**RSAI Regional Meeting Minutes - NW Region**

Prairie Lakes AEA, 500 NE 6th Street, Pocahontas, IA 50574

Or Virtually via Zoom (contact jen@iowaschoolfinance.com for link to join/observe)

May 4, 2021 at noon (or immediately following the AEA Superintendent’s Meeting)

**Attendees:***12 Member districts and 5 Non-Member districts were represented at the meeting.*

**RSAI NW Region 3-year term expires Sept. 2023**

**Justin Daggett**

RSAI SE Region 3-year term expires Sept. 2023

RSAI SW Region 3-year term expires Sept. 2022

RSAI NE Region 3-year term expires Sept. 2021

One At-large position expires Sept 2021 (Dan Peterson, Central DeWitt CSD) elected at the Annual Meeting in October.

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| **RSAI Member** | **District** | **Attendee** |
| No | Albert City Truesdale CSD | Jeff Dicks |
| No | Ar We Va CSD | Jeff Kruse |
| Yes | Ccentral Lyon CSD | Brent Jorth |
| Yes | Clay Central Everly CSD | Kevin Wood |
| No | East Sac County | Jeff Kruse |
| Yes | Estherville Lincoln Central CSD | Tara Paul |
| Yes | Laurens Marathon CSD | Kevin Wood |
| No | Lawton-Bronson CSD | Chad Shook |
| Yes | Manson NE Webster CSD | Justin Daggett |
| No | Newell Fonda CSD | Jeff Dicks |
| Yes | Prairie Valley CSD | Brian Johnson |
| Yes | Sioux Central CSD | Kevin Wood |
| Yes | Southeast Webster Grand CSD | Brian Johnson |
| Yes | Spencer CSD | Terry Hemann |
| Yes | Storm Lake CSD | Stacey Cole |
| Yes | Stratford CSD | Mandy Ross |
| Yes | Webster City CSD | Mandy Ross |
|  | Prairie Lakes AEA | Susie Meade |
|  | RSAI | Margaret Buckton |
|  | RSAI | Jen Albers |
|  | RSAI | Dave Daughton |

Justin Daggett, Manson NW Webster CSD, convened the meeting at 12:15 pm.

1. Approval of the Agenda & Introductions: *Brian Johnson moved approval of the agenda. Mandy Ross seconded. Vote was approved unanimously. As each attendee introduced themselves, they shared a significant issue they are currently facing at their district. Below is a listing of topics that were brought forth by the group:*
* *Staffing concerns around the ability to recruit and retain qualified staff.*
* *Staffing concerns about getting staff back to work regularly, and on board with initiatives following COVID-19 (such as masking, professional learning, etc.).*
* *Staffing concerns around employee morale and being burned out after such a difficult last year plus. How to finish the year strong and on a positive note so next year gets off to a good start.*
* *Behavioral issues from elementary students.*
* *Attendance issues for students and the impact that may have on graduation rates.*
1. RSAI Overview and Processes: *Margaret Buckton shared an overview of RSAI including its mission and the history of the organization.*
2. Election of RSAI Regional Representative to the Leadership Group: *Current term expires in 2023, so no election this year. Thanks to Justin Daggett for serving.*
3. Election of RSAI Legislative Committee representative for the NW Region (Annual Election). Thanks to Brian Johnson, Prairie Valley CSD & Southeast Webster Grand CSD, for serving during the 2021 legislative session! (Representative attends Legislative Committee Meeting in Des Moines during August, attends the Annual Meeting in Ankeny during October, and supports legislative advocacy efforts during the 2022 Session.)

Nominations: *Justin Daggett nominated Brian Johnson to continue on the Legislative Committee if he was willing to serve. Second by Terry Hemann. Brian Johnson expressed his interest in continuing on this committee. No other nominations were brought forth. Brian Johnson was reappointed to the RSAI Legislative Committee by unanimous consent.*

1. Review of the 2021 Legislative Session and Data Supporting Key Issues Critical to RSAI member districts. *Margaret Buckton, ISFIS, reviewed the legislative actions that have taken place thus far during the 2021 Session on each of RSAI’s priorities.*
2. Establish NW Region’s proposed RSAI Legislative Priorities for the upcoming Iowa Legislative Session to forward to the RSAI Legislative Committee: *The group considered the 2021 platform and did not believe any of the items should be removed from the list for 2022. Additionally, discussion took place among the group about adding a priority on ensuring ongoing funding is available for mental health that does not take away from other education funding areas. A motion was made by Mandy Ross and seconded by Tara Paul to recommend to the Legislative Committee to keep the current priorities on the list and add to it a priority on mental health funding. Vote was approved unanimously.*
* *2021 Priorities to Continue: Adequate School Resources; Assessing and Addressing Staff/Student Social, Emotional and Behavioral Health; Educator Shortage and Quality Instruction; Formula and Transportation Equity; Opportunity Equity; Sharing Incentives/Efficiencies; Quality Preschool; School Safety; Bonding Capacity; Internet Connectivity and Access; Remote Learning and Instructional Time; Local School Board Authority.*
* *Ensuring ongoing funding is available for mental health that does not take away from other education funding areas.*
1. Consideration of Proposed Amendments to RSAI Bylaws (Requires 2/3 majority vote). Discuss pros and cons of expanded Legislative Committee member appointments by region and goal of one member per AEA: *The group wishes to expand opportunities for leadership and grow RSAI membership and was supportive of the idea of expanding the Legislative Committee as proposed. A motion by Stacey Cole to recommend moving forward the proposed RSAI Bylaws amendments to the Legislative Committee for consideration. Second by Kevin Wood. Vote was approved unanimously.*
2. Other Business: *Other items discussed include the following topics:*
* As RSAI membership expands, we need to ensure we are staying true to rural school issues and priorities, especially when having conversations with legislators.
* The Leadership Group may want to consider offering a discount for districts with shared superintendents (not just whole-grade sharing) as incentive for both districts to join RSAI.
* In order to expand membership and influence, we need to focus on all of the positive accomplishments in the past several years. Tell the story of RSAI’s influence.
* Some superintendents are not active when it comes to legislative activities, likely because they don’t have the time or don’t believe they can influence the process. RSAI needs to help them and their school boards understand that their district can’t afford not to be a part of the organization and attempt to influence the process.
* Rural school personnel often feel isolated and RSAI should consider how to incorporate Job Alike Groups for certain roles either by region or overall to help one another feel supported and share ideas, such as TAG teachers or ELL teachers, Nutrition personnel, and Kindergarten Special Education teachers.
* Timing of getting together as an RSAI organization, whether that be an add-on to SAI or IASB, a rural school conference, Day on the Hill, etc. More face-to-face opportunities to share rural stories and ideas.
1. Adjourn: *Motion to approve by Tara Paul, second by Mandy Ross. The meeting was adjourned at 1:22pm by unanimous consent.*

**Save the date: 2021 RSAI Annual Meeting**

Oct. 26, 2021 4:30-7:30PM (includes working dinner)

FFA Enrichment Center (DMACC Campus)

1055 SW Prairie Trail Parkway, Ankeny, Iowa 50023
(or virtual via Zoom)

Conduct annual business, set Legislative Priorities, and plan for successful advocacy