



**About RSAI** Visit the RSAI home page to find out more: [www.rsaia.org](http://www.rsaia.org)

# RSAI Region Meeting NE Region May 7, 2026



# Call to Order & Welcome

## RSAI Agenda - 2026 Regional Meetings

RSAI Region	Meeting Date	Meeting Location	Meeting Time	Regional Representative
SW Region	04/01/2026	Green Hills AEA 212 E Coolbaugh St Red Oak	11:45 Lunch; 12 Meeting	Ron Lorenz
NW Region	04/07/2026	Prairie Lakes AEA 500 NE 6th Street Pocahontas	11:30 Lunch; 12 Meeting	Justin Daggett
SE Region	05/06/2026	Fairfield Arts & Conv Center, with Great Prairie AEA 200 N Main St, Fairfield	12 Lunch; 12:30 Meeting	Jeremy Hissem
NE Region	05/07/2026	Central Rivers AEA 1521 Technology Pkwy Cedar Falls	8 - 9:30 Breakfast & Meeting	Barb Schwamman



# Agenda (call for approval)

- ❖ Introductions
- ❖ RSAI Overview and Processes
- ❖ Election to Leadership Group Rep (if applicable)
- ❖ Election of Legislative Committee Reps
- ❖ Updated RSAI Mission/Vision & Review of Bylaws
- ❖ Review of the 2026 Legislative Session To Date
- ❖ Discussion of Upcoming Election & Advocacy Efforts
- ❖ Discussion of Region Priorities for 2027 Session
- ❖ Brainstorming/Networking Discussion



# Introductions (Current NE Region Leadership)

- ❖ Barb Schwamman, Osage CSD & Riceville CSD,  
Leadership Group - NE Regional Representative (Term expires September 2027)
- ❖ Caleb Bonjour, Gladbrook Reinbeck CSD,  
Leadership Group - At-Large Representative (term expires September 2027)
- ❖ Jay Marley, Tripoli CSD,  
Legislative Committee Representative (term expires June 2026)
- ❖ Erik Smith, New Hampton CSD & Turkey Valley CSD,  
Legislative Committee Representative (term expires June 2026)
- ❖ Autumn Pino, Springville CSD & Lisbon CSD  
Legislative Committee Representative (term expires June 2026)



# Introductions (RSAI & ISFIS)



- ❖ James Passick,  
IT Director
- ❖ Ken Sturgis,  
School Finance Director
- ❖ Larry Sigel,  
Retired School Finance Guru
- ❖ Margaret Buckton  
RSAI Professional Advocate
- ❖ Jen Albers,  
RSAI Support & Accountant
- ❖ Dave Daughton,  
RSAI Grassroots Advocate



# Introductions (all attendees)

- Name \_\_\_\_\_
- District Role \_\_\_\_\_
- One Sentence: What's the best thing happening in your school district as you close down the 2025-26 school year?

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# RSAI Overview and Process



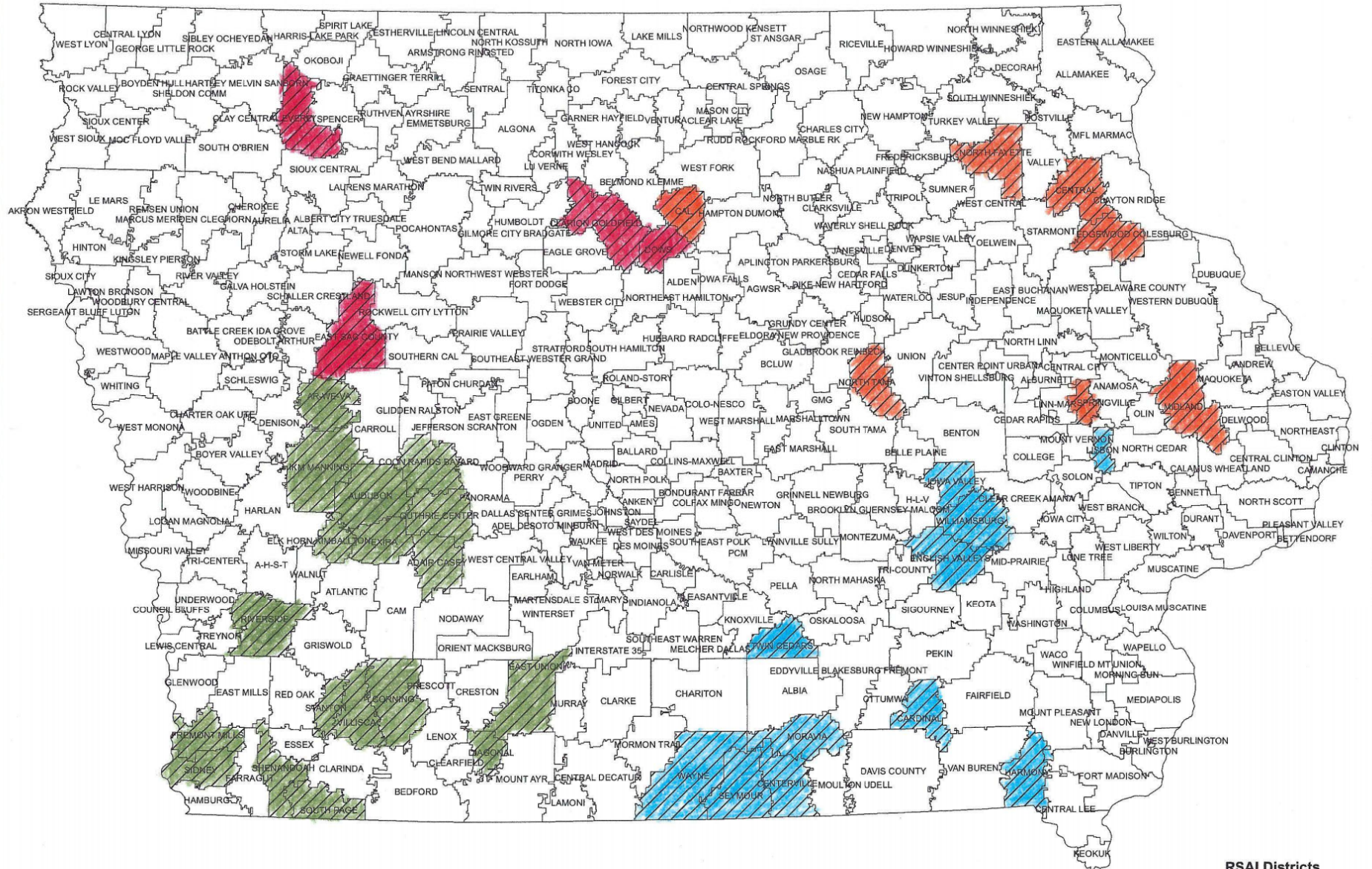
# History of RSAI

The Rural School Advocates of Iowa began with a few rural school leaders getting together in 2013 to discuss many things:

- Why were rural school voices not represented in statewide decision-making?
  - Why did funding formulas not recognize transportation and sparsity factors?
  - Why did state policy always seem to have a “one-size-fits-all” approach that left little flexibility to rural schools?
  - What could rural school leaders do to change this situation to benefit students in rural schools?
- 
- July 1, 2014 RSAI officially formed with 41 member districts

# RSAI Membership

July 1, 2014

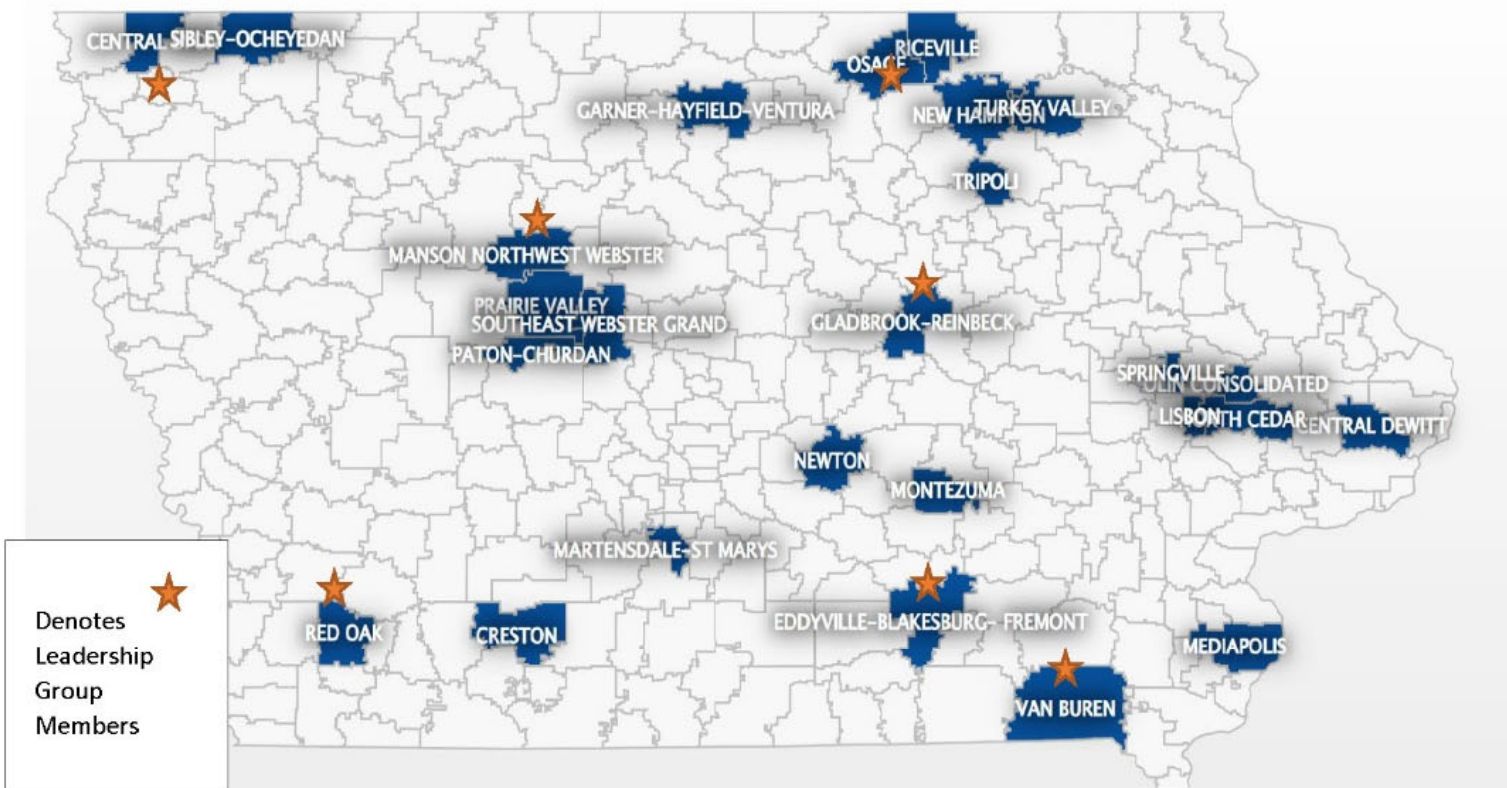


Date: 7/7/2014

**RSAI Districts**  
**Members**  
FY 2015 Members (41)



## 2025-26 RSAI Leadership Group and Legislative Committee



★  
Denotes  
Leadership  
Group  
Members

Leadership Group Members			Legislative Committee Members			
Region	Name	District	Region	AEA	Name	District
NE	Barb Schwamman	Osage/Riceville	NE	Grant Wood	Autumn Pino	Springville/Lisbon
NW	Justin Daggett	Manson NW Webster	NE	Keystone	Erik Smith	New Hampton/Turkey Valley
SE	Jeremy Hissem	Van Buren County	NE	Central Rivers	Jay Marley	Tripoli
SW	Ron Lorenz	Red Oak	NW	Central Rivers	Ken Kasper	Garner Hayfield Ventura
At-Large	Brent Jorth	Central Lyon	NW	Northwest	Stan DeZeeuw	Sibley Ocheyedan
At-Large	Scott Williamson	Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont	NW	Prairie Lakes	Brian Johnson	Southeast Valley
At-Large	Caleb Bonjour	Gladbrook Reinbeck	SE	Great Prairie	Adam Magliari	Mediapolis
			SE	Mississippi Bend	Stephanie Mishler	Central DeWitt
			SE	Central Rivers	Rich Schulte	Montezuma
			SE	Heartland	Tom Messinger	Newton
			SE	Grant Wood	Mark Dohmen	North Cedar/Olin
			SW	Green Hills	Deron Stender	Creston
			SW	Heartland	Bill Watson	Martensdale-St. Mary's
Plus all three At-Large Leadership Group Members						

# RSAI Relationships

- RSAI is recognized as the Iowa affiliate of the **National Rural Education Association (NREA)** connecting members to rural school leaders nationwide, an annual conference focused on the needs and successes of rural schools
- Lends Iowa's voice to a collective effort in our nation's Capitol through membership in the **Rural Schools Collaborative**.
- Member of **Iowa Rural Development Council** to network and collaborative w/rural leaders across all areas of economic development.



RURAL SCHOOLS  
COLLABORATIVE



# Member Benefits

- ✓ Advocacy presence at the Iowa Capitol focused on RSAI priority issues
- ✓ Weekly legislative update reports and recap videos to share news from the statehouse and calls to action
- ✓ A voice to advocate with the executive branch and represent rural schools on various task forces and stakeholder committees convened by DE
- ✓ Advocacy resources for local leaders to use, including position papers, advocacy tool kits, talking points, maps, and school finance estimates
- ✓ Assistance with communications, letters to the editor, sample letters to or specific responses to legislators
- ✓ Easy to share information, such as RSAI Legislative Priorities Video, to inform school boards, staff, and stakeholders
- ✓ RSAI is the state affiliate of the National Rural Education Association, including access to NREA research, updates about federal actions, and networking
- ✓ Free Summer Regional Meetings and RSAI Annual Conference in October
- ✓ Authentic grassroots development of legislative priorities in a one district one vote democratic process
- ✓ Discount on ISFIS Policy-hosting Service
- ✓ Collective purchasing power as a group, attracting needed supports at discounted prices

***Advocacy, Networking, Sharing, Best Practice Connections with others***

# RSAI Corporate Sponsors 2025-26

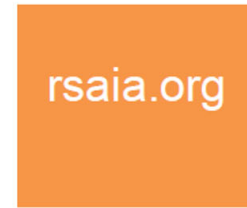


[www.rsaia.org/corporate-sponsors](http://www.rsaia.org/corporate-sponsors)

# RSAI Annual Meeting

<https://www.rsaia.org/annual-meeting.html>

- Meet Oct. 9 (Solution Tree Training Center in DSM), hear reports, budget, fee schedule, elect officers, approve priorities
- Members get one vote per district (affiliate members, guests and nonmembers are welcome but asked to register so we have enough food)
- An outside speaker or Some Leadership Development Content
- Networking
- Share a good meal



## Election of RSAI Regional Representative to the Leadership Group (NE Region)

Congrats to Barb for new position at AEA.

Barb's Regional Seat expires Sept. 2027, so this election will be for the remainder of the term.

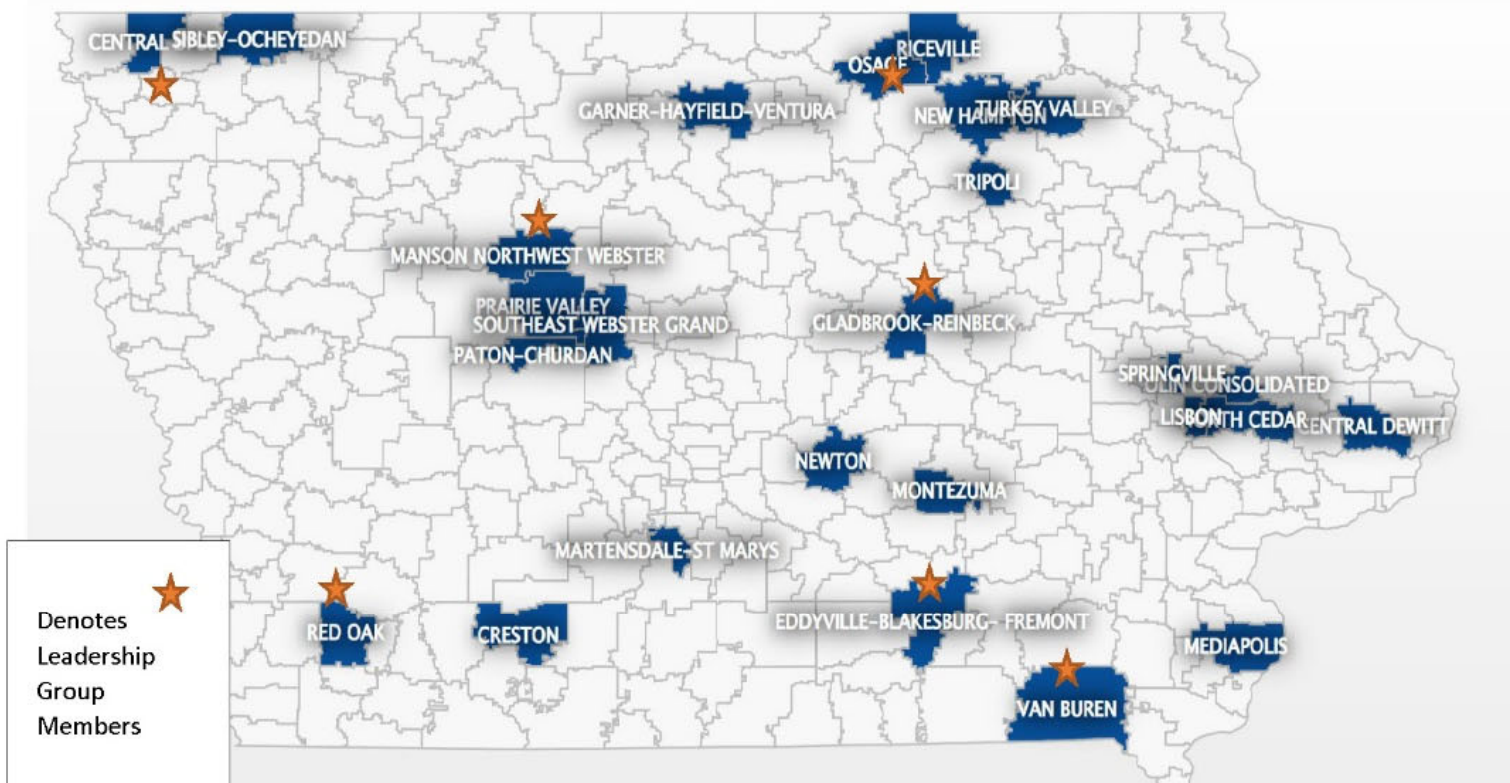


## Election of RSAI Regional Representative to the Legislative Committee

- Office is a 1-year appointment, but no term limits.
- Bylaws allow additional representatives so each AEA in the region has at least one.
- Representative attends August Legislative Committee Meeting in Des Moines, attends the October Annual Meeting, and supports legislative advocacy efforts throughout the Legislative Session.

*(Maps show membership & current representation.  
Thanks to those serving during the 2026 Session! )*

## 2025-26 RSAI Leadership Group and Legislative Committee



Leadership Group Members			Legislative Committee Members			
Region	Name	District	Region	AEA	Name	District
NE	Barb Schwamman	Osage/Riceville	NE	Grant Wood	Autumn Pino	Springville/Lisbon
NW	Justin Daggett	Manson NW Webster	NE	Keystone	Erik Smith	New Hampton/Turkey Valley
SE	Jeremy Hissem	Van Buren County	NE	Central Rivers	Jay Marley	Tripoli
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			SW	Green Hills	Deron Stender	Creston
			SW	Heartland	Bill Watson	Martensdale-St. Mary's

Plus all three At-Large Leadership Group Members



## RSAI Mission

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



# Current RSAI Vision

## **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.



## Draft RSAI 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.

# Stand-up Discussion with two's or three's

- Do these changes resonate with you?
- Does this vision provide clear direction to the Leadership Group and staff in how and where to lead?
- Does this vision guide local leaders regarding advocacy
  - With Legislators?
  - With stakeholders and organizations in the district?
- Any feedback for the Legislative Group which will take the next step on considering the changes
- (make a note on the back of your Mission handout and turn it in).



# Review of RSAI Bylaws

Any changes needed?

## Process for Changes:

- Comments/recommendations are shared with the RSAI Bylaws Committee.
- Bylaws Committee make recommendations to the Legislative Committee.
- Legislative Committee makes final recommendation to members at the Annual Meeting (which requires a 2/3 vote for approval).



**About RSAI** Visit the RSAI home page to find out more: [www.rsaia.org](http://www.rsaia.org)

# Summary of 2026 Legislative Session (so far) RSAI Priority Action



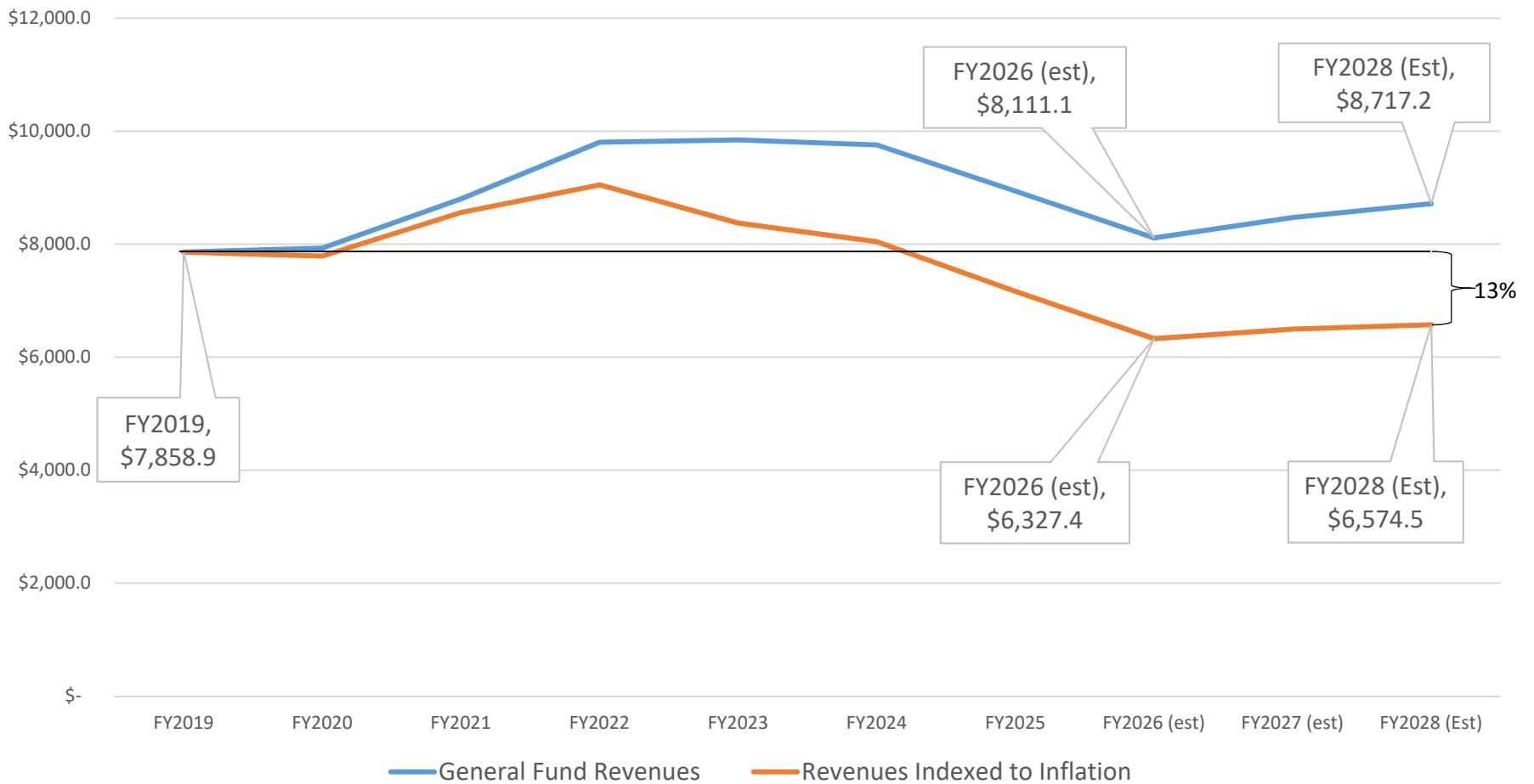
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# Advocacy Impact (and Challenges) So Far. . . .

# School Funding

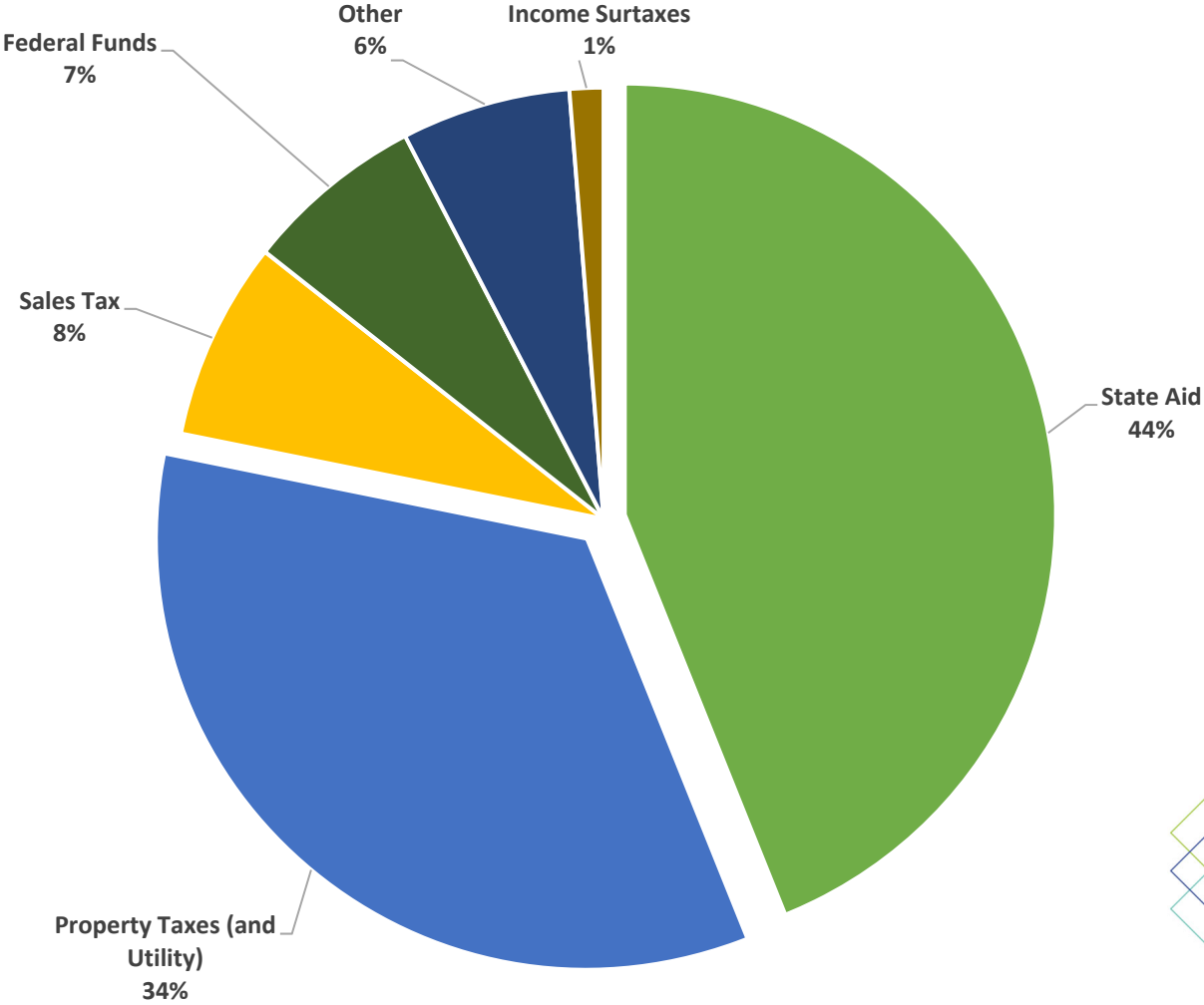
- [SF 2201](#) **SSA 2% Plus signed 2/26**: 1) despite possibilities of zero or 1% SSA discussed last November and December, the Senate agreed to the Governor's 2%. \$7 million for supplemental salary for support staff. Quarterly payments beginning in July.
- Challenges:
  - Second Count Date (January 2027)
  - 199 districts on budget guarantee (state funded to protect taxpayers)
  - 89 districts with less RPDC
  - Next year??????

# State General Fund Revenues



\*Uses data from the Iowa REC March 2026 meeting, CBO Sept 2025 inflation estimates

# FY2025 School Funding in Iowa



■ State Aid ■ Property Taxes (and Utility) ■ Sales Tax ■ Federal Funds ■ Other ■ Income Surtaxes



# Property Taxes Advocacy Impacts (what they didn't do) [H-8495](#)

- No state take-over of property taxes in most of the formula:

- the additional levy
- special ed and media and educational services



- No limitations on management fund taxing authority



- No lowering of PPEL or Debt Levy Maximum voter limits

- No supermajority vote on SAVE bonding

- No second bond issue election date in June



# Property Taxes Uniform Levy

- Sets the school uniform levy at \$5.10 per \$1,000 of net, assessed taxable value, in the school year beginning July 1, 2028.
- Lowers it further, to \$4.90 per \$1,000, for the school year beginning July 1, 2029.
- Sets reorganization and whole grade sharing incentives accordingly.

**Figure 2 — School Finance Property Tax Reduction and General Fund Appropriation Increase (in Millions)**

	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Property Tax Reduction From Decrease in Uniform Levy	\$ -94.8	\$ -99.3	\$ -101.6	\$ -106.1
Increase in General Fund (GF) Appropriation From Decrease in Uniform Levy	\$ 94.8	\$ 99.3	\$ 101.6	\$ 106.1

[Fiscal Note](#) to earlier amendment at \$5.00 Uniform Levy

# Property Taxes SAVE/State Penny

- Extends SAVE through 2071
- Diverts SAVE revenues directly to property taxes:
  - 12.5% in FY 2027
  - 15.0% in FY 2028
  - 17.5% in FY 2029
  - 22.5% in FY 2030
  - 25% in FY 2031+

The Bill as amended is expected to increase SAVE contributions to property tax relief by \$38.9 million in FY 2027, increasing to \$121.4 million in FY 2031. **Figure 3** illustrates the estimated statewide impact of SF 2472 on property tax relief.

**Figure 3 — SAVE Contribution to Property Tax Relief (in Millions)**

Fiscal Year	Current Law	SF 2472 as amended	SF 2472 as amended vs. Current Law
2027	\$ 51.2	\$ 90.1	\$ 38.9
2028	52.7	111.3	58.6
2029	61.8	133.5	71.7
2030	71.7	177.2	105.5
2031	82.3	203.8	121.5

\$39M / 473K kids = \$82/kid  
 Enrollment – continued drop?  
 Sales taxes are up 5.6% through  
 May 4, 2026

Also requires timely reconciliations of  
 SAVE payments to school districts.

# Property Taxes UAB



- Requires school boards to limit unspent authorized budget (UAB or spending authority) to no more than 35% of the school district's authorized expenditures for the school budget year beginning July 1, 2026.
- Also requires school boards to have policies on ranges and maximum UAB.
- Allows (but does not require) SBRC to grant MSA for on-time funding.

# UAB Definitions

- UAB “Maximum Authorized Budget” is the typical calculation we think of (all prior year spending authority plus current year spending authority plus miscellaneous income.)
- UAB “District’s Authorized Expenditures” is the terminology in SF 2472 which references [257.7](#)
- Waiting on confirmation from DOM/DE on implementation.
- ISFIS SitRep on Thursday will talk more about this and share the FY 2026 amendment process (due May 31)

# Definitions in 257.7

## 257.7 Authorized expenditures.

1. *Budgets.* School districts are subject to [chapter 24](#). The authorized expenditures of a school district during a base year shall not exceed the lesser of the budget for that year certified under [section 24.17](#) plus any allowable amendments permitted in [this section](#), or the authorized budget, which is the sum of the combined district cost for that year, the actual miscellaneous income received for that year, and the actual unspent balance from the preceding year.

2. *Budget amendments.* If actual miscellaneous income for a budget year exceeds the anticipated miscellaneous income in the certified budget for that year, or if an unspent balance has not been previously certified, a school district may amend its certified budget.

21 DIVISION \_\_\_\_  
22 SCHOOL DISTRICT UNSPENT BALANCES — ON-TIME FUNDING AND  
23 MODIFIED SUPPLEMENTAL AMOUNTS  
24 Sec. \_\_\_\_ . Section 257.7, Code 2026, is amended by adding the  
25 following new subsection:  
26 NEW SUBSECTION. 3. *Unspent balances.* For school budget  
27 years beginning on or after July 1, 2026, a school district's  
28 actual unspent balance from the preceding year used to  
29 calculate the authorized budget under subsection 1 shall  
30 not exceed an amount equal to thirty-five percent of the  
31 school district's authorized expenditures for the budget year  
32 immediately preceding the base year unless a greater amount  
33 is authorized by the school budget review committee based on  
34 one or more grounds authorized for the approval of a modified  
35 supplemental amount under section 257.31.

The lesser of . . . .

Unless SBRC authorizes a greater amount.

# Property Taxes TIF

- Adds the school the uniform levy to the list of school levies that are exempt from Tax Increment Financing (TIF) diversion, which means that property taxes paid on all property, including property in a TIF district, go to the school district.
- PPEL, debt levy and ISL are already exempt in current Code.
- Exempting the uniform levy should, theoretically, save the state significantly on state foundation aid, or at least offset some of the cost to the state of reducing the uniform levy.
- Limits TIF duration to 20 years (or 23 for slum and blight area)

# Fiscal Note Estimates on TIF/Uniform Levy

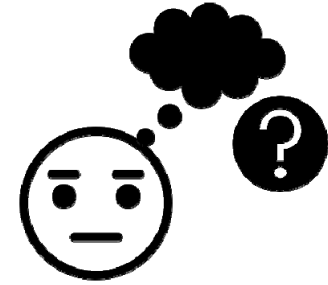
**Figure 6 — Phased Out Tax Increment Financing (in Millions)**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Districts (Current Law)</b>	<b>TIF Revenue (Current Law)</b>	<b>Districts Subject to 60/40</b>	<b>TIF Revenue Retained (60.0%)</b>	<b>TIF Revenue Returned to Tax Base (40.0%)</b>	<b>Estimated General Fund Savings (\$5.40 Backfill)</b>
2027	2,326	234,202,302	1,931	\$151,636,574	\$101,091,049	\$16,837,226
2028	2,187	223,346,701	2,070	\$158,149,934	\$105,433,290	\$17,560,448
2029	2,065	217,760,613	2,192	\$161,501,587	\$107,667,725	\$17,932,605
2030	1,935	204,141,407	2,323	\$169,673,111	\$113,115,407	\$18,839,944
2031	1,796	196,601,690	2,462	\$174,196,941	\$116,131,294	\$19,342,255
2032	1,679	187,819,626	2,578	\$179,466,179	\$119,644,120	\$19,927,334
2033	1,507	173,935,042	2,751	\$187,796,930	\$125,197,953	\$20,852,353

Assumes continued \$5.40 uniform levy. At \$5.00 and \$4.90, it will be less savings.

# Property Taxes

## Homestead Exemption



- New Exemption replaces Credit (current law \$4,850) for assessment years beginning Jan. 1, 2026
  - At least \$5,500
  - 10% of value not to exceed \$20K
  - Maximum grows over time by inflation per DOR
- IC 425.50 Homestead Credit Replacement Funding
  - Local governments (including schools) apply to DOR for replacement funding FY 2028 through FY 2029
  - County treasurer pays to taxing authority, and taxing authority applies amount to each property tax levy that it bears to the total of all tax levies imposed by the local government, excluding the uniform levy.
    - FY 2028 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of all homestead credits
    - FY 2029 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of all homestead credits
- The replacement funding is repealed July 1, 2030.

# Property Taxes Taxpayer Statements



- Rewrites the Code Section on taxpayer statements, effective for July 1, 2027 budgets
- Goal is to simplify, provide taxpayers with their change in property taxes actually due, and in easy-to-understand language.
- Requires DOM to work with the League of Cities and the State Association of Counties to determine how to simplify for taxpayers.
- Allows taxpayer statements to be online rather than mailed.

# HF 2800 Standings Appropriations

- **Nonpublic Transportation:** Freezes nonpublic school transportation at \$8,997,091 (same as 2026 so amounts will be prorated as claims exceed the funded amount).
- **ISL:** Zeroes out Instructional Support Program state funding (same as 2026).
- **Apprenticeships:** Allows the Iowa Department of Workforce Development to keep any carry-forward balances to operate and manage the Iowa Office of Apprenticeship.

# HF 2800 Standings Appropriations

- **AEA Cuts Made Statutory:** Combines the \$7.5 million statutory reduction and the \$25 million that has been reduced in the Standings Bill every year into a \$32.5 million statutory reduction.
- Specifies that, beginning in FY 2028 and subsequent FYs, out of the \$32.5 million reduction, \$10 million is to go to the DE Division for Special Education.
- FYI: Education Appropriations bill also includes \$10 million for that Division but only for FY 2027. Also increases FTEs from 29.5 to 60 for FY 2027.

# HF 2800 Standings Appropriations

- **Private PK Admin:** Fixes an incorrect date in HF 2754 regarding Private PK, beginning July 1, 2026, allowing the private preschools who start programs directly through the Department to use up to 5% for administrative costs of the program.
- **Jr. Fire Fighter Program:** Cleans up language for SF 2086 regarding the certification exam, which is called the Firefighter I certification.
- **Pediatric Cancer Research:** Appropriates \$3 million from the Sports Wagering Fund for pediatric cancer research.
- **Federal Grants and Loans Notification:** Requires notice to the appropriations committee chairs and ranking members for any applications from the executive branch to the feds for \$5 million or more.

# HF 2800 Standings Appropriations

- **AEA State Aid Payments:** Changes payment of state aid to AEAs to be quarterly (matches new cycle for school district payments approved in the SSA bill earlier in the Session).
- **Reorganization and Whole Grade Sharing Incentives:** Extends reorganization and WGS incentives to apply to any reorgs or WGS agreements on or before July 1, 2035.
- **Extracurricular Participation:** Gives State BOE emergency rulemaking authority to implement HF 2591 extracurricular interscholastic eligibility (rules in effect 8/1/26).

# Some Good Things

- **HF 2330 Teacher Prep** – training modules for Special Ed conditionally certified staff + all teacher prep students required to have sped and EL practicums
- **HF 2724 Alt Certification** for Math, Science, Fine Arts, Strat II Sped, Activities Director
- **SF 2299 Repayment for Failure or Drop** of Concurrent Enrollment Courses
- **SF 2320 Modality In-person** for Concurrent Enrollment

# Time to Implement



- HF 2230 BOEE Licensing and Postsecondary Testing 7/27
- HF 2676 MAHA food dyes 7/27
- HF 2678 Charter Schools TSS Impact 7/27
- HF 2670 Social Studies test (7/27)
- SF 2220 TAG, Math Pathways (7/27) and Accelerated Learning (7/27)

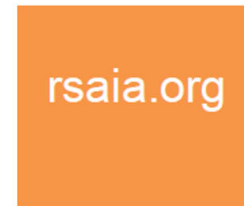
# Themes of Advocacy Impact this Session

- Timelines of implementation
- Concerns about unfunded mandates taking away from educational improvement focus – provide district discretion
- Reduced capacity in SAVE will hurt students and taxpayers (fueled the willingness to extend)
- Collaboration – when the entire education community is united, we have more influence. Can we leverage other voices for influence?
- Safety of Teachers and Students



# Evidence of RSAI Advocacy Influence

In your packet for 2025 and 2026



# Current Priorities Discussion

(see tracking form in your packet and find a notetaker)

**Find the 2026 RSAI Priorities list in the packet or on the RSAI website at:**

<https://www.rsaia.org/2026-legislative-session.html>

1. Are there any that need to be removed for 2027?
2. Any that need to be added?
3. Any significant (or suggested) policy or direction changes on those already on the list?

Small group or whole group discussion. We can go through them one at a time or consider the whole list with one vote. It's up to the attendees to decide how to proceed.



# RSAI Legislative Priorities for 2027

See the RSAI website meeting tab for more information such as RSAI Legislative Digest, Position Papers which will be updated after language is finalized during the process, Legislative Priorities, and this PPT and meeting minutes on the Regional Meeting tab. <http://www.rsaia.org/>

Suggestions and recommendations from the Regional Meeting Attendees will be compiled and shared with the Legislative Committee. Legislative Committee will recommend final priorities for approval by members at the Annual Meeting in October.



# Upcoming Election Cycle & RSAI Advocacy Efforts

**Find the RSAI Election Advocacy Supports on the RSAI website at:**

<https://www.rsaia.org/elections.html>

1. Are there additional supports that would be helpful?
- 2.
- 3.

Small group or whole group discussion.



# Brainstorming/Networking Discussions

Anything else the group would like to discuss?



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR VOICE on behalf of rural students!

- Watch for RSAI Legislative Digest
- RSAI Priority Survey later this Summer
- Stay connected through the Interim
- Let us know what you need to beef up your advocacy efforts.
  - See you in October at the RSAI Annual Meeting!

## **Professional Advocate**

Margaret Buckton, [margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com](mailto:margaret@iowaschoolfinance.com)  
1201 63rd Street, Des Moines, IA 50311 (515) 201-3755 cell

## **Grassroots Advocate**

Dave Daughton, [dave.daughton@rsaia.org](mailto:dave.daughton@rsaia.org)  
(641) 344-5205