



RSAI Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

August 14, 2025 (10am – 2pm)

ISFIS Office, 1201 63rd Street, Des Moines, IA 50311 or Via Zoom

RSAI Legislative Committee Members & Staff:

In attendance in person: Caleb Bonjour (Gladbrook Reinbeck), Erik Smith (New Hampton & Turkey Valley), Ken Kasper (Garner Hayfield Ventura & RRM), Brian Johnson (Southeast Valley & Paton Churdan), Rich Schulte (Montezuma), Mark Dohmen (North Cedar & Olin), Scott Williamson (Eddyville Blakesburg Fremont), Deron Stender (Creston), Bill Watson (Martensdale St. Marys), Margaret Buckton (ISFIS/RSAI) and Dave Daughton (RSAI/SAI)

In attendance via ZOOM: Jay Marley (Tripoli & Nashua Plainfield), Autumn Pino (Springville & Lisbon), Brent Jorth (Central Lyon), Adam Magliari (Mediapolis), Tom Messinger (Newton), Stephanie Mishler (Central DeWitt),

1. Introductions, share contact information, discuss key legislative contacts

Legislative Committee Contact Information:

The Legislative Committee was called to order at 10:00am. Members of the Committee introduced themselves and shared contact information.

2. Review Legislative Committee Responsibilities

Buckton reviewed the responsibilities of members of this Committee.

3. Elect Legislative Committee Leaders (Chair and Vice Chair/Secretary)

- a. Chair: Rich Schulte nominated Ken Kasper. Brian Johnson seconded. No other nominations. Approved unanimously.*
- b. Vice Chair/Secretary: Adam Magliari volunteered. No other volunteers or nominations. Approved unanimously.*

4. Review RSAI Membership and Organization (Membership Map and Key Values)

Committee members discussed RSAI Essential Values in small groups, with the zoom attendees in a breakout room, then discussed their observations back in the large group. Buckton and Daughton shared how these Essential Values drive RSAI's lobbying and registrations on legislative proposals. Members highlighted the importance of the first bullet, Students First, as the primary driver of policy decisions for RSAI, but stated that all are important. There was some consensus in streamlining the list during the year (for example, avoiding state mandates, flexibility and local control are all individually on the list, but similar concepts). Staff will discuss with the Leadership Group and consider pulling together a small group to do the initial work.

5. Consider RSAI Bylaws Committee Recommendation

The RSAI Bylaws were shared in the packet. Buckton shared that there were no recommended changes to the Bylaws from the Regional Meetings. The RSAI Bylaws Committee meet and also did not recommend any changes, but requested that the Legislative Committee and Leadership Group revisit the Vision statement to consider expanding the language to include a more direct commitment to coalition building and including teacher and staff shortages as a stand-alone bullet following adequate funding. Discussion ensued. A motion was made by Rich Schulte to leave the RSAI mission, vision and goals unchanged for now, but use the upcoming year to study them. Caleb Bonjour seconded. During discussion, Adam Magliari offered a friendly amendment to ask the Leadership Group to assign a Task Force or Ad Hoc Committee to study over the next year, the Mission, Vision, Values and Goals and make any recommended changes to the appropriate committee and the membership. Second by Erik Smith. The amendment was approved unanimously. The motion as amended was approved unanimously.

6. Discuss Interim Session Advocacy

As the meeting was behind schedule, Buckton suggested we move this item to the end, and if there is not sufficient time to discuss, RSAI will schedule a webinar for this content in September, after everyone gets the start of the school year off and running.

7. Discuss Reports from RSAI Regional Meetings and Legislative Issues Survey Responses

Committee members reviewed the priorities from the various RSAI Regional Meetings, as well as the result of the RSAI Legislative Issues Survey of all members. Buckton reviewed the result of the survey which included 112 responses from RSAI member districts. Results are reflected in the table below, with the averages of individual, district and total responses are shown, with 1 being Low Priority and 7 being High Priority:

Priority	Overall Average	Individual Average	District Average
Adequate School Resources (Including Formula Per Pupil Funding, Teacher Salary Supplement and other categoricals, Transportation Equity, and Supplementary weighting.)	6.8	6.7	6.8
Public School Priority (If private schools receive state funding, there should be a level playing field of regulations and accountability. Public schools should be held harmless for dollars diverted to private schools.)	6.3	6.3	6.2
Local School Board Authority (trusting school boards and education professionals to make the best decisions for students and community)	5.9	6.0	5.8
Quality Preschool (including 1.0 weighting for full day programming if districts choose to offer it.)	5.8	5.7	5.8
Increasing Student Needs Including Poverty and Mental Health (specific resources, programs and funding to meet the extraordinary needs of students.)	5.5	5.3	5.7
Staff Shortages (Including loan forgiveness and grow your own programs, emphasis on critical shortage positions, and licensure flexibility)	5.4	5.2	5.5
Operational Sharing Incentives (Right size the weightings for positions and consider some positions outside of the 25 student cap.)	5.3	5.5	5.2
Formula Equity (Continue to close the gap between high and low district cost per pupil amounts.)	5.3	5.6	5.2
Bond Issues Dates & Other Restrictions (allow more special election dates, a simple majority approval for bond issues, and eliminate the \$2.70 intermediate threshold - only one ballot initiative up to \$4.05)	5.0	4.7	5.1
AEA Services & Supports (provide adequate funding for AEAs, insure adequate resources for stable staffing and needed expertise, including school improvement supports and special education.)	4.8	5.1	4.6
Whole Grade Sharing and Reorganization Incentives (reinstate both incentives that expired beginning July 1, 2025.)	3.7	3.9	3.5

The group broke for lunch. Discussion resumed regarding issues in the survey that should be added to or considered distinctly in setting the legislative agenda for the 2026 Session. Most discussion centered on several mentions of property taxes, but other issues were mostly encompassed in the draft priorities.

8. Establish 2026 Draft Priorities (prepare recommendation for the RSAI Leadership Group and Annual Meeting attendees)

The group determined that all priorities from 2025 should remain on the list for 2026 and discussed needed changes to language, talking points and strategy. Biggest changes were in the adequate funding priority and AEA services. A new priority regarding property tax reform was added. See the priorities worksheet notes for details. Buckton will incorporate suggestions into the priority language and circulate to the Legislative Committee members in the next few weeks. Feedback will be incorporated and the draft will next go to the Leadership Group at their September meeting.

9. Discuss Plans for Annual Meeting on Oct 9th (select Leadership roles for priorities)

Individual committee members volunteered to lead discussion or provide support for individual priorities at the Annual Meeting. Buckton will prepared a chart from the

assignments, recruit others to cover the issues not already assigned and may make changes to balance out the workload for the committee members after we confirm if any committee members will not be able to attend the Annual Meeting on Oct. 9th.

10. Discuss Advocacy Supports

Buckton highlighted various RSAI advocacy supports available or in the works.

11. Discuss Next Steps/Other Business

None were brought forth for discussion.

12. Adjourn

The Committee meeting adjourned by mutual consent at 2:10pm.