



Online News

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AESA Online News

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AESA News

1. Appropriations, education reauthorization sessions at ECA Conference Sept 15-17

Concurrent sessions on appropriations funding for federal education programs, reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also known as No Child Left Behind), and reauthorization of other federal education laws such as the Higher Education Act and E-Rate will highlight the AESA Educators' Call to Action Conference, September 15-17.

The conference will also include general sessions on US Supreme Court and district courts decisions relating to education and a review of the effectiveness of AESA and other organizations involved in the Education Coalition of National Associates advocacy programs in recent legislative actions.

The conference is designed with morning sessions, leaving the afternoons open for ESAs to schedule meetings with their US Senators and Members of Congress. The conference will be at the Arlington Residence Court Hotel (ARC) in Arlington, VA. Conference information, including online registration, is available on the AESA website at:

www.aesa.us

2. 100 ESA led concurrent sessions highlight 2008 Annual Conference Dec 3-6

The 2008 AESA Annual Conference at Phoenix on December 3-6 will feature 100 concurrent sessions presented by ESAs from across the United States and Europe. The sessions are grouped in five strands on Thursday through Saturday, December 4, 5, and 6. The stands, and number of sessions in each, are: Delivering Success, 26; Demonstrating Results, 13; Measuring Success, 26; Technology: Transforming Learning, 17; and, Tools for Collaboration, 18.

In addition, the National Association of Media and Technology Centers will provide the pre-conference event by hosting its 10th NAMTC Leadership Summit on December 2 and 3 at Phoenix (see next article for details).

For more information on the conference, including online registration, go to the AESA website at: www.aesa.us

3. 10th NAMTC Leadership Summit preconference at Phoenix, Dec. 2-3

The National Association of Media and Technology Centers will conduct its 10th Leadership Summit on December 2 and 3 as a preconference at the 2008 AESA Annual Conference. Most NAMTC members are employees of ESAs. The Leadership summit includes both technical and practical sessions, including "Sandbags to Solutions" by Grant Wood Area Education Agency 10 of Cedar Rapids, Iowa about how it kept services going and provided support to affected staff during the June floods. Also speaking is Microsoft's research principal program manager, discussing the latest developments from Microsoft and their implications for education.

AESA encourages those planning to attend the 2008 Annual Conference to include the 10th NAMTC Leadership Summit in their schedule, and to have the NAMTC members continue attendance through the conference in order to leverage the professional development opportunities of integrating the content of both events in their agency planning and operations.

Registration may be made in conjunction with the AESA Annual Conference using the AESA online registration form at www.aesa.us or by downloading a pdf from the Links & Resources tab at www.namtc.org. Registration fees for the Summit will be \$200.00.

AESA Business Partner Announcements

4. New IRS HR regulations begin January 1: Is your ESA ready?

The IRS has mandated changes to the administration of tax sheltered individual annuity 403(b) and deferred compensation 457 plans effective January 1, 2009. The AESA and Great American Plan Administrators, a subsidiary of AESA Business Partner Great American Financial Resources®, are announcing a program for ESAs and the school districts they serve to provide no cost plan administration of these programs for all staff from the CEO to classified employees that will meet the IRS mandated changes.

This no cost solution relieves your ESA and school districts of the time and costs associated with plan administration. GA Plan's services include administration of: plan document adoption and revisions when necessary, participant education, form development, annual eligibility notices, hardship withdrawals, information sharing agreements, maximum contribution monitoring, loans, QDROs (divorce settlements), transfers and exchanges, and withdrawals. The no cost plan is available nationwide except Texas as required by law. Compliance services are available in Texas for a nominal fee.

For ESAs or local school districts submitting paper transactions for 403(b) or 457 programs, GA Plan will also provide technical assistance to move this process to an electronic transfer system, saving time and ensuring accuracy through customized reporting, allocation changes, name changes and billing. Website access keeps you up to date on compliance issues and provides participants with financial product education and retirement planning calculators.

The program offers full compliance with the mandated changes, at no charge, regardless of the program providers through the third party plan administration of Great American Plan Administrators.

Great American Plan Administrators is a wholly owned subsidiary of Great American Financial Resources (GAFRI) whose parent company is American Financial Group (AFG). Great American Financial Resources subsidiaries also include a fixed and variable annuity company as well as several other companies. Great American Plan Administrators, as required by law, maintains a separate program staffing, financial, and records keeping from Great American Financial Resources and its other subsidiaries. Its reporting structure to GAFRI is through the legal department to ensure full compliance with these guidelines. In addition, it ensures data separation from GAFRI and its other subsidiaries by maintaining its program on separate servers and a separate network.

For more information:

- Visit the AESA/Great American Plan program website at: <http://www.gaplandata.com/aesa.asp>
- View a three-minute web-based video describing the program at:
<http://new.gafri.com/publicsite/swf/asea/player.html>
- Send an email requesting information to: AESAGAPLAN@gafri.com
- Contact Lana Woodring, Great American Plan Administrators, (800) 695-1471, ext. 11761.

AESA Business Member Announcements

5. TERC launches ESA data training program for identifying local interventions

TERC, an AESA Business Member, will launch its “Using Data Work session Series” this fall as an integral part of its national Educational Service Agency program for local school districts. Using Data is a program of TERC that trains classroom teachers in a data analysis process designed to improve student learning that is not vendor-specific.

“When teacher data teams work together to identify needs, they own the problem and they own the solution, “ said Jake Schlumpf, TERC director of the Using Data Education and Business Alliances. Schlumpf, a former ESA technology director and classroom science teacher, said the ownership of the problem and the solution at the classroom level differentiates Using Data from other programs. “Ownership at that level is a critical formula for sustaining success,” he said.

Teachers on Using Data teams take a deep look at their data, develop the capacity to make informed collaborative inferences about learning problems, and then confirm causes for the problems through research. The Using Data process puts each district’s service organizations at the table, taking part in the process as members of the district data teams. Service organizations identified by the school district, including ESAs, are present as the districts look at their data, identify needs, and craft targeted interventions to address those needs. Participating service organizations will develop the capacity to match or craft interventions based on those teacher identified learning needs, including professional development or curriculum resources.

TERC, an educational nonprofit organization from Cambridge, MA, states that evaluation of the Using Data process has documented that participating school districts have increased student achievement and have saved time and money by targeting exact problems with teacher supported solutions. TERC teamed with the National Science Foundation and other educational institutions over a five-year period of research, field tests, and contracted engagements with foundations, states, educational service agencies, and school districts to develop the Using Data process.

For more information contact Jake Schlumpf at 617 547-0430, ext 648, email jake_schlumpf@terc.edu or visit the Using Data website at: www.usingdata.terc.edu .

US Department of Education Announcements

6. What Works Clearinghouse releases three new intervention reports

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), has released three new intervention reports this week. These latest publications focus on interventions for early childhood education, middle school math, and dropout prevention. The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) was established in 2002 by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with a central and trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education.

Breakthrough to Literacy is a curriculum for students in preschool through third grade that introduces them to a book-a-week throughout the year. The book serves as a focal point for classroom activities with whole group and small group instruction. The curriculum also offers independent learning activities, including computer-based instruction, that allow students to progress at their own pace. Read the WWC's *Breakthrough to Literacy* intervention report at: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/early_ed/btl/

Mathematics in Context is a middle school mathematics curriculum for grades 5 through 8. The curriculum teaches students to explore the relationships among different domains of mathematics (such as algebra and geometry) and to develop strategies for reasoning through problems, encouraging students to collaborate on problem solving. The WWC's *Mathematics in Context* intervention report is available at: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/middle_math/math_context/

The *New Century High Schools Initiative* is a program designed to improve large, underperforming high schools by transforming them into small schools with links to community organizations. The schools choose a curriculum that has a theme or career focus, such as engineering, health science, or theater. Each school partners with a community organization that can participate in curriculum development, school management, after-school activities, or other operational aspects of the school. To read the WWC's intervention report on the *New Century High Schools Initiative* go to: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/dropout/new_century/

Other reports and information from the What Works Clearinghouse are available at: <http://www.whatworks.ed.gov/>