



UEN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2025, 1 pm
(following UEN Superintendents Meeting & Joint Lunch at 12:30)
Solution Tree Training Center at 611 5th Avenue, Des Moines
or Via Zoom (contact jen@iowaschoolfinance.com for link)

Steering Committee Attendees: TJ Schneckloth, Chair (Davenport), Amy Hawkins, Chair-Elect (Dubuque), Angela Bemus, Chair Elect II (Sioux City), Matt Degner, Past-Chair (Iowa City)(Via Zoom), Cindy Garlock (Cedar Rapids), Tawana Grover (Cedar Rapids), Patrick Peters (Council Bluffs), Astor Williams (Waterloo)

(Bylaws require a majority of charter members for a quorum, and the quorum was met for this meeting.)

Other Members in Attendance: Erick Pruitt (Ankeny)

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 1:00 pm. A quorum was present.

2. Action on Agenda

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

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

Williams moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Degner. Approved unanimously.

4. Financial Reports

- a. Update on the IRS Form 990 for FYE 06/30/2025
Albers reported that the FY 2025 IRS Form 990 filing has been completed and reminded the committee a draft copy was previously shared via email before filing.
- b. Action on FY 2026 YTD Financial Report & Corporate Sponsors
Albers presented the FY 2026 YTD Financial Report through October 31, 2025, along with a bill pay listing of items since the last Steering Committee meeting.

Albers shared a request from 10 Fold Architecture & Engineering to be new UEN Corporate Sponsors for FY 2026, which was also shared via email prior to this meeting.

A motion was made by Williams and seconded by Peters to approve the YTD Financial Report and Corporate Sponsors as presented. Approved unanimously.

5. Action on 2026 UEN Legislative Priorities

Buckton walked through the proposed 2026 UEN Legislative Priorities and differences between 2025 and 2026. Discussion ensued. The group discussed various talking points for the Issue Briefs. Garlock moved approval of the 2026 UEN Legislative Priorities as proposed. Second by Degner. Approved unanimously.

6. Update on Legislative Interim Actions

Buckton and the group discussed various interim legislative actions.

7. Update on Urban School “Good News” Awareness Campaign

Buckton reported that conversation continues around the contemplated “Good News” Awareness Campaign discussed at the previous two Steering Committee meetings and discussed with the Superintendents, and we will begin to pull together a workgroup to explore further.

8. Update on UEN Annual Dinner – November 19, 2025

- a. Agenda
- b. Networking Conversations
- c. Steering Committee Responsibilities
Buckton shared the agenda, presentation previous, and discussion topics for the evening’s UEN Annual Dinner. Discussion ensued.

9. Updates from Steering Committee Members

Steering Committee Members discussed various topics from their local districts including the Public School Strong initiative, the purpose of board resolutions, bond issues, property taxes and budget guarantee.

10. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

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

The group reviewed upcoming meeting dates.

12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 1:50 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Margaret Buckton, UEN Executive Director, 11/19/2025

UEN 2025-26 Steering Committee Members:

- Chair - TJ Schneckloth, Davenport
- Chair-Elect - Amy Hawkins, Dubuque
- Chair-Elect II –Angela Bemus, Interim 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
- Board Member – Jackie Norris, Des Moines / 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>

- February 20, 2026 - Steering Committee 12-1pm via Zoom
- April 24, 2026 - Steering Committee 12-1 via Zoom