



Pre-Conference



Wednesday, September 25 *Congressional B - Lobby Level*

1:00 pm **Welcome and Introductions** **Noelle Ellerson Ng**
AESAs Gov't Relations

Tara Thomas
AESAs Policy Analyst

1:15 pm **State Education Policy Trends & Working with State Boards of Education** **Paolo DeMaria**
NASBE President & CEO

Stay updated on key state education policy trends and learn effective strategies for collaborating with State Boards of Education.

2:00 pm **State Budget Trends & Working Effectively with State Budget Officials** **Kathryn White**
NASBO Director of Budget Process Studies

Discover practical approaches for working effectively with state budget officials to secure funding for educational initiatives.

2:45 pm **Panel Discussion of Advocacy Success Stories** **Panelists:**

A diverse panel of education stakeholders will share the strategies and tactics used to advance successful advocacy campaigns at the local and state levels from their various perspectives as lobbyists, statewide association directors, and superintendents/CEOs.

Melissa Gombosky
Gombosky Public Affairs and WAESD Lobbyist

Anne Kilzer
Minnesota Service Cooperatives Exec. Dir.

Dave Larson
Miami County ESC Superintendent

3:30 pm **Mastering the Elevator Speech & Pivot** **Craig Burford**
Ohio ESC Association Executive Director

This session offers a practical framework for crafting effective elevator pitches and in-meeting tools, empowering attendees to concisely present ideas to policymakers and key stakeholders while keeping conversations on task and relevant.

Noelle Ellerson Ng
AESAs Gov't Relations

Tara Thomas
AESAs Policy Analyst

Speaker Bios

Paolo DeMaria

President & CEO, National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)
Paolo.demaria@nasbe.org

Bio: Paolo DeMaria is the president and CEO of the National Association of State Boards of Education and former State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Ohio. His proudest achievement was the collaborative development of Ohio's strategic education plan, *Each Child, Our Future*. During his tenure, he focused on improving literacy, promoting a whole-child framework, enhancing teacher excellence, and advancing equity. DeMaria previously served as Ohio's budget director, chief policy advisor to Gov. Bob Taft, and executive vice chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education. A native of West Virginia, he holds a B.A. from Furman University and an M.P.A. from Ohio State University.

Kathryn White

Director of Budget Process Studies, National Association of State Budget Officers
kwhite@nasbo.org

Bio: Kathryn Vesey White is the Director of Budget Process Studies at NASBO, where she tracks changes in budget practices and authors the *Fiscal Survey of States* report. She also monitors state budget developments in K-12 education, higher education, and economic development, and researches the use of performance data in state budgeting. Before joining NASBO, White was a research associate at The George Washington University Regulatory Studies Center and worked with Deloitte's federal consulting practice. She holds a B.A. in English from Georgetown University and a Master of Public Policy from George Washington University.

Melissa Gombosky

Principal Lobbyist, Gombosky Public Affairs
Lobbyist, Washington Association of Educational Service Districts
MelissaGombosky@gmail.com

Bio: Melissa Gombosky is the principal lobbyist and owner of Gombosky Public Affairs. Melissa's bipartisan approach to advocacy before the Washington State Legislature and Office of the Governor has resulted in public policy improvements for her clients. Prior to her lobbying work, Melissa worked for the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America. She is a graduate of Whitworth University and a former English teacher.

Dave Larson

Superintendent, Miami County Educational Service Center
david.larson@miami.k12.oh.us

Bio: Dave Larson serves as the superintendent of the Miami County ESC in Troy, Ohio. Mr. Larson provides support to school districts throughout Miami County. Before serving as the superintendent for MCESC, Mr. Larson served as the assistant superintendent for Piqua City Schools and the superintendent of Covington Exempted Village Schools, two districts in Miami County. Dave has been active in state-level association activities through the Ohio ESC Association (OESCA) and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA), serving on OESCA's Critical Issues Committee and as an officer and President (2022-2023).

Speaker Bios (continued)

Anne Kilzer

Executive Director, Minnesota Service Cooperatives
david.larson@miami.k12.oh.us

Bio: Anne Kilzer is the Executive Director of the Minnesota Service Cooperatives. This position was created in 2022 to help shepherd the collective statewide work of the nine individual service cooperatives and serve as a single point of contact for external partners. Anne's career has been rooted in public sector policy and partnerships; prior to MSC, she worked for elected officials of the Minnesota federal delegation in both Washington DC and Minnesota and then was the Workforce, Economic Development, and Housing Policy Analyst for the Association of Minnesota Counties. She lives in Southwest Minneapolis with her husband Tom and her daughters Chloe (5th grade) and Audrey (1st grade).

Craig Burford

Executive Director, Ohio Educational Service Center Association
Consultant, Association of Educational Service Agencies
burford@oesca.org

Bio: Craig Burford is the Executive Director of OESCA where he manages the association's operations and spearheads policy development and lobbying efforts through its grassroots network. He collaborated with AESA to establish state advocacy support and continues to write for the *State Examiner*, a monthly online publication that offers a nationwide perspective on state-by-state legislative issues and trends, along with practical tips to empower AESA members as education advocates. Additionally, he has developed a series of virtual and in-person workshops designed to help ESAs enhance their advocacy efforts within their respective states.

Noelle Ellerson Ng

Associate Executive Director of Advocacy & Governance, AASA, The School Superintendents Association and Association of Educational Service Agencies
nellerson@aasa.org

Bio: Noelle Ellerson Ng joined AASA in 2007 as a policy analyst and now serves as associate executive director. She leads AASA's advocacy efforts with Congress and the U.S. Department of Education, oversees the organization's research and policy analysis, manages governance work including support for the executive committee and board, and supervises the AASA Student and Child Privacy Center. Ellerson Ng frequently speaks on federal education policy and previously worked as a high school special education teacher and in state-level advocacy for the College Board.

Tara Thomas

Policy Analyst, AASA, The School Superintendents Association and Association of Educational Service Agencies
tthomas@aasa.org

Bio: Tara Thomas actively monitors, evaluates, and influences legislative and regulatory actions at the federal government level, ensuring that AASA's interests are represented and advocated effectively. In addition to her advocacy work, she oversees and maintains AASA's policy analysis and research efforts, providing crucial insights and data that inform decision-making and strategy within the organization.



Join us for tonight's **Welcome Reception**, sponsored by **Guardian School Security Systems**, in the **Thornton Room (11th Floor)** from **5:00-6:30 pm**.

Notes



WiFi Code

Network: HYATT-MEETING
Password: AESA2024

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