



Summer CEO Conference: You should go!

by Thomas Svitkovich

Over the years, I have attended a variety of conferences and workshops. By in large, these experiences have been extremely valuable. However, the conference which has been most valuable to me in my role as an intermediate school district superintendent at Genesee Intermediate School District (GISD) is the Summer CEO Conference sponsored by the AESA Foundation. I have always returned with timely and relevant information.

I learned first-hand about the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB); the

strategies used in Region 4, Houston, Texas, to address regional service agency restructuring; and most recently, I learned about Balanced Leadership from Dr. Tim Waters with McREL. These topics and many others covered at the CEO conference have helped me lead the change process in my regional educational service agency.

At Region 4, Bill McKinney's strategies were translated into many new GISD services for our constituent districts and charter schools. After my conference report to our leadership team and working with our K-12 superintendents, we developed shared business services and shared technical services. Currently, these programs are implemented in over half of our districts. Modeled after our successful business and technical service programs, we have shared human resources and shared community relations programs on the drawing board. The genesis for these programs came from the CEO conference, coupled with a need in

our local districts to cut costs driven by declining resources.

The CEO conference experiences allowed us to implement quickly, using models that were successful in other agencies. Sharing ideas, concepts and programs in a leader-to-leader format is the strength of the CEO conference. Time to network and learn from the experts makes the format extremely effective. When I heard about NCLB from the ex-

perts at a CEO conference, I was able to return to GISD and share my knowledge with our local district leaders. They were prepared to answer questions from

board members, staff, parents and community about the standards, tests and teacher qualifications before the news media was pounding on their doors. The July 2002 CEO conference agenda prepared me to relay an outline and a first-look at some of the elements of NCLB. They had an opportunity to review issues together and we had a collective head start in preparing strategies to address aspects of NCLB at the local level.

Twyla Barnes, superintendent of ESD 112 in Vancouver, Washington, presented and discussed the AESA Executives in Residence program. As a result, I shared this important information when I returned to Michigan. One of our assistant superintendents is interested and will ask to be considered for a future cycle. This year we will host a program participant in the GISD. I am excited about what my team will learn from this visiting executive and what we can share about our operation as we compare notes and experiences.

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AESA News is published by the Association of Educational Service Agencies, 801 N. Quincy Street, Suite 750, Arlington, VA 22203-1730; phone: (703) 875-0739; FAX: (703) 807-1849; (info@aesa.us). Editor: Kelly LaGrutta
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This past summer's CEO conference was no exception. The program focused on leadership and Dr. Tim Water's concentrated presentation became the first step in the development of a Balanced Leadership initiative for Genesee county's principals, central office administrators, and superintendents. With permission from Dr. Waters, our leadership team and the GISD superintendents developed a program to share portions of McREL's work with school and district leadership. All of the material for these topics was gleaned from presentations at AESA CEO conferences, and all of these topics framed the leadership challenges we all face. It is clear that we, as educational leaders, need tools to use with our school communities to improve student outcomes. Based on McREL's research, educators now have an asset to improve student outcomes.

In Genesee, planning is underway for a county-wide program. We are recruiting workshop participants for a program sponsored by McREL, the Michigan Department of Education, and Ferris State University. Program participants will be able to return to our county with the latest information on leading-edge research on school leader and teacher impact on student achievement. We hope to sponsor a train-the-trainer participant in this program. Our program will also include presentations for such groups as special education directors, school business officials, school board members, human resources personnel, negotiators, community groups, technical support staff, union leadership and others. The idea is that everyone must be aware of the impact of Balanced Leadership and how it affects them and how they can help make a difference to improve student achievement.

All of our effort in GISD grew simply from my attendance at the CEO conference last summer. If all goes as planned, we will have every member of the school community engaged in implementing Balanced Leadership concepts in our schools. I am sure that as we move forward the majority of our districts will carry the concepts to full implementation.

Based on my experiences, I most certainly recommend that you register for the next Summer CEO Conference to held in Rochester, New York, in July.

Announcing AESA 2007 Summer CEO Conference

The AESA Foundation proudly announces its 2007 Summer CEO Conference—*Winning the New ESA Game: Rising Demands, International Stakes and Agile Professionals*. Learn how America's competitiveness, changing workforce demographics and coming talent wars challenge ESA leaders and what we can do about it. The conference will commence with dinner on Monday, July 24, and conclude just before noon on Thursday, July 28.

One of the keynote speakers will be Marc Tucker, president and CEO of the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). NCEE is responsible for the new report "Tough Choices/Tough Times."

As always, there will be time for ESA CEOs and their staff to share with one another. Susan Leddick of PKR, Inc. will be with us for the entire conference, facilitating the development of a White Paper as a conference product.

Local arrangements are being coordinated by Joe Marinelli, district superintendent for the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES. Visit www.fingerlakes.org to see what this beautiful area of the country has to offer.

The conference will be held at the Lodge at Woodcliff, Rochester, NY, where we have secured a room rate of \$139 per night. Call (585) 248-4800 for reservations by June 20. Online registration is \$390 or \$420 via PO or check. Be sure to join with us for this learning and networking activity!

Lessons from abroad: Destination Turkey by Brian Talbott

This past summer I had the opportunity to travel to Turkey to look at their educational system and refresh my knowledge of the history and culture of civilizations where East meets West. While waiting for my return flight from New York to Seattle, I picked up the July 3, 2006, *USA Today* and became interested in that day's debate: Improving Schools. There were two articles, "Less Homework, More Trouble," by Adriene Lews and "Other Homework Does Not = A's," by Sara Bennett. I was struck by the impact these articles had as I reflected on my own experiences as an educator and what I had learned in my recent travels. It also had me thinking about the role AESA and ESAs can play in improving our educational system.

Turkey is recognized as a country where Eastern culture meets Western culture and is the center of many ancient empires. It is a country where education and learning have deep roots. I was invited by our Turkish friend and Region 4 ESC (Texas) board member Dr. Soner Tarim to join Dr. Bill McKinney and his administrative team on the trip to Turkey. Our goal was to personally learn about the Turkish education system and share how ESAs function in the United States and, more specifically, how we leverage our resources. Dr. Tarim is superintendent of schools for the Harmony Charter Schools in Texas. With Dr. Tarim and his associates Veli Baysal (director of public relations, Raindrop Foundation, Houston, Texas) and Ozgur Ozer (principal, Harmony Elementary, Houston, Texas), we experienced the beauty of Turkey.

During our trip I recognized valuable characteristics among the different cities and communities we visited. In Turkey, all religions are tolerated even though 90 percent of the population is of the Muslim faith. Another admirable character-

istic was Turkey's ability to maintain neutrality and command respect from neighboring countries including Iran, Iraq, Israel and Palestine.

I was sincerely impacted by the gracious and caring attitude of the Turkish people. This was complimented by great faith and a willingness to make sure we felt welcome in their country.

It is with this background that I discuss the Turkish commitment to education. I saw a genuine belief that education was the most important concept and was supported regardless of cultural, economic or religious values. We met with school administrators, teachers, support staff,

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business people, lay people, parents and students. Across the board, the number one priority for the children of Turkey is education.

This priority was sustained by action. At every school we visited it was apparent that students respected their teachers and the school facilities. Regardless of the age and/or location of the schools all were clean and free of graffiti. The classrooms may be smaller than ours and not as well-equipped, but the desire to learn was prevalent everywhere. Most amazing were the schools' trophy cases which were full of awards for academic performance. Few shelves, if any, were set aside for athletics.

I was impressed that we were greeted by school administrators, teachers and students, and by business leaders as well. Business is an important part of the Turkish education system. A great deal of financial support comes from the business community. The private sector helps provide supplies, school buildings and student scholarships. In the public sector the business commu-

nity also assists in the financing of buildings. In fact, I was told by Mrs. Neval Guler, wife of the governor of Istanbul (one of the ten largest cities in the world), Mr. Omer Balibey, and his wife Mrs. Handan Balibey, (Mr. Balibey was then superintendent of Istanbul and is now working for the Ministry of Education as the General Director for Professional Development and Teacher Training Division), that the first place the wealthy leave their legacy is to education. This private-sector dedication is essential given the fact that Istanbul grows by over 70,000 students a year.

I was struck by the devotion of Turkish students in comparison to ours. I asked students how long they studied each day. The range was four to ten hours a day outside of the classroom with many responding that they spent six to eight hours each day. I was amazed by the fact that it's the family's responsibility to make sure the student has every educational opportunity possible. Because school is treated like a job, students don't work while attending school. They need that time to study.

Parents are extremely involved in the educational process and are kept well informed. An incentive which is not allowed in our country is the posting of students' names and test results on the school walls. Postings provide strong motivation for students to do well. The Turkish people see this as healthy competition. In the U.S. this practice would be viewed as discriminatory and infringing upon students' rights.

There is no question that their education system is overwhelmed by the number of students wanting a college education. There are a limited number of seats so many Turkish students attend universities in the United States and other countries. Turkish people send many of their students to the U.S. because they feel we have the best higher education

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Timelines, reminders and announcements

May 1, 2007, call for nominations Executives in Residence Program

Nominate a participant for the 2007/2008 Executives in Residence Program. Information and applications can be found at www.aesa.us/Exec_Residence/execinres.html as well as a list of participants from the past three years. This year-long program mentors future ESA leaders. You also may sign up to host a program participant at this time.

May 1, 2007, call for presentations AESA Annual Conference

Submissions for the AESA Annual Conference call for presentations is now open. Instructions are on-line and proposals may be submitted to www.aesa.us/cfp2007. This opportunity allows ESA chief executive officers, staff, and board members to present sessions in one of five strands. See article on this page for further details.

May 1, 2007, call for manuscripts *Perspectives*

The annual publication, *Perspectives*, is AESA's journal reflecting needs, policies, research and other issues affecting ESAs. Each year founding editor Dr. William Keane volunteers his professional skills and astute understanding of ESAs to produce this widely-read publication embodying regional service agencies. Manuscripts for the 2007 edition are welcome now. We are open to articles of all types, but are especially interested in articles that are research-based and/or data driven. See the submission guidelines at www.aesa.us/Pubs/publications-perspectives.html.

June 20, 2007, hotel reservation cutoff Summer CEO Conference

For the best rate, please make your hotel reservations for the Summer CEO Conference now. See articles on pages one and two for details.

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systems in the world. However, their system is quickly becoming a success story, especially at the K-12 level.

And so I return to the *USA Today* article regarding improving schools. If we want to compete in the new global economy and maintain our position as a world leader we must work harder and smarter. Our students need every opportunity to be their best. At the same time we need balance. As a teacher, coach, and administrator I have thought a lot about how well students would do in school if they worked as hard on meaningful assignments as they do on extra-curricular activities.

The need for both parents to work makes it is easy for parents to become disengaged from a child's learning. Educators need to reconnect with parents. Administrators need to energize our business community to be active in our educational system in mutually productive ways.

Who is better positioned to bring new meaning to educational partnerships between students, parents, business leaders and teachers than ESAs?

I appreciate the fact that Dr. Tarim and the people I met on our journey throughout Turkey have helped me see that we need to refocus our energies. It is time for ESAs to look at successful models inside and outside of our country so we can be effective change agents. Prior to 9/11, AESA had started down a joint path with WPRO in the Netherlands and was working with other countries in Europe and the Pacific. After 9/11 we stepped back. Now is the time to move forward and re-energize our understanding of what is happening around the world.

AESA Annual Conference

Leading for Lifelong Learning November 28 – December 1, 2007 Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, FL

Make plans to attend the 22nd AESA Annual Conference—the only national conference dedicated exclusively to educational service agencies. Conference sessions are being planned to address the conference theme through the following strands: Leading for Learning, Emerging Issues and Trends, Technology Transfer, Tools for Collaboration and Measuring Success.

As in past years, participants are asked to share their expertise so colleagues and clients may benefit from their success and insight. To submit a conference proposal go to the AESA Web site (www.aesa.us/cfp2007). Proposals are due May 1, 2007, and successful applicants will be notified by mid-June.

Also note this important change in conference registration/hotel reservations. Under this new process, those wishing to attend will first register for the conference either online or by fax, receive a confirmation number, and then will be given access to make a reservation at the hotel. This new procedure will eliminate duplication in registrations and/or rooms and ensure that those who register will have rooms.

Information on Exhibitor and Showcase Prospectus will also be posted and mailed later this spring.

See you in Tampa!