



State of AESA

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Thank you Joe Crozier for your kind words. I can't express often enough my appreciation for the leadership of the AESA Council and Dee Alarcon, you have done an outstanding job as our president. I want to recognize each of you here today. It is you that have made ESAs and AESA what it is today.

I remember National Meetings in the late '80's, early '90's with only 30-60 people attending. Compare this to where we are today. Please give yourselves a hand.

So, what is our status today? What are our challenges?

- Our role continues to change in these tough economic times. However, like in previous economic downturns, ESAs are growing and expanding services.
 - Yes, we may have lost state/federal dollars
 - But, as local school district budgets shrink, cooperation is the most viable answer and we are seeing significant growth in our cooperative programs.
- The Shared Services model is becoming a reality, especially in rural areas.
- Statewide Networks – WA,WI, IA

Across the nation ESAs are recognized as a vital part of our nation's educational infrastructure.

As we become more resourceful, it is important to take advantage of leveraging the work and products of our business members, sponsors and partners. Without their support we could not accomplish our work.

A special thank you to the following sponsors: CDW-G, The College Board, Edison Learning, JDL Horizons, EduVision, myChinese 360, and Walden University.

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

- Direct Energy, a leading electrical energy supplier, is working with ESAs across the country as deregulation occurs.
- Great American Financial Resources provides the AESA co-branded miSolution discount program and is a leader in personal retirement and financial services for all school district employees. Great American also supports the national Teacher of the Year award and sponsors USA Today's Reading Across the Curriculum.
- Promethean's electronic whiteboard, software, and learning tools help bring to life the promise of 21st Century Learning. Promethean's mission is to create, develop, support and supply technology-enabled education and training environments that unlock the potential of human achievement, improving engagement and increasing the success of

learners and instructors alike. To this end they have established a very active advisory committee made up of ESA leaders to advise them on current and next generation products.

- Marsden Services is a leading facility management company which produces measurable savings with best-in-class cleaning, maintenance, HVAC, and security solutions. What I like about Marsden is while an ESA or local school district wants to outsource the service, Marsden strives to train and use local employees so that the local community has a direct buy in and support for the service.
- The US Academic Decathlon is a unique program initially started in the Orange County Office of Education. It is the premier national scholastic competition for high school students. This year's competition is on the Great Depression. I urge you to support this program started by an ESA. I believe in it so much that I have joined the US Academic Decathlon Board.
- Nova Southeastern University's Fischler School of Education and Human Services is one of the nation's largest accredited Schools of Education. They have established with AESA's assistance a Master's and Doctorate Program in Organizational and Entrepreneurial Leadership customized to ESAs and their constituents. This is an opportunity for you to participate in a national cohort of ESA colleagues. The really good news in the AESA/Nova Cohort gets a 10 % discount. The best recommendation I can give to this program is that I have recommended the program to my own son who is a local district superintendent.
- AESA's newest Business Partner and Sponsor is Corwin Press. Corwin, a division of Sage Publications, just completed the legal due diligence required by AESA. Corwin is an international leader in K-12 and higher education publishing, with content ranging from early childhood, to ELL, special education, counseling, research, online professional development and much more.
- The last corporate partner I want to thank today is Grace Global which provides our internet café. Grace does so much more than just manufacturing equipment by providing technology management and technology security for ESAs and local districts. Yesterday, 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. I now want to share a couple of slides regarding our new searchable website. Our goal is to provide our member agencies with more resources.

In addition to the website, we will soon be launching a companion website of digital archives. The Digital Library and technology platform that supports our needs would have cost us in excess of a million dollars on the open market. Thank you Grace Global, the Grace Global Foundation and the AESA Foundation.

I also want to emphasize the strong relationship we have with 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. They just 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. If you have to make choices between the various technology organizations, consider NAMTC first.

Speaking of NAMTC and all they do, I want to congratulate Geoff Craven as the 2010 NAMTC Brazelman Award recipient and Bob Witten as the NAMTC Partner in Excellence Award recipient. Let's give them a hand!

Our alliance with the Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies (AEPA) is very important to AESA. AESA supports AEPA's mission to cooperatively serve our agency memberships 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 that have measurable benefits, are cost-effective and exceed the expectations of our member states. If your state is not represented I encourage you to work with AEPA to be included in this nationwide cooperative purchasing effort that now involves 23 states working together to leverage millions of dollars of purchasing power.

Speaking of opportunities, in February we will have a special opportunity with the Mid Continental Regional Education Laboratory. McREL is working with AESA on a new series of free webinars entitled, "Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools: How ESAs can Help Low-Performing Schools and Districts." While McREL is our lead partner on this initiative, every laboratory in the country has been invited to participate. A panel of ESA and State Department of Education officials will share their insights and experience about turning around low-performing schools. The first webinar will be Thursday February 24th. We will be sending you information on this exciting new opportunity.

Finally, I want to share that this will be my last year to stand before you as your Executive Director. It is time for Anita and me to thank you for allowing us to share in this dream job. While it's been a terrific ride, it's now time to step back and see what new opportunities life will bring us.

I remember when I accepted this position. I told the Council in Phoenix I would work 3-5 years if the Council felt I was meeting their needs. Well, that was in 1997 and it is now 2010, almost 2011.

I want to thank all past and current Council and Foundation members for their continuous support. I also want to thank our business members, sponsors, and partners for their support.

I want to thank Bill Keane, Hobart Harman and Bob Stephenson for their ongoing support and counsel.

A special thanks to Bruce Hunter and Noelle Ellerson at AASA and Mary Kusler who is now at NEA for their ongoing federal relations support.

Last but certainly not least a thank you to our past and current staff which includes:

- Kari Arfstrom – COSN
- Bill Keane – Editor of Perspectives

- Dyanne Hughes whose timeless commitment makes each of our conferences a huge success.
- The entire AVW team led by Jim “Doc” Irwin, Jim Tomeny, and Al Simon.
- Lee Warne and Lori Fast for all they have done to facilitate and coordinate our general and luncheon sessions.

And today’s staff who I am deeply indebted to for all of the long hours and for taking calls 24/7 from me:

- Dick Moody – Associate Director/Director of Business Relations
- Peter Young – CFO – The Person who really keeps this organization running
- Kelly LaGrutta – For her support with all of our publications
- Geannie Wells – For her work and support of the AESA website and digital library
- Dawne Talbott-Lloyd – Whose English and legal degrees help us keep things moving in the right direction.

To my wife Anita, who stands tall through the worst and best of times, and is always in the background getting the job done. Unfortunately, she was not able to join us this year due to the fact she is recuperating from a bout of Pneumonia. The positive news is that she continues to get stronger every day.

Again, to all of you, thank you for all you do on behalf of education and the districts and students you serve. It has been my great pleasure to be a part of AESA.

Thank you.

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