

AESA NEWS

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Association of Educational Service Agencies

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Creating and maintaining the value of AESA in a sea of change

The only thing constant in our world today is change. Educational service agency (ESA) leaders know only too well how that “constant” applies to our respective organizations. We’re navigating a challenging sea of changes in the state governance of ESAs, cuts in funding, increased need for ESA entrepreneurship, increased academic standards for students, accountability for ESAs and member districts, more mandates, emergency preparedness and Homeland Security, technology’s role in instructional improvement and others too numerous to mention. All are affecting what we do and how we do it. For some, there is increased unpredictability, instability and uncertainty about the future as they chart new courses in order to maintain the vitality and strength of their agencies. This leaves them feeling vulnerable and concerned about viability.

What does this sea of change mean for AESA? Our organization’s mission 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 services agencies*” is the ballast on our ship and will assure its stability as long as we effectively navigate.

This requires the constant monitoring of this sea of change and providing for an open stream of feedback on what we do, or propose to do, in order to create and maintain this organization’s value to its members. That primary responsibility rests with those you have elected to the AESA executive council.

Role of Leadership

The leaders of your association must lay out a clear vision, one that encompasses appreciation and understanding of the values, expectations, needs and anxieties of our

members; it should be a vision with a clear, strategic direction reflecting optimism about the future of ESAs, their critical role in American education today and the role AESA will play in realizing this future. To this end, the council has established an annual May planning event. To increase the meaningfulness of that event, the council seeks to increase the number of opportunities to solicit membership input and participation in the dialogue. The truth is, we are an ambitious organization with a wealth of ideas on how to create value for members, but one which begs for a way to increase our capacity to be responsive to the membership. The summer CEO conference and the national conference in December present annual opportunities to conduct market and member research as we scan our environment. Between those meetings we can use technology on a regular basis to gather data about your organizations and your opinions. The executive council will review the data and then add value to it by setting directions, conducting oversight, reviewing progress and measuring results. In the past we have relied primarily on workgroups of the council to carry out strategic initiatives with very capable, but limited staff support. Now we will have all on board as we move toward our destination.

Priorities

We have identified three priority areas within which our initiatives and ideas tend to cluster and which have been the focus of our energy—federal relations, member services and business partnerships. Last year the council recognized that the initiative to enhance our federal advocacy had created an ongoing need for the existing Governmental



Written by AESA president, Joe Marinelli.

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AESA members reap the benefits of electronic procurement tools

AESA member organizations have recognized the benefits of electronic procurement tools to save time and money in operating their cooperative purchasing programs for over three years. Electronic purchasing and bidding tools have helped to control their organization's spending, automate their manual and paper-intensive processes and facilitate strategic sourcing—which means that despite today's declining budgets, dollars are being saved through the use of electronic sealed bidding and automated purchasing processes.

Additionally, e-procurement solutions are being used by ESAs as a means to generate new revenue opportunities. These same e-procurement solutions and processes that save time and money can also provide value-added services to your constituencies. Services such as cooperative bidding, cooperative buying, contract compliance, on-line catalog access, robust workflow, and automated processes can be cost-effectively provided by ESAs to their constituent organizations. In many cases, these value added services can be used to support or enhance constituent fees.

As a result, AESA has continued to monitor the e-procurement market and the K-12 e-procurement solution providers. Last fall, after completing an extensive due diligence process, AESA entered into a business partnership with eSchoolMall (www.eschoolmall.com), the market share leader in on-line procurement solutions for K-12 schools. Now, AESA has expanded our relationship with eSchoolMall to include private label versions of their easyPurchase™ electronic purchasing solution and their easyBid™ automated sealed bidding engine. Because of this expanded relationship, AESA member organizations will benefit from the power of electronic procurement with special AESA packaging and special AESA pricing.

eSchoolMall's easyBid and easyPurchase software provides a complete procurement solution that elevates the buying power of ESAs and their constituent school districts. Under this newly enhanced agreement, eSchoolMall will offer AESA members a substantially discounted price for each of these solutions. AESA members and their constituents will benefit from this relationship as they move from a primarily paper based and time consuming manual procurement process to these new AESA branded solutions and eSchoolMall's efficient and cost effective e-procurement process for securing the goods and services they need to operate their schools. These new AESA branded solutions will allow ESAs to provide value-added electronic procurement services.

The AESA branded versions of easyPurchase and easyBid are configured and supported by eSchoolMall and its professional services organization. These tools are delivered over the Web—you need only a Web browser and Internet access to harness the power of e-procurement for your agency and constituents.

For more information or to schedule a demo, please contact Mike Winkler at eSchoolMall. Mike can be reached by phone at (877) 969-7246 x208, or by e-mail at mwinkler@eschoolmall.com.

Spirit of exploration and discovery: opportunities for ESAs

Discover... Attend the AESA 2003 Annual Conference, Exhibition & Showcase on December 3-6, 2003, in Marco Island, Florida. This is the only national conference that is dedicated entirely to service agencies and their roles with customer districts, state agencies, and federal agencies.

With No Child Left Behind and the increased demand to improve student achievement and ensure accountability, opportunities for ESAs to be leaders of innovation are greater than ever. Through individual efforts and collaboration among entities, the need for ESA involvement is increasingly evident. Seize this opportunity to learn about model programs and ESA successes and innovation.

The 2003 annual conference will go a long way toward helping ESAs meet future challenges, whether they include academic help for students, staff training, transforming learning through technology, leadership, or special issues

and changing federal policies.

Experience... This year's conference features thought-provoking addresses by distinguished professionals whose works have greatly impacted education. Don't miss Dr. Peter Bishop, futures researcher; Dr. Chauncey Veatch, 2002 national teacher of the year; or Dr. Ted Stilwell, director of Iowa State Department of Education.

And, be sure to register for the Thursday night event—the entertainment highlight of the conference! Purchase tickets now for this memorable special evening of fine Italian cuisine and nationally recognized entertainment.

Attend... Go to www.aesa.us to register on-line, find hotel reservation and travel information, see conference activities and highlights, view the conference schedule, and check the most up-to-date conference information.

Choose to leverage your resources...to receive a return on your investment...to make a difference.

Navigating the sea of change (continued from page 1)

Relations Committee to become a standing committee. Now we hope to increase the participation of members by creating workgroups of both council and other association members for the member services and business partnership priorities. The relevance of these priority area workgroups, each headed up by a council member, depends upon the expertise provided by your participation. Soon the council will be asked to formalize these priorities by creating a standing committee for each. These committees will meet at our annual conferences and on-line to carry out the organization's agenda.

Agenda for 2003-2004

Based on its May planning retreat, the executive council established an ambitious agenda of objectives which are listed here. In future issues of this newsletter each will be addressed and detailed.

Membership services

- Improve the linkage between ESAs through regional networking opportunities.
- Expand the pool of qualified candidates for ESA CEO positions.
- Promote research and development on key issues affecting ESAs.
- Support new and emerging ESAs.
- Connect individuals in similar positions across ESAs

to assist in effective implementation of NCLB.

- Address development needs of ESA board members.

Business partnerships

- Establish a standing committee for our ongoing and growing business partnerships to include parameters, operations, functions and guidelines.
- Explore the marketing of individual ESA business products by AESA.
- Explore partnerships with other national associations.

Federal relations

- Achieve participation of all states on the Governmental Relations Committee.
- Establish an annual cycle of governmental relations activities capitalizing on AESA's federal advocacy conference and annual conference.
- Match AESA members with members of congress and USDOE key staff to increase out effectiveness.

Summary

The leadership of this organization is committed to creating and maintaining value to you and your agencies as we navigate through the sea of change. We are creating expanded opportunities for your input and participation in mapping out and implementing strategic direction.

Working together we can hoist the sails that will carry us on a successful journey into the future.

Register now for federal advocacy conference

Attend AESA's Educators' Call to Action: Federal Advocacy Conference; Wednesday – Friday, September 10-12, 2003.

AESA's federal advocacy conference is an important opportunity for you to explore the hot issues being discussed on Capitol Hill and speak directly with your senators and representatives about the issues that are important in your agency and local districts. The conference is strategically timed so that you will be on the Hill just before final decisions about education funding are made. This year is especially critical as it will be the time that the appropriations are made by Congress for key educational issues. We also will have the opportunity to work with the U.S. Department of Education on funding and implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

This conference is intended for superintendents/executive directors (of both service agencies and districts); board members, federal/state program directors; directors of curriculum, or special education, or vocational education; and other educators with an interest in federal legislation.

The conference kicks off with a welcome reception on Wednesday. Thursday starts with breakfast and an overview of the conference, followed by a general session on NCLB and ESAs. Break-out sessions will follow on topics including IDEA/special education, Head Start, Perkins's Vocational Education, and Higher Education. Box lunches will be available to take with you to the Hill. ***Please make your appointments with members of Congress prior to traveling to DC.*** Friday will include breakfast with a review of Hill activities. Susan Sclafani, AESA's liaison at the Department of Education and counselor to Secretary Paige, will provide an overview followed by key department staff talking about current programs. Next, a panel of educators discussing successful practices related to implementation of NCLB will be followed by lunch and wrap up.

All activities, other than appointments with senators and representatives, will take place at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill conveniently located on Capitol Hill. Please make your hotel reservations prior to August 10 by calling (800) 233-1234. Mention you are attending the AESA Educators' Call to Action conference to receive the special conference room rate of \$180 single/\$205 double. To register, review the agenda, read more about transportation options or to download a brochure, please go to www.aesa.us.

Calendar of events

Award nomination packets due August 22

Nominations for AESA's national awards program are due August 22, 2003. Nominate your outstanding colleagues and associates for one of three distinctions: Justus A Prentice Award, Walter G. Turner Award, or E. Robert Stephens Award. For nomination packets and information, please go to www.aesa.us.

Educator's Call to Action Legislative Conference

Wednesday, September 10 - Friday, September 12, 2003
Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill
400 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington D.C.
To register: www.aesa.us
For hotel reservations call (800) 233-1234

AESA Annual Conference and Exposition

Wednesday, December 3 - Saturday, December 6, 2003
Marco Island Marriott Resort, Marco Island, Florida
To register: www.aesa.us

For hotel reservations call either hotel listed below and request a reservation in the AESA room block:

Marco Island Marriott Resort (conference host hotel)
(800) 438-4373 or 800-GET-THERE; or

Hilton Marco Island (a few doors down the beach)
(800) 455-8667 or 800-HILTONS or direct (239) 394-5000

A note about room cancellations: Please reserve only the number of rooms your agency will need for these events. You are responsible for making and (if you must) canceling your own hotel room(s). Even if you cancel your room(s) within the hotel's stated policy, AESA is required to pay for any rooms that are not resold because those rooms are part of the AESA guaranteed room block. Therefore, AESA will bill any agency or individual who has reserved a room in the block and cancels after the AESA-designated cancellation date, unless the room is resold.

AESA has a new address. Please remember to update your records.

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