

AESA NEWS

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AESA applauds national award winners



Dr. Dennis Harkin, Executive Director, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, Pennsylvania, receives Justus A. Prentice Award

Dr. Harkin has served as an outstanding agency director in PA, AESA council member, and AESA president. As a county superintendent, Dr. Harkin played a critical role in generating legislative support and gaining the governor's approval to create the Iowa system of educational service agencies, one of the first in the country. Dr. Harkin was instrumental in forming the association eventually known as AESA, which he led as president. He has dedicated his professional career to promoting the advancement of ESAs.

The Justus A. Prentice Award recognizes contributions through executive leadership in the advancement of regional ESA programs.



Dr. Susan Sclafani, Counselor to the U.S. Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education, receives Meritorious Service Award

The appointed liaison between the U.S. Department of Education and AESA, Dr. Susan Sclafani has fostered a close partnership between ESAs and the U.S. Department of Education through an open-door approach, accessibility, and recognition of ESAs capability to assist state departments and local school districts in implementing landmark legislation. Dr. Sclafani employs ESAs in creating greater learning opportunities by understanding their role as a vital link between the department of education, state offices of education, and school districts across the country. She has been diligent in keeping AESA involved at the national level, working directly with AESA in addressing NCLB and helping identify specific areas where AESA is eligible for funding and grant opportunities.

The Meritorious Service Award recognizes service to regional ESAs and to AESA.



Dr. M. Craig Stanley, Executive Director, Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative, Massachusetts, receives E. Robert Stephens Award

Dr. Stanley has conducted extensive studies on the potential cost savings and cost-effectiveness of educational collaboratives. He published the first long-term longitudinal study of the cost-effectiveness of ESAs, has made presentations at national conferences, been published in the AESA journal *Perspectives*, and been honored as the Pioneer Institute's Educational Excellence Award recipient for his award-winning paper, "Educational Collaboratives Saving Tax Dollars for Massachusetts Schools."

The E. Robert Stephens Award recognizes contributions that advance understanding of regional ESAs through research and writing.



Dr. Terry Bergeson, Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, receives Walter G. Turner Award

Dr. Bergeson has headed statewide reform efforts in Washington State that have greatly expanded the role and statute of educational service districts (ESDs) in the state. She has spearheaded a unique collaboration with the nine Washington ESDs to create a regional delivery system that provides technical assistance to schools in meeting the requirements of NCLB. She also utilizes the ESDs as support units to operate, manage, and deliver one of the best communication systems in the nation. She is an acknowledged and admired leader who has built and nurtured the partnership with ESDs

The Walter G. Turner Award recognizes contributions in the advancement of educational service agency programs.

AESA NEWS 2003 annual conference a great success!

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The 2003 AESA Annual Conference and Exposition at Marco Island, Florida, was an enormous success. With ESAs playing a vital role in providing high quality, cost-effective programs for local school districts, being a part of this conference is critical for superintendents, staff, and boards of service agencies. As AESA president Joe Marinelli stated in his welcome letter, "We are increasingly seen by national and state policy makers as the 'go to' organizations that will make the difference in whether our nation's goals are achieved." This was brought home by the keynote speakers, concurrent sessions, and vendors on the exhibit floor.

The keynote speakers were exceptional this year. Dr. Peter Bishop set the tone with his insightful presentation on long-term forecasting and planning as it applies to the future of ESAs. His Power Point presentation can be found on the AESA Web site at www.aesa.us.

Students from the Tommie Barfield Elementary School serenaded attendees with joyous holiday selections.

Truly inspiring was the keynote presented by Chauncey Veatch, the 2003 National Teacher of the Year. After retiring from the U. S Army, Mr. Veatch started to teach social studies in Coachella Valley High School in Thermal, California, where he emphasized literacy and really knowing students as major components of his instructional philosophy. You can request information on his forthcoming video tape from his assistant Tracey Richardson at trichardson@rcoe.k12.ca.us.

Once again students closed the general session. The Umoja African Dance and Panther Show Choir from Village Oaks Elementary School were a big hit.

The conference closed with inspirational remarks from Ted Stilwill, chief state school officer in Iowa. In this role, he has worked very closely with the area educa-

tion agencies. He recently was elected president of the Council of Chief State School Officers.

AESA annually recognizes outstanding accomplishments or contributions to education and to AESA. See the front page for a full description of this year's award winners.

Staff from Region IV Education Service Center in Houston, Texas, went beyond the call of duty in preparing for the 18th annual conference. Special thanks to Lisa Mahady, Tommye Wolverton, Lila Lusk, and conference chairman Bill McKinney. Thanks also go to Pinal County Educational Service Agency in Arizona for their assistance in implementing the proposal review process. Special thanks to the Educational Service Unit #10 in Nebraska and other Nebraska ESAs for serving as greeters, information sources, ushers and for general assistance. Gratitude goes to the West Kentucky Educational Cooperative for the development and coordination of the regional breakfasts. We look forward to working with all the CESAs in Wisconsin on the 2004 annual conference. Finally, we cannot forget to thank the conference staff of AASA for their invaluable assistance on the conference.

As AESA executive director Brian Talbott expressed in his state of the association address, the price of this conference for attendees would more than double if it weren't for the generous support of conference sponsors and business partners. We cannot thank the following companies enough for their involvement with AESA: Apple and PowerSchool, Brainchild, Canter, Chancery, Educator\$Money, eSchoolMall, Executive Intelligence, HOSTS Learning, Hewlett-Packard (HP), Learning 24/7, MacNeil Environmental, Microsoft, the Pulliam Group, Sprint, Strategic Energy, Williams Scotsman, and all of our exhibitors.

Please join us for the 19th annual conference and exposition at Phoenix, Arizona, December 1-4, 2004 at the brand new five-star J. W. Marriott Hotel and Resort. More information will be sent shortly on how you may submit a proposal for consideration, how to showcase your agency, and how to register for the conference.

Education service agencies can help

As we mark the second anniversary of the “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) legislation with continued debate and development of its requirements, sanctions and funding levels, most agree on its intent. Educators, policy makers, parents, and citizens throughout the country are committed to the ideals that every child can achieve high standards of success, and that the gap between high achieving and low achieving students cannot be allowed to continue.

Education service agencies (ESAs) are in a key position to help schools and districts address the achievement gap and realize the ideals of NCLB. Here at the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE), we play the essential role of providing schools and districts with the leadership, advocacy, training, and support services needed to make a serious attempt at our common goals.

Leadership. Schools, districts, and communities look to local ESAs to provide leadership to embrace the goals of success for every student, and to provide access to and understanding of the exemplary programs and practices needed for that success. We have attempted to provide such leadership in a variety of ways, including public activities and public forums.

Advocacy. We cannot expect to improve the performance of our lowest performing students without dedicating ourselves to the task and advocating on their behalf. We place our advocacy for students in our mission, vision and values statements, and demonstrate our advocacy in looking first at student performance in each program review we undertake. We are now more focused in both public and legislative advocacy for finding solutions that will help those students most in need.

Training. One of the traditional roles of ESAs had been to provide training for schools and districts. NCLB creates new opportunities and requirements for training (such as additional training for paraprofessionals) but also provides a focusing factor that promotes the importance of common training activities for multiple sites and participants. We are expanding our training offerings, focusing on practices designed to address the achievement gap, and providing greater opportunities for multiple training activities, involving experts and practitioners, among schools and districts. The impetus of addressing the achievement gap is helping to focus on demonstrated best practices.

Services. ESAs are filling the need for expanded services. We now provide School Plan, a regional professional

development and on-line database analysis system that enables teachers, administrators, and stake holders to use local data analysis in the context of national research to address local school issues. We also provide new math mentor broadcast services. And we offer a public school and district on-line locator system. We are gearing up to provide NCLB mandated school choice options and availability on-line. These are each newly-developed applications designed specifically to focus on raising the achievement levels of our lowest performing students throughout the region.

Parents, schools, and school districts are working toward the goal of ensuring that truly no child is left behind. The ESAs throughout the country are key agencies in making that happen. Through AESA, we can share our experiences, and assist each other in realizing the goals that we all share.

By Colleen Wilcox, Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools, California, and AESA executive council Western Region representative.



Announcements

AESA Foundation marks the passing of loved ones

The AESA Foundation has received a number of gifts from AESA members to mark special events such as retirement or the receipt of an award. Recently, we were notified of the passing of Fay Solomon, mother of former AESA council member Howard Solomon. Howard designated the AESA Foundation as one choice for those who wished to make memorial donations. A number of gifts were received in memory of Fay. AESA extends sympathy to Howard on the passing of his mother and thanks him for his support of the AESA Foundation.

Ron Fielder receives 2003 Excellence in Educational Leadership Award

Ron Fielder, administrator of Grant Wood AEA at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, received the 2003 Excellence in Educational Leadership Award from the University Council of Educational Administration. The UCEA is a consortium of 70 major research universities with doctoral programs in educational leadership and policy. The presentation was made at a function held at the University of Iowa where Ron was recognized for his outstanding work in the professional development of Iowa's school leaders.

AESA partnership with USED reaches new levels

For many years, AESA has dreamed of a mechanism that would allow communication with key individuals within each member agency. Through this mechanism, information on proposed legislation or funding opportunities would reach highly interested parties instantly. Requests for program information would be targeted to the most appropriate ESA staff and responses would foster adaptation or adoption of proven practices.

AESA has moved from dreaming about what could be to designing what will be. **The ESA Personnel Identification Project (EPIP)** is moving quickly through the design/construction phases and initial testing will commence by March.

AESA submitted a grant proposal to the United States Department of Education in July 2003. The goal of the proposal was to facilitate communication between designated agencies—such as the Department of Education and AESA—and our ESAs throughout the country.

The rationale of the proposal was that ESAs are key to the implementation of many Federal programs, including the NCLB. This role has been identified by Secretary of Education Rod Paige in a letter that he sent to each state department of education in April 2003. Secretary Paige noted that ESAs “...play an important role in implementing, as well as communicating, the requirements of NCLB to local districts...”

Web-based software is currently under development that will allow AESA members to enter the contact data of key personnel for specific functions within their agency (function has been chosen over title as ESA creativity leads to a wide range of titles).

Since ESA leaders know best who in their agency should receive the information and respond to requests, they will decide whose name should be entered. Further, ESAs will be able to update the list of their key personnel on-line as changes occur in staffing or responsibility.

Ultimately, this project is intended to include information from every ESA in the country (including both AESA members and nonmembers). However, once even a few ESAs have entered their data, AESA plans to start using the communication system. As an example, the U.S. Department of Education can ask AESA to send out some specific information related to paraprofessional training to meet NCLB requirements. ESA key staff will be able to receive this information directly and start sharing this information immediately with their school districts. The system can then also be used by ESAs. They would ask AESA to send a request for information regarding,

for example, promising practices that are in use in a particular program area, or to find others wrestling with the same needs. The advantage to the new process is that the request will be received by the person most involved in the topic.

In addition to the collection of the names and contact data for key personnel, ESA will ask members to enter approximately 12 data elements that will improve our ability to characterize the strength and role of ESAs in the United States. This information will also be used with the National Center for Education Statistics to begin the process of tightening up the definition of ESAs.

Clearly, the grant of \$400,300 for the period 10/1/03 to 9/30/04 provides a tremendous opportunity for USED, AESA and the individual ESAs.

All AESA staff are involved in the development and implementation of this project. Peter Young, AESA chief financial officer, is administering the project. Please feel free to contact him at youngpjyoung@aol.com.

Perspectives: call for manuscripts

Volume 10 of *Perspectives*, the journal of research and opinion about ESAs will be published in September 2004. This edition will feature (though not exclusively) articles about how ESAs are helping local districts meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Deadline for submission of articles is April 1, 2004. If anyone is interested we would be pleased to have someone serve as guest editor of this volume. The main responsibility of the guest editor is to solicit and choose among submitted articles. The general editor is responsible for final editing of submitted manuscripts. If you are interested, please contact Bill Keane at keane@oakland.edu.

It is not necessary to be a skilled writer to appear in the journal. Submit a manuscript and you will be given as much help as necessary. If you plan to submit a manuscript, please contact Bill Keane at the above email address, and you will be sent a style sheet to help you prepare the piece in a way that will simplify publication.

This edition, which will be sent to all state superintendents of public instruction and the U.S. Secretary of Education, presents a terrific opportunity to tell the ESA story to the whole nation. Please don't let this unique opportunity to feature your agency pass by unnoticed. To view the 2003 issue, please go to www.aesa.us/PUBs/publications.html.