



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, 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.

Membership dues shall be provided each year at the RSAI Annual Meeting. 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 Bylaws.

Voting:

Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, 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 and shall be considered in person for purposes of voting, 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 Bylaws, 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 Bylaws, 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 Bylaws. 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:

Eligible officer 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.

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

The RSAI Regional 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 to the Legislative Committee meeting each year. The term of office of the RSAI Region Liaison shall be one year.

At the RSAI Regional Meeting, amendments to these Bylaws 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 Regional 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 Regional 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 Bylaws 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 Bylaws 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 Bylaws; act as the official spokesperson for RSAI; 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 amounts deposited into or withdrawn from the bank account(s); 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.

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
Amended: October 25, 2022
Amended: October 17, 2023