



## RSAI Regional Meeting Agenda - SE Region

Fairfield Arts & Conv Center, 200 N Main Street, Fairfield, IA 52556

Or Virtually via Zoom (contact [jen@iowaschoolfinance.com](mailto:jen@iowaschoolfinance.com) for link to join/observe)

May 5, 2021 at noon (or immediately following the Great Prairie AEA Superintendent's Meeting)

1. Approval of the Agenda
2. RSAI Overview and Processes
3. Election of RSAI Regional Representative to the Leadership Group. Terms are specified in bylaws. Ongoing office is a 3-year term. No election this year for SE Region. Thanks to Laurie Noll!
4. Election of RSAI Legislative Committee representative for the SE Region (Annual Election). Thanks to Joel Pedersen, Cardinal CSD, for serving during the 2021 legislative session! *Representative attends Legislative Committee Meeting in Des Moines during August, attends the Annual Meeting in Ankeny during October, and supports legislative advocacy efforts during the 2022 Session.*
  - a. Nominations
  - b. Election
5. Consideration of Proposed Amendments to RSAI Bylaws (Requires 2/3 majority vote). Discuss pros and cons of expanded Legislative Committee member appointments by region and goal of one member per AEA.
6. Review of the 2021 Legislative Session and Data Supporting Key Issues Critical to RSAI members by Margaret Buckton, RSAI Professional Advocate
7. Establish SE Region's proposed RSAI Legislative Priorities for the upcoming Iowa Legislative Session to forward to the RSAI Legislative Committee (Requires simple majority vote)
8. Other Business
9. Adjourn

**RSAI SE Region 3-year term expires Sept. 2023**

**Laurie Noll**

RSAI NW Region 3-year term expires Sept. 2023

RSAI SW Region 3-year term expires Sept. 2022

RSAI NE Region 3-year term expires Sept. 2021

One At-large position expires Sept 2021 (Dan Peterson, Central DeWitt CSD) elected at the Annual Meeting in October.

### Save the date: 2021 RSAI Annual Meeting

Oct. 26, 2021 4:30-7:30PM (includes working dinner)

FFA Enrichment Center (DMACC Campus)

1055 SW Prairie Trail Parkway, Ankeny, Iowa 50023

(or virtual via Zoom)

Conduct annual business, set Legislative Priorities, and plan for successful advocacy



<http://www.rsaia.org/legislative.html>

## 2021 RSAI Legislative Priorities

**Adequate School Resources:** the increase in SSA should be no lower than anticipated growth in state revenue, not lower than 3.75% in FY 2022 due to abundant FY 2020 state surplus, maintain balanced state and local resources, be predictable, and assure adequate time for budget planning and staffing.

**Assessing and Addressing Staff/Student Social, Emotional and Behavioral Health:** access to funded mental health services for children and supports for staff. Address the shortage of mental health professionals and provide resources over the next two years for local districts to train school staff based on a local needs and community capacity to collaborate for a collective solution.

**Educator Shortage and Quality Instruction:** maximum flexibility to hire staff to provide great instruction, including several strategies to attract and retain quality staff; flexibility to meet offer and teach requirements, loan forgiveness programs, a special education generalist credential, creation of a Public Service CTE strand, hire retirees without IPERS impact, and elimination of barriers to licensure.

**Formula and Transportation Equity:** formula equity, closing the state and district per pupil gap within ten years and continued transportation equity support without burdensome reporting requirements.

**Opportunity Equity:** resources based on at-risk need, in addition to enrollment. All school boards should have 5% dropout prevention funding. School districts should be granted spending authority for FRPL waived fees and Iowa should study the impact of poverty on educational outcomes.

**Sharing Incentives/Efficiencies:** extension of Whole Grade Sharing, Reorganization and Operational Sharing Incentives. The 21-student cap should expand to allow access to any new flexibility.

**Quality Preschool:** funding of quality PK at the 1.0 per pupil cost and formula protections against budget and program impacts of PK enrollment swings (budget guarantee/on-time spending authority).

**School Safety:** school safety investments, including additional funding for security personnel and training to protect against emergency situations.

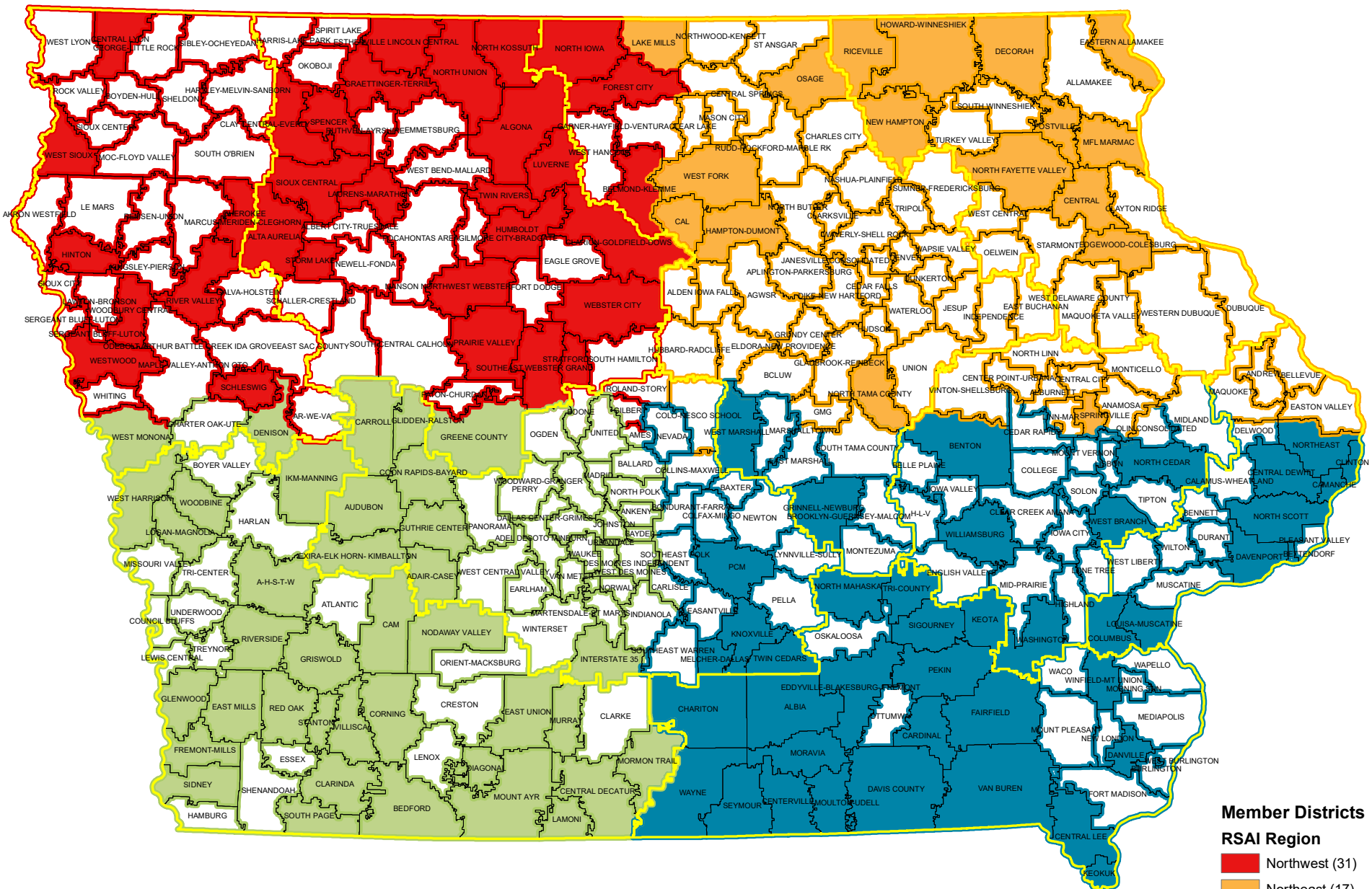
**Bonding Capacity:** a simple majority, 50% plus 1, voter approval for school bond issues and calculation of debt limit excluding debt backed by the SAVE.

**Internet Connectivity and Access:** expanded access to high-speed Internet for all Iowans including incentives, investments, and creative solutions to close the technology gap for students, businesses and community members in rural Iowa. Low income should not be a barrier to internet access.

**Remote Learning and Instructional Time:** local authority to determine when school should close, for emergency situations/safety, counting instructional time toward minimum instructional days or hours as long as engagement in virtual learning is required and needs of all students are anticipated and met.

**Local School Board Authority:** locally elected leaders closest to the community are in the best position to determine the interest of students, staff 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.

# RSAI Membership 2020-2021



**Member Districts**  
**RSAI Region**

- Northwest (31)
- Northeast (17)
- Southwest (38)
- Southeast (40)
- AEA (9)



## RSAI Regional Meeting Bylaws Discussion 2021

### Background

RSAI Leadership Group has been discussing how to continue to grow membership and recruit and support engaged leaders. The sharing of information among superintendents based on AEA easily facilitates a boundary by AEA for recruiting Legislative Committee members, who could be tasked with sharing of legislative and other RSAI information with colleagues. Special appreciation to Iowa’s nine AEAs for their support of RSAI through affiliate membership!

### Small group discussion:

What is the value to RSAI of recruiting more leadership voices from membership? The Leadership Group discussed both increasing reach/influence with legislators and aiding recruiting of RSAI membership. Do you agree? Are there other benefits you can think of? Any downsides?

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What are the pros and cons of this bylaws proposal to appoint at least one but potentially more Legislative Committee members from each region with a goal of at least one per AEA?

Cons:

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Pros:

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Is there a better way to accomplish this goal?

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Other thoughts?

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## **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.

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.

Membership dues shall be provided each year at the Annual meeting of RSAI. 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.

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

Member School Districts shall be entitled to participation in RSAI 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 RSAI 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 RSAI Annual Meeting or as needed between RSAI Meetings as determined by the RSAI 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. 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 in the case of Superintendents shall be deemed vacant.

**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 an-RSAI Region-Liaison to the RSAI Legislative Committee. It shall be the responsibility of the RSAI Region Liaison to present the RSAI Region's Legislative priorities at the Legislative Committee meeting each year. The term of office of the RSAI Region Liaison shall be one year.

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: ~~upon ratification, 3-year term; 3 years thereafter~~
- RSAI NE Region & 1 At-Large: ~~upon ratification, 2-year term; 3 years thereafter~~
- RSAI NW Region, RSAI SE Region & 1 At-Large: ~~upon ratification, 1-year term; 3 years thereafter~~

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 any reports necessary with the Iowa Secretary of State and State Legislature regarding non-profit status and lobbying activities as required.

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

Proposed Changes: 2021



## 2021 REGIONAL MEETINGS

### Northwest Region:

May 4<sup>th</sup> immediately following Prairie Lakes  
AEA Supts Mtg (approx. 12pm)  
500 NE 6th St., Pocahontas, IA 50574  
Or Via Zoom  
Region Rep: Justin Daggett

### Southeast Region:

May 5<sup>th</sup> immediately following Great Prairie  
AEA Supts Mtg (approx. 12pm)  
Fairfield Arts & Convention Center  
200 N Main St., Fairfield, IA 52556, USA  
Or Via Zoom  
Region Rep: Laurie Noll

### Southwest Region:

May 21<sup>st</sup> at 4pm  
Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton School  
4114 Madison St., Elk Horn, IA 51531  
Or Via Zoom  
Region Rep: Paul Croghan

### Northeast Region:

May 25<sup>th</sup> at 1pm  
Central Rivers AEA  
1521 Technology Drive, Cedar Falls, IA 50613  
Or Via Zoom  
Region Rep: Nick Trenkamp

## RSAI BYLAWS COMMITTEE

April 26, 2021 from 1 – 2:30pm  
Via Zoom

## RSAI LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

TBD - August 2021  
ISFIS Office  
1201 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, Des Moines

## 2021 RSAI LEADERSHIP GROUP

NE Nick Trenkamp, Central CSD, Supt,  
[nickolas.trenkamp@rsaia.org](mailto:nickolas.trenkamp@rsaia.org)  
(563) 245-1751 (term expires Sept. 2021)

SE Laurie Noll, Fairfield CSD, Supt,  
[laurie.noll@rsaia.org](mailto:laurie.noll@rsaia.org)  
(641) 472-2655 (term expires Sept. 2023)

SW Paul Croghan, CAM CSD/Nodaway Valley  
CSD, Supt, [paul.croghan@rsaia.org](mailto:paul.croghan@rsaia.org)  
(641) 743-6127 (term expires Sept. 2022)

NW Justin Daggett, Manson NW Webster CSD,  
Supt, [justin.daggett@rsaia.org](mailto:justin.daggett@rsaia.org)  
(712) 469-2202 (term expires Sept. 2023)

\*Dan Peterson, Central DeWitt CSD, Supt,  
[dan.peterson@rsaia.org](mailto:dan.peterson@rsaia.org), At-large  
(563) 659-4705 (term expires Sept. 2021)

\*Scott Williamson, Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont  
CSD, Supt, [scott.williamson@rsaia.org](mailto:scott.williamson@rsaia.org) At-large  
(641) 969-4226 (term expires Sept. 2023)

\*Dennis McClain, Adair-Casey CSD/Guthrie Center  
CSD, Supt, [dennis.mcclain@rsaia.org](mailto:dennis.mcclain@rsaia.org) At-large  
(641) 746-2241 (term expires Sept. 2022)

3-year term  
elected by  
attendees at  
Regional  
Meetings

3-year term  
elected by  
attendees at  
the Annual  
Meeting\*

## RSAI LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE (2021 SESSION)

Elected annually at regional meetings. Group  
includes the at-large members above \* plus:

- SW Tim Mitchell, Riverside CSD, Supt
- NW Brian Johnson, Prairie Valley CSD &  
Southeast Webster Grand CSD, Supt
- SE Joel Pedersen, Cardinal CSD, Supt
- NE Barb Schwamman, Osage CSD &  
Riceville CSD, Supt

1-year term  
elected by  
attendees at  
Regional  
Meetings

## RSAI Annual Meeting

October 26, 2021 4:30 – 7:30 PM

FFA Enrichment Center, DMACC Campus, Ankeny, IA or Via Zoom

Conduct annual business, set Legislative Priorities, and plan for successful advocacy

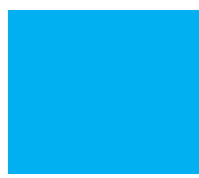
A light working dinner will be served



**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.



## Thank you to RSAI 2020-21 Corporate Sponsors



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More information about RSAI Corporate Sponsors at: [www.rsaia.org/corporate-sponsors](http://www.rsaia.org/corporate-sponsors)



RSAI member districts receive the benefit of free licensure checks processed through the NASDTEC (National Association of State Departments of Teacher Education and Credentials) Clearinghouse, which would otherwise cost your school district hundreds of dollars.

The licensure checks verify for all new hires (or existing staff), for both teachers/administrators or even noncertified positions, whether they had a notice of disciplinary action listed on licensure from another state. Even though the action may not have had criminal charges associated with it, knowledge of such action is good information for district leaders to know regarding hiring, assignment of responsibilities and other issues regarding safety of staff and students.

RSAI welcomes all Iowa districts to membership, even if your district is interested in RSAI membership solely for purposes of access to the NASDTEC clearinghouse.

Contact Jennifer Albers [jen@iowaschoolfinance.com](mailto:jen@iowaschoolfinance.com) with any questions.



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