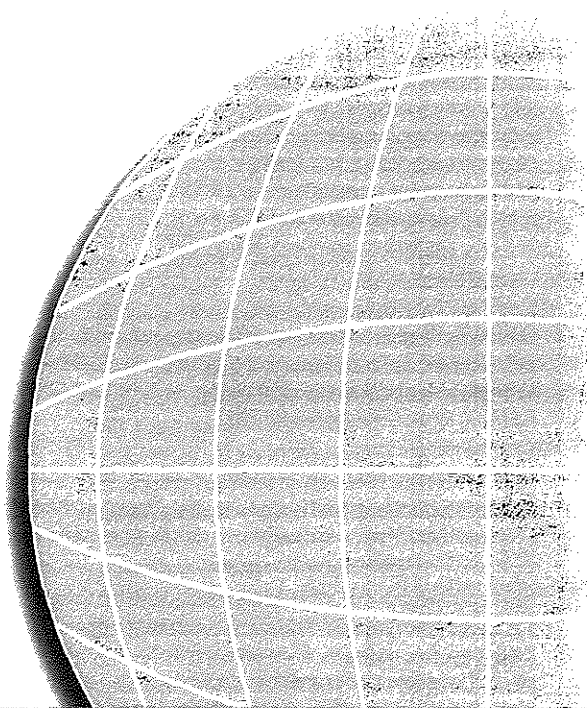


**2007 : FEDERAL
LEGISLATIVE
AGENDA**



**Prepared by the
AESAs Governmental
Relations Committee
January 25, 2007**

**Adopted by the
AESAs Executive Council
February 26, 2007**

Educational Service Agencies (ESAs) provide services and programs to meet the needs of local schools and school districts. Currently, there are 553 ESAs in 44 states. With the recent growth in the demand for services, more people are asking about these public entities, which are playing an ever-increasing role in our public education system. ESAs are public entities created by state statute, to provide educational support programs and services to local schools and school districts within a given geographic area.

The role of ESAs is to provide high quality, cost-effective support programs for local schools and districts. By working cooperatively, districts can share costs and leverage resources rather than fund duplicative programs. This enables local districts to direct more resources to the classroom.

AESA FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS FOR THE 110TH CONGRESS

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

AESA supports the intent of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and encourages a full analysis of the Act and seeks modifications in the Reauthorization, which will strengthen local and regional flexibility and provide adequate federal funding to accomplish the goals of ESEA. AESA believes that appropriate changes to Titles I, II, IV, V, VI, & VII will enhance the overall impact of the ESEA. For a complete list of the goals for ESEA, see the back panel and www.aesa.us.

E-RATE PROGRAM

The E-Rate Program provides important leveraging funds for education technology infrastructure to schools and libraries throughout the country. AESA supports a permanent exemption from the federal Anti-Deficiency Act (ADA) for the Universal Service Fund.

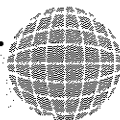
MEDICAID

Medicaid reimbursement is an important part of the support services that ESAs and their LEAs provide to eligible students throughout the country.

HEAD START AND OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The federal government rightly funds numerous early childhood (birth through age five) programs. ESAs often operate these programs on behalf of local communities and/or local school districts. Research demonstrates that quality early childhood education and development programs improve student achievement and close the learning gap, especially for high-poverty children, and are wise investments of public tax dollars.

Because of state constitutions, laws, rules and regulations the names of ESAs vary across the nation. Examples include: Area Education Agency (AEA), Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), Cooperative Education Service Agency (CESA), County Office of Education (COE), Educational Cooperative (EC), Education Service Agency, (ESA), Education Service Center/ Cooperative/Commission (ESC), Education Service District (ESDC), Education Service Unit (ESU), Intermediate Service Center (ISC), Intermediate School District (ISD), Intermediate Unit (IU), Regional Educational Cooperative (REC), Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), Regional Office of Education (ROE), Regional Resource Center (RRC), or Service Cooperative (SC). The common characteristic is the delivery of high quality, cost-effective support programs for local schools and districts.



WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) provides for a one-stop delivery system with employment and training services for job seekers and businesses. As with all aspects of education, WIA should be part of a seamless system of articulation from K-12, adult and post-secondary education, and business connections to strengthen readiness for high school and post-secondary school and/or work.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT (HEA)

ESAs are in a position to assist Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) with technical assistance, professional training, and other services needed by educators to comply with NCLB, IDEA and the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. Many programs within Title II of the HEA could be delivered by ESAs. Data show that instructional programming delivered by ESAs is cost effective.

Many ESAs deliver alternative certification thereby increasing the pool of highly qualified teachers as required in NCLB, IDEA and other federal laws. Delivery of such courses at the local/regional level is vitally important for school districts, especially those in rural areas, where colleges and universities are not in close proximity. It is also crucial for ESAs to assist LEAs in training teachers in critical need areas, such as special education, math and science.

SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES SELF DETERMINATION ACT

AESA recognizes the challenges of school districts located in federal forest counties and urges the continuation of the safety-net legislation to ensure a consistent funding stream for these school districts.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE

AESA supports efforts to provide comprehensive health and mental health care insurance for all children and pregnant women.

AESA'S MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of AESA is to support and strengthen regional educational service agencies by:

- Serving as a national voice for educational service agencies;
 - Providing professional growth opportunities, technical assistance, advocacy and research;
 - Helping member agencies promote, distribute, and leverage their knowledge, products, and services: and
 - Assisting in the establishment of educational service agencies
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OTHER AESA FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

AESA remains committed to the federal government paying its full mandated share of the costs to implement IDEA. AESA supports modifying IDEA to require that the district of residence for IDEA students be responsible for the equitable participation of parentally-placed private school students, as was the case in the 1997 IDEA law.

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CHOICE AND CHARTERS. NOT VOUCHERS OR TUITION TAX CREDITS

Alternatives within the public school system are needed, such as public charters, magnet schools, accommodation schools, and inter-district school choice (open enrollment). Alternative educational systems that have public oversight and conform to state and federal laws and regulations are acceptable. The concept of a tuition tax credit is little more than a modified voucher using public funds to pay for children to attend any private school, including those with discriminatory admissions criteria; provides financial assistance to middle and upper income, rather than low income families; and provides public funding to schools where there is no requirement for oversight and accountability. Tuition tax credits could lead toward a more segregated and segmented educational system that could ultimately have a damaging impact on our democracy.

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SCHOOL SAFETY

ESAs are a critical component of school and community safety efforts. Federal and state funding must be made available to support the coordination and training efforts by ESAs on behalf of their schools and communities.

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QUALIFIED ZONE ACADEMY BONDS

AESA supports the Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB) program, including the expansion of funding to support new construction. Educational Service Agencies should be eligible to receive QZAB funds under the same terms as other LEAs.

level. AESA believes that the federal government should support the directions of the states and local education agencies, including ESAs, in their efforts to achieve high school redesign, including the use of high quality alternative strategies and programs for public high schools.

- AESA supports the right of state and local education agencies to determine the requirements for graduation, including the definition of graduation and/or completion rates for accountability purposes.
- AESA strongly supports a goal of literacy for all students. AESA believes that the ultimate responsibility for determining the appropriate programs and methodology for how literacy should be taught should rest with state and local education agencies.

TITLE II

- AESA strongly supports the right of states to define what constitutes a highly qualified educator.
- ESAs are national leaders in providing alternative licensure and certification, as well as professional development, for educators.
- AESA supports the right of states to determine allowable alternative routes to licensure or certification for educators.
- AESA supports expanded funding for technology, and supports the continued use of a combination of competitive grants and a formula for the distribution of those funds.

TITLE IV

- ESAs are national leaders in both school safety and after-school programs throughout the United States. AESA supports the continuation and expansion of the Safe and Drug Free Schools program and the 21st Century Schools After School Program.
- AESA also supports flexibility in the allowable uses of funds under these programs.

TITLE V

- AESA supports the continued flexibility allowed under the Education Innovative Block Grant Program.

TITLE VI

- AESA supports the Rural Education Achievement Program.

TITLE VII

- AESA supports the continuation of programs dedicated to Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, Native Alaskans, and other native groups.



AESA GOALS FOR THE REAUTHORIZATION OF ESEA:

TITLE I

- AESA supports high standards and a goal of reaching proficiency. However, we believe that it is statistically unlikely that all students will reach a universal level of proficiency by 2014. Proficiency needs to be defined realistically, taking into account the diverse needs of students, including multiple measures of accountability and means of evaluation.
- Given the need to ensure continued American competitiveness in the global economy, the ESEA statute should facilitate a process to develop voluntary model standards that may be used as a resource by states to develop their own standards. This process should include participation by education professionals and other stakeholders.
- States should have flexibility in determining the means of measuring proficiency, including (but not limited to) individual student growth models.
- School improvement requirements and/or sanctions under ESEA should be graduated and targeted to address the needs of groups or subgroups identified as needing improvement.
- IDEA students' achievement should be measured based on the goals established in their individualized education programs (IEPs).
- AESA believes that students with Limited English Proficiency should be appropriately assessed in English proficiency and content areas such as math, science and other subjects specific for that child.
- Supplemental services are a critical tool for increasing student achievement and targeting additional education resources to students in need. ESA's are uniquely positioned to provide cost efficient and high-quality supplemental services to impacted schools and school districts. AESA strongly believes that all supplemental service providers should be publicly accountable and school districts should have maximum flexibility in the use of their supplemental service dollars.
- ESAs are the nation's infrastructure for school improvement. ESAs are uniquely positioned to assist state departments of education, school districts, and schools with school improvement. ESAs should be the primary providers of technical assistance and professional development for school improvement efforts.
- AESA supports redesign of high schools to reflect contemporary educational, social, and economic conditions at the state and local

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