



UEN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
February 20, 2026 at Noon
(following UEN Superintendents Meeting at 11am)
Via Zoom (contact jen@iowaschoolfinance.com for link)

Steering Committee Attendees: TJ Schneckloth, Chair (Davenport), Amy Hawkins, Chair-Elect (Dubuque), Jim Vanderloo, Chair Elect II (Sioux City), Cindy Garlock (Cedar Rapids), Patrick Peters (Council Bluffs), Matt Smith (DMPS)
(Bylaws require a majority of charter members for a quorum, and the quorum was met for this meeting.)

Other Members in Attendance: Robert Scott (Burlington), Vickie Murillo (Council Bluffs), Amy Kortemeyer (Linn-Mar), Mike McGrory (Ottumwa), Dirk Halupnik (Southeast Polk), and Brad Buck (Waukee)

Staff/Guest Attendees: Margaret Buckton (ISFIS), Jen Albers (ISFIS)

UEN Purpose Statement:

The Urban Education Network keeps the state's lawmakers, the media, and the public informed about the progress and problems in our state's largest and most diverse schools. The organization does this through advocacy, legislation, communications and research.

The UEN also helps to build capacity in urban education by facilitating connections between member districts to improve student academic performance and narrow achievement gaps, improve professional development; and strengthen leadership, governance, and management.

In addition, joint efforts with other state organizations and policymakers extend the UEN's influence and effectiveness outside member school districts to the broader community that will ultimately benefit from the contributions of today's urban students.

All members of the Urban Education Network help determine program priorities. For guidance, the members rely upon data retrieved from local, state, regional and national sources. In addition, specific issues arise addressing contemporary events, legislative concerns and current trends. The priorities of the UEN continually evolve, reflecting the changing needs of urban students, families and communities.

1. Call to Order and Introductions by TJ Schneckloth (UEN Chair)

Chair Schneckloth called the meeting to order at 12:01 pm. A quorum was present.

2. Action on Agenda

Garlock moved approval of the agenda, seconded by Hawkins. Approved unanimously.

3. Action on Steering Committee Minutes from November 19, 2025

Garlock moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Hawkins. Approved unanimously.

4. Action on FY 2026 YTD Financial Report

Albers presented the FY 2026 YTD Financial Report through January 31, 2026, along with a bill pay listing of items since the last Steering Committee meeting. A motion was made by Garlock and seconded by Smith to approve the YTD Financial Report and Bill Pay Listing as presented. Approved unanimously.

5. Report on Status of 2026 Session & UEN Legislative Priorities

Buckton and the group discussed various legislative actions since the start of Session including specifically around SSA, PPEL and Property Taxes.

6. Discussion/Feedback on UEN Annual Dinner (November 19, 2025 at the Hilton)

Buckton and the group discussed the November 2025 Annual Meeting and dinner including attendance, the program content, and logistics, providing staff with suggestions for 2026.

7. Updates on FY 2027 UEN Transitions

Buckton and Albers shared UEN Superintendent & Steering Committee transitions known at this time for June 30th. Staff will bring proposed leadership for FY 2027 to the Steering Committee at the next meeting and will rotate in a way to ensure continuity.

8. Updates from Steering Committee Members

Steering Committee Members discussed various topics from their local districts including Black History Month celebrations, focus on leadership getting into buildings to interact with students, status of superintendent search for upcoming transitions, and new SIM schools.

9. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

10. Upcoming Meeting Dates - <https://www.uen-ia.org/calendar>

The group reviewed upcoming meeting dates.

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 12:32 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Jen Albers on behalf of Margaret Buckton, UEN Executive Director, 02/20/2026

UEN 2025-26 Steering Committee Members:

- Chair - TJ Schneckloth, Davenport
- Chair-Elect - Amy Hawkins, Dubuque
- Chair-Elect II – Jim Vanderloo, Acting Superintendent, Sioux City
- Past-Chair - Matt Degner, Iowa City
- Board Member - Cindy Garlock, Cedar Rapids
- Board Member - Astor Williams, Waterloo

- Board Member - Patrick Peters, Council Bluffs
- Superintendent –Matt Smith, Des Moines
- Treasurer - Jared Smith, Waterloo

All UEN Member Districts have a vote on matters in front of the Steering Committee.

Upcoming Steering Committee Meeting Dates - <https://www.uen-ia.org/calendar>

- April 24, 2026 - Steering Committee 12-1 via Zoom