

RSAI Vision/Mission Workgroup Minutes

December 5, 2025 at 10am

Via Zoom or at ISFIS 1201 63rd Street, Des Moines, IA 50311
(Contact jen@iowaschoolfinance.com for Zoom link)

Leadership Group Attendees: Ron Lorenz, Barb Schwamman, Caleb Bonjour
Staff Attendees: Margaret Buckton & Jen Albers

The meeting was called to order at 10am.

1. Welcome and Purpose of Meeting:

Reviewed charge from Leadership Group and Legislative Committee. Discuss desired outcome: a recommendation on updated Mission, Vision, and Goals. Reviewed RSAI Core Values so they are top of mind when we get to discussion of draft mission options.

2. Review of Current Mission, Vision, and Goals:

Briefly recapped existing bylaw language. Individual reflection and discussion of what might be missing. Shared reflections with the group.

Current Mission:

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

Current 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.*

3. Presentation of Three Mission Options:

Recommended mission Option A (Short and Strong), Option B (People and Partnerships). Discussed tone, clarity, and alignment with RSAI values.

4. Review of Updated Vision and Goals:

Highlighted new elements to include: coalition-building, educator shortages. Discussed whether language should be more formal (bylaws) or public-facing (advocacy).

5. Consideration of Coalition-Building Language:

Discussed priority partner organizations. Discussed how the mission and vision should reflect this direction.

6. Discussion of Educator Shortage Priorities:

Confirmed the level of emphasis desired. Discussed alignment language with RSAI's advocacy priorities.

7. Draft Recommendation:

The group prepared the draft recommendation for mission and vision below, to be considered by the Leadership Group, and if approved, to move forward to RSAI Regional Meetings. Any changes to Bylaws would then require membership approval at an RSAI Annual Meeting.

Draft Revised Mission:

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

Draft Revised Vision:

Member schools will collaborate in support of rural students by advocating for just resource allocation, addressing structural differences, and promoting statewide decisions that recognize the unique needs, challenges, and opportunities of rural communities, to ensure rural schools and students survive and thrive, by:

- 1. Collaborating to promote awareness and legislation that strengthens rural education and opportunities for students;*
- 2. 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;*
- 3. Leveraging partnerships to build capacity and understanding by collaborating with business, postsecondary, economic, agricultural, educational and other entities to engage their capacity for advocacy and support of rural schools and students;*
- 4. Securing adequate resources, academic and financial, to provide first class educational opportunities for students; and*
- 5. Maintaining local control through elected school boards, ensuring the flexibility and authority to be innovative based on local student and community needs.*

8. Discussed Next Steps and Timeline

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12pm by consent of the attendees.

Minutes respectfully submitted

Margaret Buckton, RSAI Professional Advocate, As of 12/5/2025