



AESA—the best professional decision

by Judith Miller, AESA council member

As I finalized my travel plans for this year's national conference, thoughts of my first knowledge of AESA and my first conference experience floated across my memory. It was quite by coincidence that I learned about AESA or AAESA, as it was called in the earlier days. It was also on a whim that I decided to attend the first Marco Island conference. Little did I know that years later I would count that decision as one of the best of my professional career.

In 1995, I was hired as an assistant professor of educational leadership at the Meridian (MS) Campus of Mississippi State University. My primary responsibility was to serve as executive director of a small, regional educational consortium and teach future school administrators. Unlike many states, Mississippi did not have intermediate units. The few consortia that existed in our state were simply school districts pulled together for a few meetings by various universities. Our purpose was two-fold: serve as an outreach arm for the university to area schools and provide a few PD sessions each year to local districts. Coming from a lengthy administrative career with a school district, I knew that our schools needed more help than this, but I wasn't sure what that support should be or how it should be delivered.

During that time, not only was I trying to figure out my role as an executive director, but I was also trying to help my board shape the future of our agency. As I began to search for examples of school district support, I made a trip to a neighboring state to visit a professional development center. At the close of my visit, the

center's director gave me a copy of *Perspectives* (1998) and suggested that I might find some examples of various support units in the articles.



The theme of that edition was "Accountability for ESAs: Is Accreditation the Answer?" Although I had never heard of an ESA, I liked what the term seemed to imply. In the introduction by Bill Keane, I read about a man named Dr. E. Robert Stephens, "the pre-eminent researcher on service agencies." Not being a shy southern lady, I began my search for this little-known group called AAESA and the "eminent researcher" who I hoped would have the answers to my questions.

Long story, short, I was invited to attend the December 1999 conference on Marco Island. My understanding was that I would learn about educational service agencies and that sounded interesting. The location was outstanding and I had a little travel money in my budget. I was also told that I would find the kind, stately gentleman everyone called Dr. Bob outside smoking a pipe. So off I went—and the rest as they say is history.

As I look back over my association with AESA, I can unequivocally say that membership in AESA has provided my agency and state with innumerable resources, opportunities and support—in good times and bad.

Today, I'm proud to say that

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Directory information: the struggle to remain current

For many years, AESA has annually published a membership directory. This document is a great tool for our members to use in contacting each other and as a reference tool for the organization and structure of AESA.

Each year, within a few days of printing of the directory, we start receiving notices of changes from you, our members. Whether it is the name of a new CEO, a change in the address of your facility, a Web site address change, or simply the telephone company adding another area code within your state, the numbers of changes that we receive are substantial. Soon, the directory is out of date. We realize that a once-a-year update is simply not enough.

On the recommendation of staff, the AESA council has voted to utilize an electronic directory attached to our Web site starting this current fiscal year. This will allow us to update our information as changes are sent in to us and therefore to provide you, our members, with a most up-to-date tool.

Please share with us any change to the directory information about your agency by sending an e-mail to info@aesa.us.

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Mississippi has seven regional service agencies that are codified into law, recognized as partners by and with the Mississippi Department of Education, and are considered an invaluable resource for our schools in improving education for all our children.

As for me, my term as a council member is coming to a close. I view these past four years of service as the pinnacle of a career that spans more than thirty years. During this time, I have been extremely fortunate to be associated with colleagues within various organizations who have influenced my professional life. However, I can say without reservation, none of these associations has impacted me more than my relationship with the AESA staff (Brian, Kari, Peter, Anita and Aleck) and the terrific colleagues I've come to know in ESAs across the country. I have learned so much from each of you.

I hope that as you participate in this year's conference or the next, when you recommend someone to participate in the Executives in Residence program, when you retrieve a document from the website or contact a colleague in another state for advice, you will know that AESA truly believes that our members are our primary customers; their satisfaction is our highest priority.

And as we say in Southernese, I'm proud to call ya'll my friends. Remember, "There are no coincidences, Delia... only the illusion of coincidence."

Dr. Judith Miller is executive director of the East MS Center for Educational Development, Inc. at Meridian, Mississippi. She also serves as AESA membership committee chair.

Meet the candidates for AESA executive council elections in December

Central Region

Bruce Dennison

Regional Superintendent of Schools,
Bureau-Henry-Stark Counties
Elected Official, Serving as CEO for the
Regional Office of Education

Educator for forty years, currently in my
third term of office as Regional Superin-
tendent, and running for re-election
Service to 26 public school districts and
5 parochial schools, with a student population 17,000 and
1,800 educators.

Region is located in north central Illinois between Peoria and
Moline and is considered essentially rural.

Former high school social studies teacher, high school princi-
pal and school district superintendent.

Past President, Illinois Association of Regional Superinten-
dents of Schools, and currently serve as Area II Chairman
(Northwest Illinois) IARSS.

Member ASCD, Illinois ASCD, (past member of State Board
of Directors)

Married, three children, two grandchildren.



Central Region

Mick Loughran

Administrator, Educational Service Unit #9
Hastings, Nebraska

At present, I will start my eighth year
as chief administrator of Educational Ser-
vice Unit #9 located in Hastings, Nebras-
ka. ESU #9 serves twenty school districts
in six south central Nebraska counties.

Previously I was superintendent at a school district in
north central Nebraska for 17 years and a six-year stint prior
in northeast Nebraska.

On a state level, I have served on the Legislative Commit-
tee for the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, the
Nebraska Council of Teacher Education, and numerous task
force committees.

Currently I am serving as President-Elect of the Nebraska
Educational Service Unit Administrators Association, and
representing Nebraska at the AESA Educator's Call to Action:
Federal Advocacy. My goal would be to serve as a national
voice for educational service agencies and to promote the
existing philosophy of AESA.

Civic organizations includes being on the local Chamber
of Commerce Board of Directors, United Way board, and long
time Rotarian.



Southern Region

John D. Hough

Executive Director, RESA VIII
109 S. College Street, Martinsburg, WV

Dr. John Hough has been the Ex-
ecutive Director of RESA VIII since 2002.
During his nearly thirty-three years in
education, John has been a teacher,
school counselor, and community college
administrator in Kansas and Oklahoma.

From 1989 to 1999, John was professor of Curriculum and
Instruction and Associate Dean at Marshall University. He
holds a doctorate in curriculum and instruction from Okla-
homa State University.

From 1999 to 2002 John held key positions with the
West Virginia Department of Education, including appoint-
ment as executive assistant to the State Superintendent.
He served as liaison to the West Virginia legislature and the
CSSO.

John has served on a number of state educational commit-
tees and is currently serving on the Appalachian Regional Com-
prehensive Center of EDVANTIA advisory board. He is a current
member of the AESA government relations committee.



Western Region

David Long, Ph.D.

Dr. David Long is the superintendent of
schools for Riverside County, California,
and President of the California County
Superintendents Educational Services
Association (CCSESA). His interest in
student achievement began 40 years
ago in Sheffield, Iowa where he served
as a coach, athletic director, teacher, principal, and assistant
superintendent.

Shortly after earning a Ph.D. from Iowa State University,
Dr. Long was hired as superintendent of Lake Elsinore Unified
School District, a position he retained until 1998 when he
was elected Riverside County Superintendent of Schools.
As Riverside County Superintendent, Dr. Long has successful-
ly advocated for programs to help under performing schools,
increase safety in schools, and to increase literacy. On
June 12, 2006, Dr. Long was appointed by U.S. Secretary of
Education Margaret Spellings to chair the newly formed Safe
and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Advisory Commit-
tee, to advise the Secretary on safe and drug-free schools
programs and crisis planning.



Note: Ballots for council elections will be mailed to each member agency CEO/superintendent in December. We encourage you to vote in this important election. To review, AESA bylaws call for four-year terms of office and each region will have a bye once every four years. This year, the Eastern Region has the bye and will not have a nominee.

2005 Walter G. Turner Award winner recognized

On September 14, during the AESA Educators' Call to Action Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., Representative Howard McKeon, chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, received the 2005 Walter G. Turner Award. Because of travel schedules last year, Rep. McKeon was unable to accept the award in person during the AESA annual conference in Savannah. He was presented the award at the fall event by Dee Alarcon, superintendent of Solano County Office of Education in Fairfield, California; and Sue Burr, executive director of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association. Many other California County Office of Education superintendents also were present when Rep. McKeon received this award.



The Walter G. Turner Award recognizes contributions in the advancement of regional educational programs at the regional, state, and/or national levels, and this exemplifies Rep. McKeon's contributions to ESAs.

Rep. McKeon has served the 25th Congressional District of California for over a dozen years. During this time one of his main goals has been to enhance education's role as "the great equalizer." He has worked to reform educational programs, including Head Start and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and to increase flexibility under the No Child Left Behind Education Act, all of which affected key programs operated by ESAs throughout the country. He was also very instrumental in the reauthorization of the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, and the role ESAs play in that Federal law.

AESA congratulates Congressman McKeon!

Founding AESA member passes

Urey Arnold, a member of the Organizational Ad Hoc Committee that created the National Organization of County, Intermediate and Educational Service Agencies (NOCIESA) passed away on August 17, 2006. Urey served on the NOCIESA council (which later became the American Association of Educational Service Agencies) from 1977 to 1982, and was honored with the Justus A. Prentice Award in 1982-1983.

Walt Turner, AESA's first executive director, said of Urey, "There was never a more conscientious and dedicated educational leader. He contributed enormously to educational service agencies with his vision, spirit of cooperation and unfaltering leadership."

2007 CALENDAR of events

To plan now for 2007, please add the following events to your calendar and plan to attend. More information may be found at www.aesa.us.

Summer CEO Leadership Conference

July 23-26, 2007, Rochester, New York

Lodge at Woodcliff (www.woodcliffodge.com)

Join your peers for three-and-a-half days dedicated to conversations by and for ESA leaders. This year's location will be stunning. Atop a wooded hill in Rochester's affluent suburbs stands The Lodge at Woodcliff, upstate New York's premier resort and conference center. Its vantage point reveals spectacular views of vivid landscapes. These vistas will tempt you to take advantage of a world rich in recreational and cultural excitement outside the lodge, from Native American encampments to New York's largest indoor shopping mall. More information will be sent to all ESA CEOs in spring 2007.

AESA Educators' Call to Action Legislative Conference, September 26-28, 2007

Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

Fall not only is the best time to visit the nation's capitol, it is also the best time to talk with your elected officials as they prepare to vote on funding measures affecting Federal education laws. The collective voices of ESA CEOs, staff, and board members make a difference as senators and representatives debate issues and cut side deals. This is the time to make your voice heard. Plan now to attend this event and walk the hallowed halls of Congress.

AESA Annual Conference

November 28 - December 1, 2007, Tampa, Florida
Tampa Convention Center

You and your team will not want to miss the annual gathering of ESAs from around the nation and a few from abroad. Over a thousand people will attend this event and talk about ESAs and the programs, services, and products they provide. This is the time to tell your story by presenting a concurrent session, highlight your agency by having a showcase booth, make purchasing decisions when visiting with exhibitors, or get inspired by one of the keynote speakers. Spend the evening at the historical Tampa theater, visit Ybor City, or relax with peers who understand the particular nuances of running an education service agency.