

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

President's Message

AAESA continued on a path of growth and improvement this past year. New state memberships emerged, a bold strategic planning effort was launched, and the transition to a new executive director went smoothly. Our annual conference continues to grow substantially. AAESA is fiscally sound and members received support in a wide variety of ways.

This growth and improvement are the result of the substantial investment of members in the principal activities of the organization. The spirit of volunteerism is inspiring! I am so impressed with the willingness of members to respond to requests for help or to volunteer for major tasks such as planning the annual conference.

The strategic plan will be distributed to members in December. This plan suggests areas of focus for the association for the next few years. I urge you to read the plan, offer suggestions for improvement, and volunteer to serve on one of the action planning committees. Your support will keep our organization dynamic and focused on member needs.

Thank you for your continued support of AAESA.

Dr. Virginia Z. Seccombe
AAESA President
1997-1998

Meetings

1997 Annual Conference *Sailing the Winds of Change*

The December 1996 Annual Conference in Hilton Head, S.C., was the largest ever. Four hundred forty service agency executives, board members, and staff, attended, which represents a 25 percent increase in attendance over last year. Of these participants, one-third were executives, one third staff, and one third board members indicating that AAESA is meeting not only the needs of agency directors, but is becoming the primary national association for all who carry out the mission of service to local school districts.

The LEARN service center in Old Lyme, Conn., directed by AAESA Executive Council member Dr. Virginia Seccombe, planned and hosted this exceptional conference. Sponsorships and exhibitors enabled AAESA to expand the conference while keeping registration fees low.

1997 Leadership Seminar *ESAs: Supporting Local Administration in Times of Conflict*

Executive Council member Mr. Don Stevens, Administrator, Cooperative Education Service Agency #5, chaired this seminar featuring exemplary programs developed by ESAs to support local administrators. Nearly 50 participants heard presentations by: Dr. George Woons, Superintendent of Kent ISD in Grand Rapids, Mich., on team building; Dr. Virginia Seccombe, Executive Director, LEARN, Old Lyme, Conn., on service and leadership; Dr. Robert Cavanaugh, Administrator, Cooperative Education Service Agency #8, Gillett, Wis., on effective relations with boards of education; and Mr. Bruce Hunter, then AAESA Executive Director, on federal legislation. Ninety percent of the evaluations returned indicated the seminar was very successful and should be continued in conjunction with the AASA National Conference on Education.

1997 AAESA Breakfast at the National School Boards Association Convention *Celebrating Educational Service Agency Successes*

Forty AAESA board members and administrators attending the NSBA annual convention in Anaheim, Calif., took advantage of this AAESA-sponsored breakfast to share successes and ideas, and network. The breakfast was hosted by Dr. Virginia Seccombe and Dr. Brian Talbott, Superintendent, Educational Service District 101, Spokane, Wash.,

1997 We Care Legislative Conference

Co-sponsored by AAESA and AASA, the 1997 We Care Legislative Conference served as an excellent forum for the 100 AAESA members who interacted with leaders from Congress, the Department of Education, and other federal agencies. AAESA again coordinated the breakout sessions, which addressed implementation of the e-rate discount, state-level lobbying, welfare reform, and grant writing.

Publications

AAESA produces three publications. *AAESA News* covers issues of national interest to ESA members while the *Bulletin*, a new bimonthly publication, features articles written by members on innovative agency

programs, updates on statewide trends, and career opportunities. The third publication, *Perspectives*, is AAESA's journal reflecting needs, policies, research, and other issues affecting ESAs. Each year, founding editor Dr. William Keane volunteers his professional skills and astute understanding of ESAs to produce this widely read publica-

tion embodying regional service agencies. The 1997 edition of *Perspectives* reflects Dr. Keane's leadership and the expertise of a strong editorial review board.

AAESA thanks Dr. Keane and the editorial review board for volunteering their time and knowledge to the journal.

Awards

AAESA bestowed its 1997 national awards to candidates who excelled in their contributions to ESAs through program development and legislation. The Executive Council, which makes the award selections each year, found it difficult to select winners

from the outstanding pool of candidates. The 1997 award winners will be honored at the annual awards presentation during the 1997 Annual Conference in Monterey, Calif.

The *Justus Prentice Award*, acknowledging contributions through executive leadership in the advancement of regional educational service agency programs, will be presented to Dr. Glen Shaw, former executive director,

Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative, Marshall, Minn.

The *Walter G. Turner Award*, recognizing contributions in the advancement of regional education programs at the regional, state, and/or national levels, will be presented to Dr. Doug Christensen, Commissioner of Education, Nebraska Department of Education, Lincoln, Neb.

Advocacy

Legislation

In January, an ad hoc committee of AAESA Executive Council members and representatives from member agencies met to develop AAESA's third annual legislative agenda. The group visited with key federal policy makers, reviewed recommendations based on background work done by ESA administrators from California and Michigan, examined position papers from other educational groups, and discussed a detailed issues report. The group then developed a

platform of positions on issues affecting ESAs in federal legislation.

AAESA Telecommunications Task Force

ESAs are better situated than any other organization to assist schools and school districts in taking advantage of the federally legislated e-rate discount. To ensure that AAESA members were in communication with the development and governing bodies of the e-rate implementation plan, AAESA established a member task force and network of key technology contacts in member states. Under the direction of then-

member Dr. Brian Talbott, the task force conducted teleconferences to discuss implementation developments, address questions, design responses to implementation developments, and receive updates. The goals of the task force were to:

- Help influence the final regulations for the Telecommunications Act and the specific implementation structure, guidelines, and applications for the e-rate discount, and
- Provide leadership to the states in working with the public utility rules commissions.

Membership

AAESA Celebrates New Members

AAESA celebrates new statewide memberships in Arizona and Massachusetts, which strengthens the collegial national network with an additional 30 agencies. New members were also welcomed from South Carolina, Georgia, and New Jersey.

Bylaw Changes

Currently, the AAESA membership is divided into three regions (East, Central, and West), with the Central region most heavily populated. To accommodate the continued growth of the association, the Executive Council, with member approval,

adjusted the regions to assure equality of representation.

State Leaders

Collaboration with state association leaders represents AAESA's commitment to further strengthen the organization by leveraging the leadership of these emerging state organizations. This year, several states including Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, and Wisconsin have been added to the list of state associations with executive directors. By working together, AAESA can be more responsive and effective at both the state and national levels.

States that have statewide memberships:

Alaska	Kansas	Oregon
Arizona	Kentucky	Pennsylvania
Arkansas	Massachusetts	Texas
California	Michigan	Utah
Colorado	Minnesota	Washington
Connecticut	Nebraska	West Virginia
Illinois	New Jersey	Wisconsin
Iowa	New York	
Indiana	Ohio	

States with individual agency members:

Georgia	South Carolina
Missouri	Wyoming

Budget

AAESA's budget reflects stability in membership and the continuing growth in attendance at the annual conference as well as increased support from the private sector.

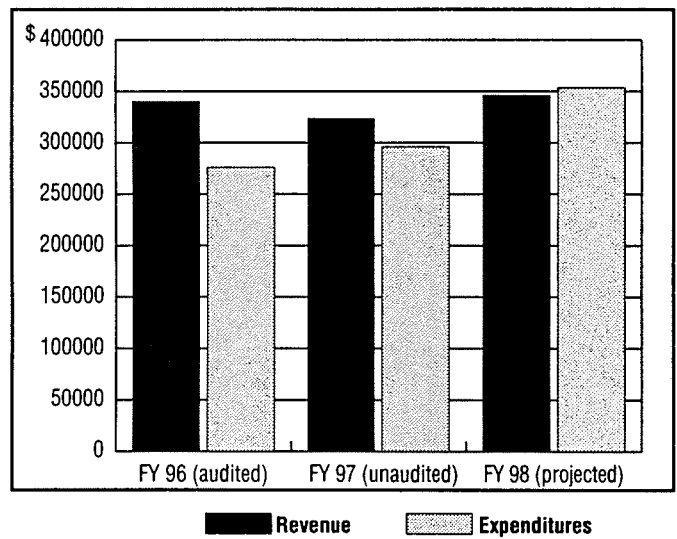
The Area Cooperative Education Service in Hamden, Conn., directed by Peter Young, has expertly served as the fiscal agent for the past two years, producing clear financial records that document and facilitate management of this growth.

The accompanying graphs illustrate that the projected expenditures exceed revenues by \$7,434 in FY98. This does not take into consideration the unaudited projected fund balance of approximately \$90,000 from FY97. The 1998 budget does reflect one-time office equipment upgrades of \$10,000. The executive director anticipates that as a result of the aggressive strategic planning activities that the Council has undertaken, this budget will provide greater flexibility in meeting membership needs.

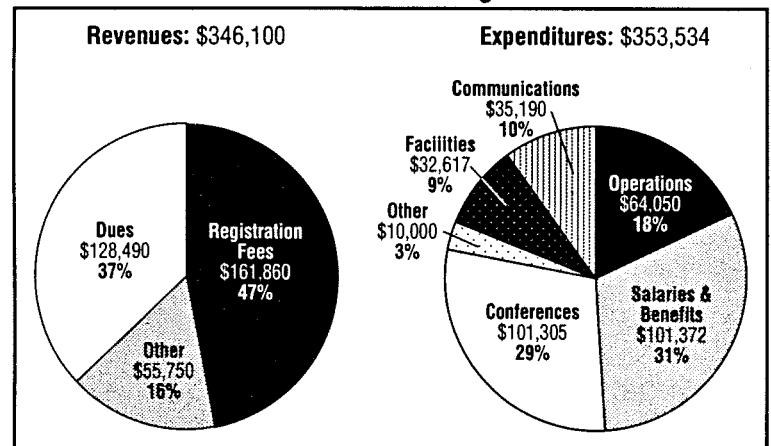
On October 11, the AAESA Executive Council approved the FY98 budget that anticipates revenue to be \$346,100, a 7 percent increase over 1997.

Expenditures in FY98 are projected to be \$353,534. Projected FY98 revenue and expenses are illustrated in the accompanying graph and pie charts.

Annual Revenue for FY96, 97, and FY98



1998 AAESA Budget



Strategic Planning

October 1997, the AAESA Executive Council met to review the mission statement, vision, and strategic priorities of the association. The final strategic initiatives emphasize positioning of the organization to: successfully meet the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse membership; strengthen AAESA's ability to affect education policy through appropriate and effective governmental relations activity; expand AAESA's capacity to provide relevant information and technical assistance to member organizations and partners; develop relationships and partnerships

that promote the vision and agenda of AAESA; and, actively promote and support the role of ESAs in utilization of technology.

Once the initiatives and action areas are accepted, task forces composed of members will be established to carry out the strategic plan.

Business Affiliates

In 1996, AAESA entered into its first business partnership in accordance with two objectives established by the Executive Council: (a) generate revenue streams for the association and its member agencies, and (b) provide information to member agencies on companies, services, and products.

After conducting a comparative viability study, AAESA entered into an agreement in

1996 with the Great American Life Insurance Company (GALIC). This agreement creates opportunities for AAESA member agencies to:

- Generate revenue to improve programs and services for their client districts, and
- Assuring adequate retirement benefits for employees of educational service agencies and local school districts.

Many ESAs across the country are working closely with GALIC to design agreements that best address their needs. As a result, these ESAs have been able to strengthen their retirement plans with GALIC's quality annuity programs and, at the same time, generate additional revenues for their agencies, which they are using to improve services to their member districts.

Who's Who

New Executive Director

AAESA bid a fond farewell to executive director Mr. Bruce Hunter, under whose outstanding guidance and leadership the association experienced unparalleled growth in membership, conference attendance, and

revenues. The Executive Council appointed Dr. Brian Talbott, Superintendent of ESD 101 in Spokane, Washington, as the new executive director. Talbott is recognized nationally for his comprehensive background and innovative leadership.

Executive Council

President

(East Region)

Virginia Secombe
LEARN
Old Lyme, Conn.

President Elect

(Central Region)

Don Stevens
Cooperative Education
Service Agency #5
Portage, Wis.

Past President

(East Region)

Joseph Lagana
Allegheny Intermediate Unit
Pittsburgh, Pa.

East Region

Joseph Marinelli
Wayne/Finger Lakes Board of
Cooperative Education Services
Newark, N.Y.

Craig Stanley
Greater Lawrence Education
Collaborative
Lawrence, Mass.

Central Region

Ronald Dickinson
Area Education Agency 7
Cedar Falls, Iowa

David Distel
Hamilton County
Educational Service Center
Cincinnati, Ohio

West Region

Frank Deebach
Olympic Education Service District
Bremerton, Wash.

Steve Jones
Mountain Board of
Cooperative Education Services
Leadville, Colo.

Wendall Kuykendall
Solano County Office of Education
Fairfield, Calif.

AAESA Staff

Executive Director
Brian Talbott

Director of Operations
Melissa Adkins

Key Volunteers

Fiscal Agent
Peter Young
Area Cooperative Education Services
Hamden, Conn.

Editor, Perspectives
William Keane
University of Michigan
Rochester, Mich.

1998 Schedule of Events

Legislative Meeting
Friday - Saturday, January 16 - 17
Washington, D.C.

Executive Council Meeting
Wednesday, February 25
San Diego, Calif.

Leadership Seminar
Thursday, February 26
San Diego, Calif.

AAESA Breakfast
at the NSBA Conference
Monday, April 6
New Orleans, La.

Executive Council Meeting
May 15 - 16, 1998
Marco Island, Fla.

We Care Legislative Conference
Thursday - Saturday, September 17 - 19
Washington, D.C.

Executive Council Meeting
Wednesday, December 2
Phoenix, Ariz.

Annual Conference
Thursday - Saturday, December 3 - 5
Phoenix, Ariz.

AAESA thanks the Grant Wood Area Education Agency, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for its support in designing and reproducing this report.