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AESA Honors Jenna Cooper and Darlene Kennedy for Advancing Student Data Privacy Across Indiana

National award recognizes collaborative leadership behind statewide Student Data Privacy Consortium initiative.

October 7, 2026 – The Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESAs) has named Jenna Cooper, Director of Technology & Innovation at Central Indiana Educational Service Center, and Darlene Kennedy, CETL, Director of Technology Integration at Northern Indiana Educational Service Center, as the recipients of the 2026 Exemplary Service and Innovation for Technological Advancement Award.

The award recognizes their leadership in developing the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) Indiana Alliance, a statewide initiative that helps Indiana schools strengthen student data privacy while simplifying data privacy agreements between school districts and technology vendors. Through the Educational Service Centers of Indiana, Cooper and Kennedy helped create a shared system using the Access 4 Learning framework. All nine Indiana Educational Service Centers participate, providing districts with shared resources, training and a more standardized approach to managing student data privacy.

Rather than requiring individual districts to navigate increasingly complex privacy and vendor agreements independently, the alliance creates statewide capacity that allows schools to learn from and build upon one another's work. Participating districts receive access to training covering data privacy fundamentals and data privacy agreement workflows, along with resources designed to support implementation.

"Your work demonstrates how technology, when paired with collaboration and a clear commitment to students, can build trust, strengthen accountability, and improve school operations across an entire state," Joan Wade, Ed.D., AESA Executive Director, wrote in notifying the recipients of their selection.

The initiative also illustrates the role educational service agencies can play in solving challenges at a scale larger than any single school district. The nomination emphasized that the alliance reduces duplication of effort and creates solutions that individual districts would struggle to build on their own.

Cooper and Kennedy will be formally recognized during the 2026 AESA Annual Conference & Expo, December 2-4 in Orlando, Florida.

About the Association of Educational Service Agencies

AESA is the national organization representing Educational Service Agencies and regional educational organizations across the United States.

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