

RSAI Priorities for 2023 Session: the RSAI website for the 2023 Session includes the language for our legislative priorities, found here. <https://www.rsaia.org/2023-legislative-session.html> This includes amended language requested at the Annual Meeting to the teacher shortage priority, to closely align with SAI's language about respecting the education profession. In addition to the list of policies RSAI supports regarding recruitment and retention, the priority now includes this statement:

"In both the short and long term, legislation, policy, and public support will not only provide improved compensation for educators, but will also foster the respect for the education profession that is well deserved. Only when we are able to do this will Iowa be able to have adequate numbers of quality individuals educating our children."

Find Your Legislators: now that the election is over, it's time to reach out to your returning and new legislators. Find your school district's House and Senate district numbers, then find the names of election winners (and returning incumbent senators), as well as their contact information we've compiled from several sources, in our [2023 Legislator Lookup Tool](#).

Public School Proud Postcards: distributed at the RSAI Booth during the IASB Convention Tradeshow, use the above contact information to address the postcards to your legislators at their HOME address and mail them this week (add standard postage). Indicate your school district and something about your district that you want your legislators to know that makes you proud. Include your return address on the bottom left and send it to their home address. Recruit board members, parents, business leaders or community leaders to send one as well. We would suggest you not have students fill them out, as some at the statehouse could think students were manipulated to participate in a political action. If you didn't stop by the RSAI booth to pick up these postcards, let us know what you need and we will mail you some. Request [Public School Proud Postcards](#) using this form.



School Choice Advocacy: Despite any rumors about votes in the Iowa House on the Education Savings Account/Voucher Bill, do not be lulled into complacency. The Session doesn't begin until Jan. 9. That gives advocates the month of December to connect with legislators, let them know how school choice expansion would hurt rural schools, and ask for their vote against the legislation. Remind legislators that Iowa ranked 9th in the nation in school choice BEFORE the charter school expansion and elimination of the open enrollment deadline approved last

session (according to the Heritage Foundation's Education Freedom Report Card 2022). We already have school choice in Iowa. Talk to legislators about the problems with an unlevel playing field (public schools must accept all students), lack of transparency for expenditures, a "poverty" eligibility threshold that is too high (400% = \$111,000 income for family of 4), and unworkable funding processes regarding special education. Reach out to RSAI if you'd like help planning a meeting with your legislator or if follow-up after a meeting is required. Please share any information you get from your legislators about where they stand on the Governor's ESA policy. The RSAI Position Paper with additional information and talking points will be posted soon on the RSAI 2023 legislative session webpage.

RSAI Annual Meeting Keynote Address: This 25-minute video link will still be available for another 6 weeks. Benjamin S. Winchester, Extension Educator, Evaluation & Rural Sociology, from the Extension Center for Community Vitality at the University of Minnesota, delivered our keynote address via Zoom at the October RSAI Annual Meeting. Winchester discussed a different way of thinking about changes to rural communities in a positive light, to help dispel the myth of exaggerated rural decline.

[View the Ben Winchester Presentation Recording \(https://youtu.be/xL73JpWh918\)](https://youtu.be/xL73JpWh918)

Thanks for all you do for your students and communities!