



State of AESAs

by

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Thank you President Crozier for your kind words. I can't express often enough my appreciation for your leadership and the outstanding work of the AESAs Council

I also want to recognize two special people who are in attendance today.

- My peer from the Netherlands, Ruud Gorter with EDventure INHOLLAND University. Ruud will you please stand and be recognized?
- Mel Blackwell, Vice-President of the Schools and Libraries Division of the Universal Service Program (known to all of us as E-rate). Since becoming the Vice-president Mel has streamlined and continues to improve on the program. I work with Mel on at least a weekly basis as the Chair of the USAC Board I cannot say enough about his leadership. I also want to recognize Mel for being the 2009 National Association of Media & Technology Centers Partner in Excellence Award winner. Congratulations Mel! Mel will you please stand and be recognized?

I can report to you that AESAs is strong and vibrant even in these tough economic times. Yes, like you, we have had to take steps to do more with less. To this end we have cut expenses wherever possible. We are moving as much as feasible online, including the AESAs News.

We are also restructuring staff hours, while committing to provide you the same level of service.

Our attendance at this conference is down by 20%. However, we are doing much better than other National Education Associations, many of which are seeing drops of 30-50%. I know that a number of you felt this conference was such a valuable asset to your organization and your own professional growth that you are personally paying part or all of your expenses to be here with us. Thank you and thanks to everyone here for making the sacrifices necessary to participate in this conference. I also want to give a thank you to all of the presenters. Even in these tough economic times we had the fewest presenter cancellations ever this year.

AESA has always been a hard working volunteer organization, which is our strength. I want to spend a few minutes sharing what I see as some of our successes and opportunities.

On the success side we should feel good about the work of our Governmental Relations Committee:

- We were included in the Higher Education Act that was passed by Congress this year
- You responded very positively to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) request for comments regarding the i3 Innovation Grants (346 responses)
- We continue to position ESAs in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and will be ready when this piece of legislation moves forward
- E-Rate – you have supported lifting the 2.25 billion cap that Senator Rockefeller is asking for from Congress

All of this happens because of the Governmental Relations Committee's hard work, your efforts, and of course Bruce Hunter, Noelle Ellerson, and Mary Kusler who lead our efforts in D.C. I can't say enough about all of the work this team puts in on our behalf. Especially, Mary Kusler who does our work on Congressional issues, works with US Department of Education, and spends countless hours supporting me as Chair of the Universal Service Administrative Company Board (USAC). Mary will you please stand and be recognized?

Another area I want to address is the changing role of ESAs.

I have spent considerable time traveling the country this year and have witnessed the haves and have not's relating to ESA funding. There are, however, many opportunities and success stories.

- There is no question that most ESAs have lost state money, but many have offset these losses with the expansion of LEA services. Some have gotten significant stimulus money and some are players in their states Race to the Top application. In California for example Sue Burr, the Executive Director of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association has been selected as the Project Manager for California's Race to the Top Application.
- Mergers/Consolidation
- Shared Services – Back office support, purchasing, personnel, insurance, construction, maintenance, transportation are just some of the examples.

Another opportunity and a positive aspect of the work we do is the relationship we have with our business members, sponsors and partners. Without their support we could not have this valuable networking conference.

I want to single out some examples of how our business partners are customizing their work to meet our needs.

Promethean has established an ESA Advisory Group so they can continue to customize their product to meet ESA and LEA needs.

Direct Energy is working with ESAs by helping them in their state to deregulate electricity so our members can offer additional savings to the districts they serve. (CA)

Computer Automation Services, which provides the nation's leading special education management software, provides ESAs the ability to not only manage IEPs, but also seamlessly track and document Medicaid billing, and offer online staff development for your staff and the school districts you serve.

I am very excited about our partnership with Nova Southeastern University. NSU has been working with us to design online Masters and Doctorate Programs in Organizational Leadership customized for ESA members. You can now join a national cohort of ESA colleagues for an online Masters or Doctorate program that addresses the educational and business needs of ESAs including entrepreneurship, non-profit accountability, accreditation, operations, as well as unique techniques for influencing political agendas.

Another opportunity for all of us is our partnership with Great American Financial Resources Discount Benefit Program called MiSolutions. This program includes TelaDoc, VIP's Health & Wellness, Travel Assist, Roadside Assistance, Vision Coverage, Dental Benefits and Prescription Drugs. All of these services are available for \$10 per month for the entire family and can be made available to your ESA, local school districts and your local communities. Full-time, part-time and yes, your volunteers and board members are all eligible for this program.

A longtime sponsor of AESA is Walden University, which provides online courses through the Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership.

We are also very excited about the new programs of TCG Global, which provides native language Mandarin Chinese courses live from Beijing through its distance learning network, which started at an ESA in California.

AESA is exploring customized video streaming through the services of JDL Horizons JDL will be conducting a number of interviews with presenters, AESA leaders, and partners throughout the conference. Those edited interviews and other video will be linked through the AESA website through JDL's EduVision network.

The last Corporate Partner I want to thank today is Grace Global which provides our internet café. More than just an equipment manufacturer, Grace provides technology management and security for ESAs and local districts. This morning, Ron Fielder shared the importance of the commitment that Grace has made to sponsor our Digital Library which is part of the Institute for the Advancement of ESAs. This is a huge commitment from the Grace Foundation. The Digital Library would have cost AESA more than a quarter million dollars on the open market. Thank you Grace Global and the Grace Global Foundation.

I also want to talk a moment about the strong relationship we have with the National Association of Media & Technology Centers (NAMTC) and Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies (AEPA).

I refer to NAMTC as our sister organization. They are always available to support and help AESA. Yesterday, NAMTC provided their members and ours with a very successful Technology Leadership Summit.

With technology on all of our agendas, I want to urge you to support and join NAMTC if you are not already a member. In these tough economic times, if you have to make choices between the various technology organizations, consider NAMTC first.

Our alliance with the Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies (AEPA) is very important to AESA. AESA supports AEPA's mission to cooperatively serve their agency membership through a continuous effort to explore and solve present and future purchasing needs. Their goals include working on your behalf to secure multi-state volume purchasing contracts with benefits that are measurable and cost-effective. If your state is not represented I encourage you to work with AEPA to become involved. AEPA's nationwide cooperative purchasing effort now involves 23 states working together to leverage millions of dollars of purchasing power.

A new opportunity that AESA is in the process of finalizing is an Alliance with the United States Academic Decathlon. The Academic Decathlon is a ten-event scholastic competition that was created to provide individual academic competition. A unique aspect of the Academic Decathlon is that it is designed to include students from all academic abilities from grades nine to twelve. Each nine-member team consists of three "A" (Honor), three "B" (Scholastic) and three "C or below" (Varsity) students. Each student competes in ten events: Economics, Essay, Art, Language and Literature, Math, Music, Science, Social Science and Speech. A new theme of study is developed every year with topics that are relevant, current and challenging. Imagine what this could do for your ESA, region and local schools if we put even half the effort into this opportunity as we do our athletic programs. Talk about positive incentives for students to learn.

Before I finish I want to thank Board Members Si Batista and Tony Hocevar for their work and encouragement in insuring that we have a specific break out session for Board Members in every time slot and for their willingness to host the Board Table Talk at 2:45 tomorrow afternoon. Si & Tony thank you for your leadership.

Lastly, I know that tomorrow is not the time for me to thank the Council for establishing the AESA Technology Award in my name. Sometimes Boards do things and as the Executive Director you are the last to know. This came as a total surprise to me at the spring 2009 Council meeting when they announced the Brian L. Talbott Award. This is a very humbling experience to be included with such great ESA leaders as Justus Prentice, Walt Turner and Bob Stephens. I know that any success I have had is due to the help and support received from others. So I want to say thank you to the past, current and future Council

members who really do the work of this association. I also know that our future rests with how well we utilize technology. The current and future award winners of this award are the true leaders and tomorrow's recipient is at the top of this list.

AESA looks forward to serving and representing you.

Thank you !!!