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John Bass Honored with 2025 AESA Exemplary Service Award

Ripon, WI – The Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESAs) is proud to announce that John Bass, former AESA Chief Operating Officer and current Senior Advisor, has been named the recipient of the 2025 AESA Exemplary Service Award. This prestigious honor recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to advancing the mission of educational service agencies (ESAs) at the regional, state, and national levels.

With more than 40 years of service in public education, John Bass has left an indelible mark on the ESA community. His career spans roles as a superintendent, principal, teacher, and executive director of Region 16 Education Service Center in Amarillo, Texas, where he led initiatives that supported over 60 school districts across the Texas Panhandle.

Since joining AESA in 2015, Bass has played a pivotal role in shaping the organization’s strategic direction, strengthening its operational foundation, and mentoring emerging leaders. He led the Executives in Residence program and brought rigor and transparency to AESA’s business partner evaluation process ensuring alignment with AESA’s values and goals.

Affectionately known as AESA’s “champion on the road,” Bass built personal relationships with members across the country, becoming a cornerstone of AESA’s member experience. His presence—whether in person or on Zoom—brought a human touch to strategic planning, member services, and national leadership.

“John has been instrumental in shaping AESA’s strategic path forward, guiding the organization with wisdom, integrity, and a deep commitment to the mission of ESAs across the country,” said Joan Wade, AESA Executive Director.

The AESA Exemplary Service Award is one of the organization’s highest honors, recognizing individuals whose careers reflect the values and vision of the ESA community.

For more information about the AESA Exemplary Service Award and past recipients, visit: www.aesa.us/exemplary-service-award

Contact:

Claire Sowder
Director of Communications & Marketing
515-979-0392
csowder@aesaus