



## RSAI 2026 Legislative Priorities (Short List)

**Adequate School Resources for Public Schools:** Predictable, balanced, sustainable and timely funding, at least exceeding inflation, set within 30 days of the release of the Governor's budget.

**Staff Shortages:** Policy makers must be thoughtful to encourage Iowans to become educators, provide sufficient SSA to compensate all staff, but also work on specific strategies to grow the candidate pool, rebuild the pipeline of interest, support and fund grow-your-own programs, and provide districts with maximum funding and licensure flexibility for retention programs. TSS must be sufficient to avoid salary compaction and cover new salary minimums.

**Quality Preschool:** Funding of quality statewide voluntary preschool for three- and four-year-olds should be set at the 1.0 cost for full-time or prorated proportionally. Districts must have local control to determine whether full or half-day programs are best for their students and families.

**Local School Board Authority:** Locally elected leaders are in the best position to balance interests of students, staff, district and stakeholders. New state mandates should be given adequate time to study, plan and implement, based on input from school and respecting the school cycle.

**Public School Priority:** changes to ESA policy; 1) flexibility to spend ESA categorical funds, 2) eliminate district reimbursement of private transportation, 3) require funding to follow students back to public school, 4) March 1 application deadline, 5) do not include homeschool or allow a less rigorous private accreditation 6) apply consistent expectations and regulations.

**Increasing Student Needs Including Poverty and Mental Health:** All districts should have access to 5% dropout prevention funding. Continue addressing the MH Professional shortage and provide AEA resources to train school staff in MH first aid.

**Whole Grade Sharing & Reorganization Incentives:** Whole Grade Sharing and Reorganization incentives, expired last year, should be extended for at least ten years.

**Operational Sharing:** Return to a minimum 3-student weighting per position. Add technology director. School safety, MH positions and sharing with AEAs should be exempt from the cap.

**Formula Equity:** Continue investment, closing the \$135 SCPP and DCPP gap within ten years.

**Property Tax Reform:** principles to guide property tax legislation: 1) affordable to the State, 2) retain local school board and voter authority for existing levies, 3) protect pre-reform voter-approved amounts (levies and total dollars anticipated) through transitions, and 4) improve transparency (simple property tax statements, remove rollbacks and explain TIF impacts). RSAI opposes restriction of management fund, since taxpayers have a mechanism to protest. Bond issues should be approved by a simple majority of voters (50% +1) and there should be multiple election dates yearly. Only one vote should be required, up to the \$4.05 maximum levy.

**Rural Access to AEA Services:** SSA should be enough to fund AEAs. AEAs should receive at least 90% of special education funding. The Task Force to study AEA changes should reconvene and make recommendations. Regionalization of critical services through AEAs should continue.