupil, or \$4.12 per day of 180 days of instruction) would position Iowa schools and AEAs to deliver a world class education, lower class sizes, attract and retain qualified staff, increase and individualize internships and other workforce experiences for students, and provide programs to close achievement gaps. Iowa per pupil expenditures fall \$1,200 short of the national average, which does not meet the standard of Iowa's pride in our foundation of education, as shown on the Iowa state quarter. The 10% investment would be a down payment in closing Iowa's lagging funding gap, unless other states commit even more to their students' education.
- **Sustain Current Status:** An investment of at least 5% (\$371 per pupil, or \$2.06 per day of 180 days of instruction) would position school districts and AEAs to maintain current status with Iowa's competitive economy, recovering *partially* from high inflation and increased student needs.
- **Continued Erosion:** An investment of 2.5% (\$185 per pupil, or \$1.03 per day of 180 days of instruction) will *partially* cover expected increased costs of the next fiscal year, including staff salaries and benefits, but will require schools to scale back, provide part-time librarians, counselors and nurses, shift some classes to on-line learning, or take other actions to squeeze more out of the current system in order to set a salary sufficient to retain existing staff (teachers, bus drivers, custodians, paraprofessionals) and provide a rounded course offering and programs.

Iowa's school foundation formula must maintain balanced state and local resources, be predictable, and assure adequate time for budget planning and staffing.

Education Staff Shortage: In addition to sufficient SSA, strategies to rebuild Iowa's education workforce must address two areas during an unprecedented staff shortage:

Recruitment: to rebuild the pipeline of interest into education, the Legislature, BOEE and DE must provide additional flexibility for school districts to provide hiring incentives, ongoing investment in CTE programs for high school students to study and experience work in education, provide resources for grow-your-own educators and appropriate certifications, provide means-tested tuition assistance and minimize the economic costs of unpaid student teaching, provide more loan forgiveness, and change the culture of political speech to restore education to a respected profession.

Retention: to slow the out-migration of staff from schools to other professions or retirement, the Legislature, BOEE and DE must provide maximum flexibility to hire staff to deliver great instruction; additional flexibility for retention incentives, flexibility to meet offer and teach requirements, opportunities for teaching expanded courses within existing and/or competency based licensure, institute a special education generalist credential, allow districts to hire retirees without a negative IPERS impact, and maintain the commitment to resources for mentoring, training and supporting staff.

Local School Board Authority: locally elected leaders closest to the community are in the best position to determine the interest of students, staff, district and stakeholders. District leaders need maximum flexibility to provide a great education to all students. The Legislature, the Executive Branch and the courts should follow Iowa Code 274.3 and liberally construe statute to effectuate local control.

Quality Preschool: funding of quality statewide voluntary preschool at the 1.0 per pupil cost for full time or prorated proportionally. Formula protections against budget and program impacts of preschool enrollment swings (budget guarantee/on-time spending authority). Full day programming increases the opportunity for parent workforce participation, allows Iowa's limited child care workforce capacity to focus on younger children, prevents later special education consequences, improves literacy and prepares students for learning.

Opportunity Equity: resources based on at-risk need, in addition to enrollment. All school boards should have the opportunity to access up to 5% dropout prevention funding. School districts should be granted spending authority for FRPL waived fees. Iowa should study the impact of poverty on educational outcomes and best practice of other states in closing associated achievement gaps, leading toward a significant and urgent update to Iowa's School Foundation Formula in funding programs for Iowa's neediest students. Investments in programs for at-risk students prepare them for full participation in the workforce, improve school safety for all students, minimize tax increases to remediate social costs later and improve outcomes for students and families.

Sharing Incentives/Efficiencies: extension of Whole Grade Sharing, Reorganization and Operational Sharing Incentives. Expand the 21-student cap to allow access to new flexibility. Weightings should be sufficient to encourage and support sharing opportunities, with a 3-student weighting at a minimum. The addition of new positions over the last few years, such as the work-based learning coordinator and school resource officer, demonstrates the value of continuing sharing incentives for both efficiency and extended opportunities for students.

Student Mental Health: increased access to funded community mental health services for children. Address the shortage of mental health professionals statewide, provide resources for local districts to train school staff in social emotional learning awareness and build community capacity to collaborate for a collective solution to the increasing mental health needs of children.

Formula and Transportation Equity: continue investments in formula equity, closing the state and district per pupil gap within ten years and maintain the commitment to transportation equity support without burdensome reporting requirements. General fund directed at transportation is not available to spend on teachers, curriculum and opportunities for students. According to the DE's [2020-21 Annual Transportation Report](#), transportation expenditures per pupil ranged from \$27 per pupil to \$1,012 per pupil. Thanks to the transportation equity funding commitment, all districts with high expenditures were reimbursed down to the state average of \$353 per pupil. Inequities in the formula, based on no longer relevant historical spending over 40 years ago, must be corrected to support resources for all Iowa students.

Public School Priority: Public schools must be adequately funded and supported by the state. Investments in education savings accounts, voucher programs, school tuition organizations or home school, whether by tax credit or direct appropriation, remove resources from public schools in three ways;

- 1) Iowa's funding formula is enrollment based. Fewer students results in fewer resources for staff, programs and courses for the vast majority of students remaining in the public school. For rural schools in particular, the loss of students further stresses an already tight economy of scale.
- 2) Carving Iowa's education funding pie into more pieces necessarily means a smaller piece of pie for Iowa's public-school students. Rural school leaders, looking ahead to the implementation of the 2022 historic tax cuts, already fear the inability of the state to adequately fund public schools, let alone, take on the commitment of a second educational delivery system.
- 3) School choice programs typically start small, but quickly expand eligibility criteria (increased income eligibility, support for home school, or even eventual public support of private tuition for any student at any private school that will take them.) Many rural school districts do not have a private school in their community today. In the future, private online academies, the pressure for the state to support home schooling and the profit motive to expand private schools without the corresponding costs of oversight and compliance will create lower economies of scale and the inability for small rural schools to survive increased rigorous state accreditation compliance.

RSAI is opposed to all forms of education savings accounts/voucher programs/additional public funds appropriated for private or home school. Such programs traditionally do not include accountability for tax expenditures, are not required to educate and assess all children or provide special education services, and are hidden from the public oversight that accompanies public funding. With recent expansions to unlimited open enrollment to any public school in Iowa, combined with Iowa's current public investment in private religious schools and home school exceeding \$80 million, even small demonstration programs or pilot projects should be resisted; the camel's nose under the tent is soon followed by the humps.

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