



AESA

ASSOCIATION OF
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Annual REPORT

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Executive Message

In 2024, the Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA) continued to advance its mission of supporting educational service agencies (ESAs) nationwide. Grounded in our three core pillars—thought-leadership, advocacy, and networking—we strengthened our impact, expanded our initiatives, and fostered meaningful connections.



Thought-Leadership

AESA provided forward-thinking solutions and expert guidance, equipping ESAs with the latest industry insights and best practices. Our Business Strategy Framework workshops empowered members with critical strategies for success.



Advocacy

AESA actively engaged in federal policy discussions to shape legislation, ensuring ESAs had a voice at the highest levels of government while our state advocacy workshops helped education leaders navigate complex policy landscapes more locally.



Networking

Networking was at the heart of our work in 2024. Through conferences, workshops, and strategic collaborations, AESA facilitated invaluable connections among members, fostering professional growth and a strong sense of community.

To support these initiatives, we expanded our team, bringing in new staff whose expertise enhances our ability to serve members effectively. Their contributions will ensure AESA continues to provide high-quality support, resources, and advocacy.

As we reflect on a year of growth, innovation, and collaboration, I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished together. Thank you for your dedication to advancing education for all students. We look forward to building on this momentum in the coming year!


Joan H. Wade
AESA Executive Director

Our Commitment

In 2024, AESA continued to demonstrate its unwavering commitment to its members through various initiatives and programs designed to support and enhance the work of ESAs.

Mentorship and Education: AESA remained dedicated to mentoring and supporting current and future ESA leaders and staff members. Through professional development opportunities, leadership academies, and educational resources, AESA prepared its members for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

Innovation for Sustainability: AESA constantly innovated to ensure the development, growth, and sustainability of ESAs. By exploring new ideas, adopting cutting-edge technologies, and implementing best practices, AESA stayed at the forefront of the education system.

Partnerships for Excellence: AESA partnered with thought leaders, educational organizations, and businesses to bring its members the best resources and innovative solutions. These partnerships enhanced AESA's ability to lead in educational thought and practice.

Strategic Communication: AESA's strategic communication efforts ensured that members and stakeholders were well-informed about the benefits and impacts of ESAs. AESA highlighted the successes and achievements of its members, sharing stories that inspired and motivated.

Professional Learning and Networking:

AESA provided professional learning through workshops, conferences, and training, keeping members updated on education trends and best practices. AESA-facilitated networking opportunities fostered valuable connections and professional growth.

Advocacy and Support: AESA remained steadfast in its commitment to providing resources, advocacy, and community support to its members. AESA's support for its members did not waver, even during times of uncertainty, such as election periods.

Strategic Design of Systems and Services:

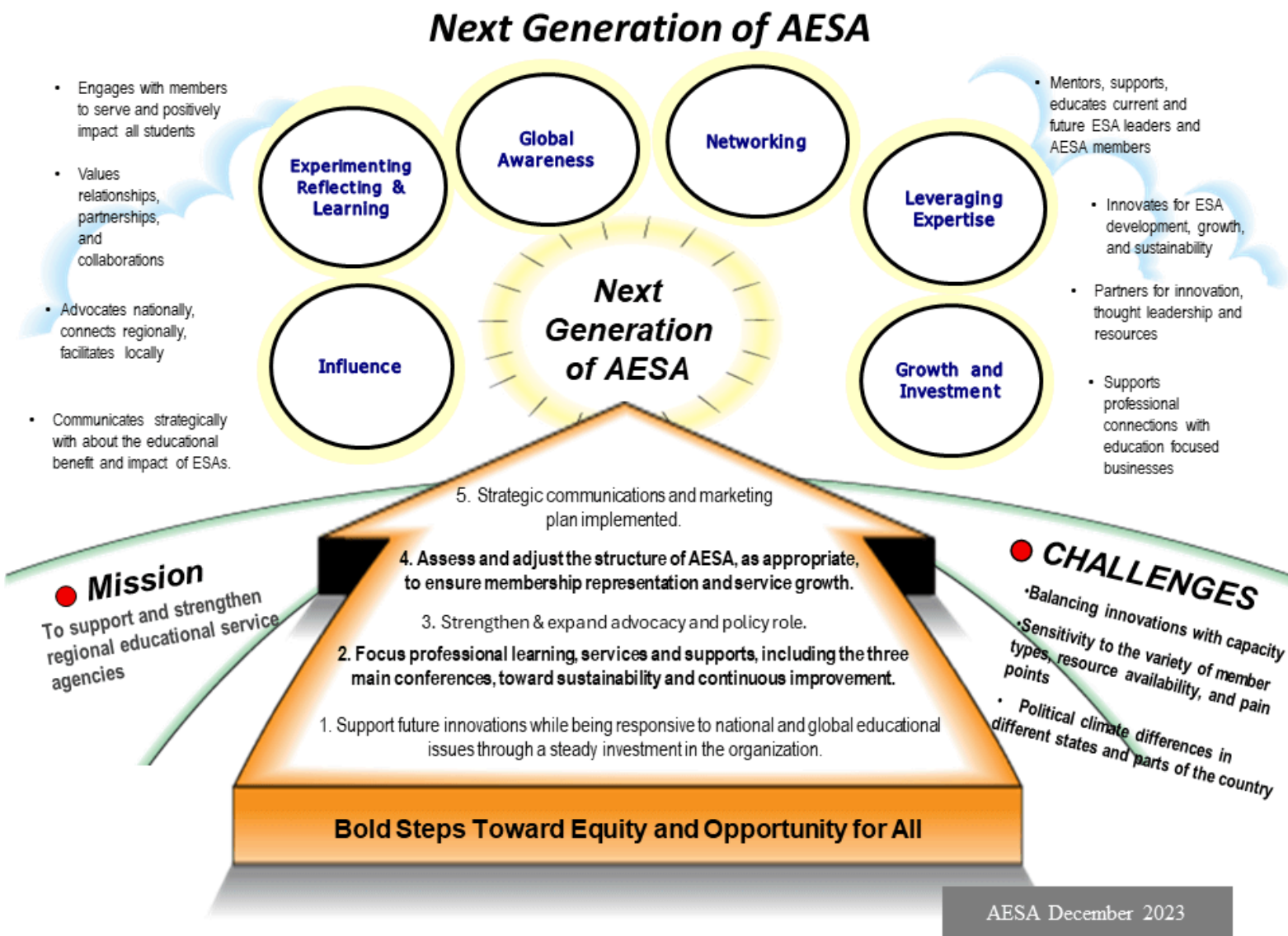
AESA collaborated with members to design strategic plans and customized services that aligned with their agency's goals. This included executive search services, coaching, business strategy guidance, and more.

International Focus: The AESA Global Advisory Council was created to provide insights for AESA's global presence and enhance its role in supporting ESAs that want to be leaders in international education.

Through these initiatives and more, AESA demonstrated its deep commitment to supporting and strengthening ESAs. By engaging in advocacy, mentorship, innovation, and strategic communication, AESA empowered its members and made a lasting impact on education. Together, AESA and its members are shaping the future of learning for all students.

Bold Steps

AESA has identified five bold steps to drive its future initiatives, ensuring growth and long-term sustainability. These strategic actions are designed to strengthen the organization's impact, enhance member services, and adapt to the evolving needs of educational service agencies nationwide.



1. Support future innovations while being responsive to national and global educational issues through a steady investment in the organization.

AESA drives innovation in education by investing in research, development, and professional growth, ensuring member agencies have access to the latest tools and strategies to tackle emerging challenges and improve learning outcomes.

To stay ahead of national and global trends, AESA collaborates with AASA advocacy consultants, closely monitoring developments and responding swiftly. Whether addressing the digital divide, promoting educational equity, or navigating national policy shifts, AESA delivers timely and effective solutions to support its members.

Expanding its global reach, AESA established the Global Advisory Council at the close of 2024 to connect members with international partners and position ESAs as leaders in global education. This Council fosters partnerships, encourages cultural exchanges, and brings innovative educational ideas from around the world to the ESA community. Working alongside ACES International, the Council aims to create collaboration opportunities in Europe, Asia, and other key regions. Additionally, the AESA Leadership Academy has partnered with ACES International to offer participants valuable experiences in international travel and cultural exchange.

Through strategic investments and partnerships, AESA strengthens collaboration, advances policy advocacy, and fuels educational innovation—creating lasting benefits for students, educators, and the broader educational system.



**Investing in
Innovation,
Responding to
Education's
Future.**



2. Focus professional learning, services, and support (including the three main conferences) toward sustainability and continuous improvement for ESA leaders and the organizations they lead.

This year, AESA expanded and refined its portfolio of services to better align with agency goals, operational challenges, and local community demands. Whether supporting executive searches, facilitating board retreats, conducting strategic planning, or delivering professional development, AESA's approach is rooted in collaboration, customization, and results.

Business Strategy Workshops

In 2024, we provided five association-wide workshops focused on business strategy development, empowering ESAs to enhance their business expertise, leadership, and innovation capabilities. These workshops, including the EPIC Workshop and the Business Strategy Framework 1.0 and the newly launched Business Strategy Framework 2.0 series, equipped participants with essential tools for strategic planning, pricing optimization, and fostering sustainable growth. Members in Washington and Massachusetts benefited from customized workshops tailored to their specific needs while members in Westmoreland IU in Pennsylvania benefited from customized coaching.

Executive Searches

In 2024, AESA played a key role in supporting executive leadership transitions through its CEO search services. Notably, AESA facilitated successful searches for new CEOs at Region 12 ESC and Region 14 ESC (both in Texas), ensuring these agencies secured experienced leaders to drive their missions forward. These searches reflect AESA's commitment to strengthening ESAs by connecting them with top-tier leadership talent.

Board Professional Development

AESA's Board Professional Development Sessions equipped ESA board members with governance strategies, trust-building techniques, and advocacy skills. These sessions enhanced board effectiveness, helping members navigate complexities and champion their ESA's mission.

Operations Consultation Services

For ESA administrators transitioning into leadership roles, AESA's Operations Consultation Services provided essential support in legal, policy, and business operations. These services streamlined processes, simplified legal considerations, and enhanced overall leadership effectiveness.

System and Service Design

Notably, AESA led strategic design projects in OESCA in Ohio and Douglas ESD in Oregon, a Technology Review for Chester County IU, and a leadership workshop for Wisconsin CESAs. These efforts show our commitment to tailored solutions that make a lasting impact.

Networks

AESA Networks provide a dynamic platform for ESA leaders and staff to connect, collaborate, and innovate. Designed to foster meaningful engagement, these networks bring together professionals from across the country to share expertise, tackle challenges, and explore new opportunities in education.

The **Small ESA Community of Practice**, which connected ESAs with 20 or fewer full-time employees (FTEs), was sunsetted at the close of FY2024. This community provided a vital space for small ESAs to network, exchange best practices, and discuss key topics such as ESA structure, funding sources, district relationships, and revenue generation. Meetings were held virtually six times a year, fostering meaningful discussions and peer support.

The **Executive Assistant to the CEO Network** offers a dedicated space for executive assistants in ESAs to connect, share insights, and enhance their professional skills. Meeting virtually four times a year, this network covers essential topics such as well-being, artificial intelligence, and technological strategies.

The newly established **Technology Leaders Network**, facilitated by Tim McIlvain, Executive Director of the Learning Technology Center, is an exciting initiative focused on strengthening technology leadership within ESAs. Launched in August 2024, this network provides a platform for members to explore current and emerging technologies, discuss best practices, and share real-world applications to enhance their agencies' technological capabilities.

The **Women's Leadership Network (WLN)** continues to empower women leaders in ESAs through virtual sessions and an in-person gathering. The program has covered critical topics such as psychological safety in the workplace, emotional intelligence, innovative leadership, and advancing DEIB initiatives. A key event was the Women's Leadership Network Gathering, held April 15–17, 2024, at The Foundry Hotel in Asheville, NC, featuring keynote speakers Circe Stumbo and Ann Carter. This retreat provided a supportive environment for personal connections and professional growth. In Fall 2024, three new WLN cohorts launched for another year of learning and leadership development.



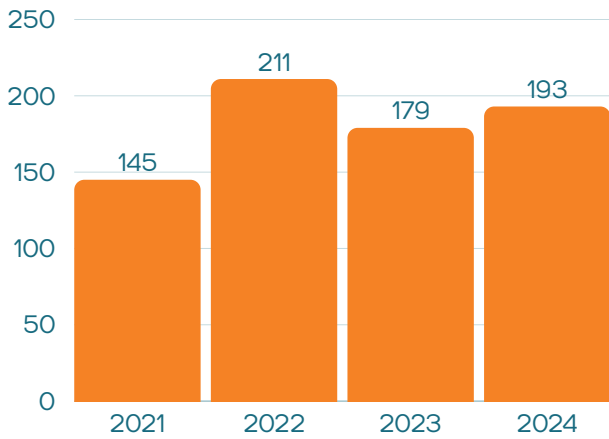
Participants at the Women's Leadership Network Gathering, held April 15–17, 2024, at The Foundry Hotel in Asheville, NC.

2024 Summer Leadership Conference



The 2024 Summer Leadership Conference, held July 16-18 at the Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale, brought together educational leaders nationwide. Featuring breakout sessions, inspiring keynotes, and networking opportunities, the event was praised for its focus on AI, leadership, and its convenient location. The Whova app enhanced the experience with easy access to the agenda and networking tools, making the conference a well-received blend of professional development and collaboration.

Yearly Attendance



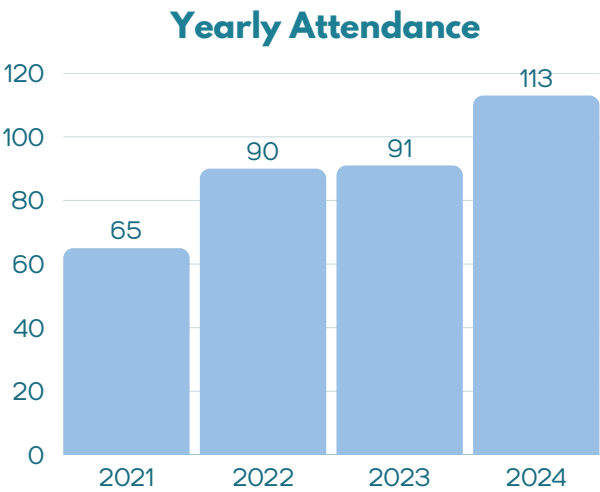
Attendance by Audience

| Type | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Regular Attendees | 132 | 193 | 156 | 177 |
| Business Partners | 13 | 18 | 14 | 16 |
| Exhibitors/Sponsors | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| Total | 145 | 211 | 179 | 193 |

2024 Advocacy in Action Conference



The 2024 Advocacy in Action Conference, held September 25-27 in Washington, D.C., drew a record 113 participants. The pre-conference equipped attendees with state advocacy tools, covering policy trends, budgets, and communication. The main conference featured sessions on E-Rate, student privacy, online safety, early childhood policies, mental health, and Medicaid. A key highlight was the Executive Council and Leadership Academy’s meeting with FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel to discuss the Universal Service Fund and E-Rate.



Attendance by Audience

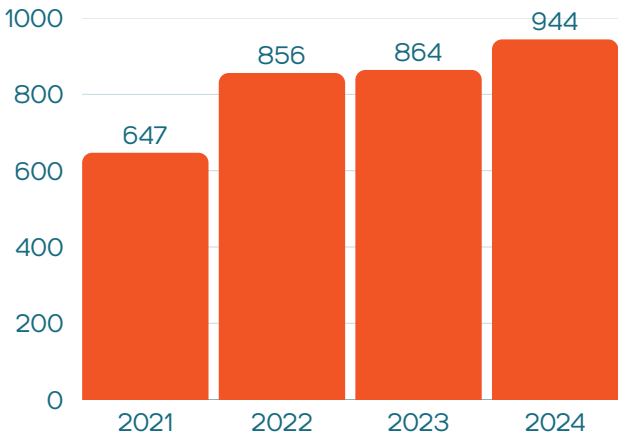
| Type | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Regular Attendees | 64 | 89 | 90 | 111 |
| Business Partners | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Exhibitors/Sponsors | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 65 | 90 | 91 | 113 |

2024 Annual Conference



The 2024 Annual Conference, held December 4-6 in Orlando, Florida, was a resounding success (and marked another record-breaking attendance in recent history). Attendees experienced high-energy student performances that set an uplifting tone, thought-provoking keynotes that challenged leaders to innovate, and engaging breakout sessions covering equity, leadership, technology, and strategic planning. The event also provided invaluable networking opportunities, allowing ESA leaders to share best practices and strengthen professional connections, making it a truly impactful gathering.

Yearly Attendance



Attendance by Audience

| Type | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Regular Attendees | 485 | 676 | 674 | 754 |
| Business Partners | 63 | 76 | 66 | 70 |
| Exhibitors/Sponsors | 99 | 104 | 124 | 120 |
| Total | 647 | 856 | 864 | 944 |

3. Strengthen the advocacy and policy role.

AESA and AASA collaborate on federal education advocacy, leveraging their influence to champion equitable policies. AASA helps shape AESA's Legislative Policy Priorities and Annual Federal Legislative Agenda, which is developed by the Federal Advocacy Committee and approved by AESA's Executive Council. This agenda allows AESA to adapt to emerging federal discussions, especially those impacting ESAs.

AESA's advocacy efforts are guided by core principles: ensuring equity in education and educational opportunity, defining the federal government's appropriate role in strengthening public education, and guaranteeing that every student has access to a high-quality education, regardless of location. These principles serve as the foundation for AESA's work in shaping public policy and driving meaningful change.

At the state level, AESA equips members with customized resources—including training workshops, legislative monitoring, and tailored presentations—to help them navigate state legislative processes and advocate for equitable policies.

A key resource in these efforts is the Advocacy Toolkit, introduced at the 2024 Advocacy in Action Conference. This comprehensive guide offers strategic insights into audience analysis, message development, and effective communication channels, ensuring advocacy efforts are both targeted and impactful. It also includes practical templates and real-world examples to help members craft persuasive messages and engage with key stakeholders effectively.

2024 Federal Documents

- [Legislative Agenda \(pdf\)](#)
- [Legislative Priorities \(pdf\)](#)

**Strong Voices,
Stronger
Schools:
Advocating
for Equity and
Impact.**

[Advocacy Toolkit \(pdf\)](#)



4. Assess and adjust the structure of AESA, as appropriate, to ensure membership representation and service growth.

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, AESA is refining its organizational structure to better represent members and support service growth. This process involves evaluating regional alignments, the Executive Council's role in fostering growth, its composition, and how effectively the organization leverages the diverse expertise of its members. Assessing AESA's value to members, partners, and sponsors is key to ensuring alignment with its mission and future objectives.

To strengthen financial support, AESA hired a Foundation Coordinator to lead a comprehensive fundraising program. This role drives initiatives such as donor cultivation, board development, foundation operations, and grant writing, ensuring sustained support for leadership development and innovation within educational service agencies. The role includes Board Leadership Development and Operations Consultation, offering guidance through legal, policy, and business-focused perspectives.

Additionally, AESA redefined a staff role as Chief Strategy Officer to focus on strategic direction and organizational growth. This position fosters collaboration through interest-based groups, enhances ESA marketing and branding, and champions innovative solutions. By building strong member connections and facilitating professional growth, this role strengthens AESA's overall impact and influence.

5. Implementation of a strategic communications and marketing plan inclusive of value propositions and the use of multi-platform media outlets and data-based decisions.

In 2024, AESA made significant strides in implementing a Strategic Communications and Marketing Plan designed to amplify our value proposition, expand engagement, and strengthen our brand across the ESA community. Our approach was rooted in data-driven decision-making, ensuring that every effort was both targeted and impactful.

One of the important steps forward this year was bringing on a dedicated communications and marketing staff member rather than engaging a consultant agency. This strategic move has significantly enhanced AESA's capability to craft messages that are closely aligned with our mission, effectively communicate our offerings to members, and present a unified brand image. With a team member dedicated to understanding the association's unique role and impact, we have improved our ability to share the story of ESAs and their vital contributions to education.

BOLD STEPS (cont.)

AESA offers four distinct electronic publications as well as our [Federal Updates blog](#) designed to keep members informed, engaged, and connected. These communications provide valuable updates, insights, and resources tailored specifically for educational service agencies (ESAs).



This weekly digital newsletter is delivered directly to members’ inboxes. It provides timely updates about AESA’s events, federal advocacy efforts, and highlights of innovative work by our members and business partners.



Published bi-monthly, this newsletter connects members with a wide range of learning opportunities available through AESA, fellow ESAs, and our business partners.



Each month, this comprehensive report is provided to keep members informed about the latest state-level education policies and trends. It includes legislative updates, funding news, and curated articles from across all 50 states. It also offers actionable advocacy tips, empowering members to become informed and effective advocates for education within their states.



AESA’s dedicated platform for research and best practices, this publication features articles that explore innovative practices, public-private partnerships, and research relevant to ESAs. The Perspectives Journal serves as a space for sharing thought leadership and ideas that advance the work of ESAs nationwide.

Tracking readership engagement provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of our communication strategies. Below are the key performance indicators for our digital publications and professional learning outreach in 2024.

| Communication | 2024 Open Rate Average | 2024 Click Rate Average |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Online News | 39.94% | 22.64% |
| Professional Learning Opportunities | 37.79% | 9.18% |
| State Examiner | 40.68% | 22.85% |
| Perspectives Journal | 37.86% | 20.27% |

These metrics serve as a baseline to assess audience engagement and refine our strategies for future communications. Our goal is to continually enhance content relevance and accessibility, ensuring that our members and stakeholders receive the most valuable information in a timely and engaging manner.

Future Vision for AESA

Charting the Path to Continued Success and Relevance

The future vision for AESA is one of transformative growth and sustained success. AESA is committed to leading with intentional actions and initiatives that elevate its impact among a growing membership. Here are the key areas of development that will shape AESA's future:



AESA will embrace global engagement by fostering worldwide awareness and international collaborations. This will enrich the educational experience and perspectives of its members. Through a cycle of experimentation, reflection, and learning, AESA will adjust its strategies based on data insights to ensure that its activities resonate with its members.



Purposeful networking will continue to be a cornerstone of AESA's approach. The organization will foster opportunities that encourage purposeful connectivity around relevant issues that matter to its members and the educators they serve. AESA will also deepen its influence and understanding of the intricate advocacy web at federal, state, and regional decision-making levels, ensuring that its members' needs and voices are heard and addressed.



By leveraging the vast expertise, skills, and talents within its membership, AESA will amplify its capacity to drive innovation in PreK-12 education. Focused growth and investment in strategic services will lead to a diverse portfolio of services that will strengthen AESA's ability to support its members effectively.

This vision underscores AESA's commitment to leading in ways that exceed the expectations and needs of its members. The organization is excited about its future and the future of the educational service agencies it serves.



Executive Council

The Executive Council, the Association's governing body, has 14 members: three from each of the four regions, the past president, and a State Association Network representative. All Council members are elected to a four-year term with the elections happening annually to replace exiting members. Serving on the Council allows members to lead and shape AESA's direction, showcasing exceptional leadership within ESAs nationwide.



Back row (l to r): Jeremy Kovash, Mark Hoffman, Tom Danehy, Joshua Wenning, Harold Coles, Dan Schnoes, Chris Modellmog
Front row (l to r): Armando Aguirre, Nancy Hutchinson, Jill Broussard, Joan Wade, Jan Webster, Jessica Vavrus, Ted Alejandre

| Council Member | Job Title | Organization | City, State |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Jeremy Kovash, AESA President | Executive Director | Lakes Country Service Cooperative | Fergus Falls, MN |
| Dan Schnoes, AESA President-Elect | Executive Director | Educational Service Unit #3 | LaVista, NE |
| Tom Danehy, AESA Past President | Executive Director | Area Cooperative Educational Services | New Haven, CT |
| Joan Wade, AESA Representative | Executive Director | AESA | Ripon, WI |
| Armando Aguirre | Executive Director | Region 19 ESC | El Paso, Texas |
| Ted Alejandre | Superintendent | San Bernardino County Office of Education | San Bernardino, CA |
| Jill Broussard | School Superintendent | Pinal County | Florence, AZ |
| Harold Coles | District Superintendent | Southern Westchester BOCES | Rye Brook, NY |
| Mark Hoffman | Executive Director | Bucks County IU | Doylestown, PA |
| Nancy Hutchinson | CEO | Kentucky Educational Development Corporation | Ashland, KY |
| Chris Modellmog | Executive Director | Smoky Hill ESC | Salina, KS |
| John Searles | Superintendent | Midland County ESA | Midland, MI |
| Jessica Vavrus | Executive Director | Washington State Association of ESDs | Turnwater, WA |
| Josh Wenning | Executive Director | Region 8 ESC | Fort Wayne, IN |
| Jan Webster | Executive Director | Western NC Education Support Alliance | Asheville, NC |

AESA Foundation

The AESA Foundation supports education leaders by awarding scholarships for the Executives in Residence and Leadership Academy programs. A major fundraising highlight is the AESA Foundation Auctions at the Annual Conference, where attendees bid on exclusive items and experiences to support leadership development in education.



Back row (l to r): Eric Wadsworth, Cliff Carmody, Jeremy Kovash, Tom Danehy, Dan Schnoes, Joseph Goins

Front row (l to r): Joan Wade, Shileste Overton-Morris, Leigh Ann Putman, Tina Viletto, Michelle Price, Joanne Haley Sullivan, Jake Seuntjens, Phoebe Bailey (Not pictured: Wanda Cook-Robinson, Mark Hornung, Parkhill Mays, Diana Parafiniuk, Cynthia Winds)

| Trustee | Job Title | Organization | City, State |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Tina Viletto | AESA Foundation Coordinator | AESA Foundation | Ventura, CA |
| Jeremy Kovash, AESA President | Executive Director | Lakes Country Service Cooperative | Fergus Falls, MN |
| Dan Schnoes, AESA President-Elect | Executive Director | Educational Service Unit #3 | LaVista, NE |
| Tom Danehy, AESA Past President | Executive Director | Area Cooperative Educational Services | New Haven, CT |
| Joan Wade, AESA Representative | Executive Director | AESA | Ripon, WI |
| Phoebe Bailey | Director | Southwest Arkansas ESC | Hope, AR |
| Cliff Carmody | Executive Director | SWWC Service Cooperative | Marshall, MN |
| Wanda Cook-Robinson | Alumni Member | | Lake Orion, MI |
| Joseph Goins | Chief Executive Officer | Pathways2Careers (Business Partner) | Maryville, TN |
| Joanne Haley Sullivan | Executive Director | MA Organization of Education Cooperatives | Sandwich, MA |
| Mark Hornung | Chief Executive Officer | Community Health Magazine (Business Partner) | Chicago, IL |
| Parkhill Mays | Chief Executive Officer | STOPIT Solutions (Business Partner) | Holmdel, NJ |
| Shileste Overton-Morris | Chief Program Officer | Central Susquehanna IU 16 | Milton, PA |
| Diana Parafiniuk | Private Member | | Flagstaff, AZ |
| Michelle Price | Superintendent | North Central Educational Service District | Wenatchee, WA |
| Leigh Ann Putman | Executive Director | Metropolitan RESA | Smyrna, GA |
| Jake Seuntjens | Education Services Director | Northwest Service Cooperative | Thief River Falls, MN |
| Eric Wadsworth | Chief Executive Officer | Good-Lite (Business Partner) | Elgin, IL |
| Cynthia Winds | Assistant Superintendent | Hamilton County Educational Service District | Cincinnati OH |

Global Advisory Council

The AESA Global Advisory Council was established in September 2024 to connect members with other countries and support ESAs in becoming leaders in global education. This Council aims to build partnerships, encourage cultural exchanges, and bring the best educational ideas from around the world to the ESA community. By working with ACES International, the Global Advisory Council hopes to create opportunities for collaboration in Europe, Asia, and other regions from around the world.

| Council Member | Title | Organization | City, State |
|------------------|--|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Jason Hiruo | Director | ACES International | North Haven, CT |
| Sheila King | Chief Strategy Officer | AESA | Des Moines, IA |
| Joan Wade | Executive Director | AESA | Ripon, WI |
| Scott Bloomquist | Superintendent | Boone Winnebago ROE | Loves Park, IL |
| Jeremy Kovash | Executive Director | Lakes Country Service Cooperative | Fergus Falls, MN |
| John Kurelja | Executive Director | Central Susquehanna IU 16 | Milton, PA |
| Leigh Ann Putman | Executive Director | Metropolitan RESA | Smyrna, GA |
| Sue Todey | Board of Control Chair | CESA 7 | Green Bay, WI |
| Tera VanDyke | Director of Fiscal Operations | Northwest Regional ESD | Hillsboro, OR |
| Michael Webb | Assistant Director, Organizational & Professional Learning | Montgomery County IU 23 | Norristown, PA |
| Josh Wenning | Executive Director | Region 8 ESC | Fort Wayne, IN |

Perspectives Journal Editorial Board

The editor and the editorial board actively work to secure articles connected to the research and practices of educational service agencies. Submissions that are relevant and important for ESAs, such as research, innovative practices, and public-private partnerships are considered for publication.

| Board Member | Title | Organization | City, State |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Sheila King, Editor | Chief Strategy Officer | AESA | Des Moines, IA |
| Craig Burford | Executive Director | Ohio Educational Service Center Association | Columbus, OH |
| Mike Haynes | Director of Instructional Services | Char-Em ISD | Charlevoix, MI |
| Jerry Maze | Alumni Member | | Waco, TX |
| Chris Modellmog | Executive Director | Smoky Hill ESC | Salina KS |
| Joan Schuman | Alumni Member | | MA |
| Paula Vincent | Alumni Member | | Sagle, ID |

State Association Executive Directors

State Association Executive Directors lead and coordinate ESAs within their states, focusing on statewide projects and serving as primary liaisons with other groups. They promote professionalism in association management by sharing ideas and experiences, ensuring their associations are effective and responsive to members and communities.

| Member | Title | Organization | State |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---------------|
| Joan Wade | Executive Director | AESA | |
| John Bass | Chief Operating Officer | AESA | |
| Karen Stapf Walters | Executive Director | California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) | California |
| Dale McCall | Executive Director | Colorado BOCES Association | Colorado |
| David Erwin | Coordinator | RESC Alliance | Connecticut |
| Cindy Yelick | Executive Director | Iowa's Area Education Agencies | Iowa |
| Joanne Haley-Sullivan | Executive Director | Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives (MOEC) | Massachusetts |
| John Severson | Executive Director | Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) | Michigan |
| Ann Kilzer | Executive Director | Minnesota Service Cooperatives | Minnesota |
| Larianne Polk | Executive Director | Educational Service Units Coordinating Council | Nebraska |
| Bobbie Gutierrez | Executive Director | New Mexico RECA | New Mexico |
| Bonnie Lightfoot | Superintendent | New Mexico RECA | New Mexico |
| Gladys Cruz | Superintendent | BOCES of New York State | New York |
| Lynne Wells | Assistant District Superintendent | BOCES of New York State | New York |
| Craig Burford | Executive Director | Ohio Educational Service Center Association (OESCA) | Ohio |
| Amber Eaton | Executive Director | Oregon Association of Education Service Districts (OAESD) | Oregon |
| Mark Leidy | Executive Director | Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units (PAIU) | Pennsylvania |
| Jessica Vavrus | Executive Director | Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESD) | Washington |
| Luther Olsen | Liason | CESA Statewide Network | Wisconsin |

Executives in Residence Program

The Executives in Residence Program is a yearlong, performance-based opportunity designed to develop the next generation of CEOs. With mentorship from experienced CEOs, access to diverse leadership experiences, and a cohort-based model for national networking, the program equips participants with essential skills. Beginning each July, it prepares leaders for success in the fastest-growing sector of education.

| 2024-25 Participant | Title | Organization | City, State |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Scott Blum | Prof Learning Dept Exec Director | Educational Service Unit 3 | La Vista, NE |
| Curt Bradshaw | Superintendent | Southern Ohio ESC | Wilmington, OH |
| Rebecca Cuevas | Director of Human Capital Development | ACES | New Haven, CT |
| Brandilyn DePalma | Chief Finance and Operations Officer | Region 11 ESC | White Settlement, TX |
| Sandra Edling | Chief Financial Officer | Montgomery County IU 23 | Norristown, PA |
| Jarrad Grandy | Exec Director of Student Services | Oakland Schools | Waterford, MI |
| Ted Hanson | Deputy Exec Director of Programming | Region V BOCES | Wilson, WY |
| Kevin Keating | Director of Pupil Services | ACES | New Haven, CT |
| Shea Konigsmark | Director of Professional Learning | Metro RESA | Smyrna, GA |
| Lisa Kvas | Reg Coord of Planning & Development | Northeast Service Cooperative | Mt. Iron, MN |
| Nathan Maxwell | Deputy Executive Director | Region 16 ESC | Amarillo, TX |
| Sarah Nelson | Director of School Support Services | CESA 12 | Ashland, WI |
| Stacie Opahle | Executive Director of Learning Services | CESA 7 | Green Bay, WI |
| Mark Parsons | Director of Strategic Leadership | Region 12 ESC | Waco, TX |
| Lisa Simone | Director of Alternative Ed School | ACES | New Haven, CT |
| Brenda Vogds | Director, Inst for Personalized Lrng | CESA 1 | Pewaukee, WI |
| Bethany Whidden | Director of Student Services | Miami County ESC | Troy, OH |
| Margo Williams | Exec Director Special Education | Willamette ESD | Salem, OR |

Leadership Academy

Sponsored by the AESA Foundation and the Universal Benefits Consortium (UBC), the Leadership Academy is a yearlong program preparing ESA CEOs for an evolving educational landscape. Kicking off at the 2024 Summer Leadership Conference, the first session featured Bryan Goodwin, CEO of McREL International, on entrepreneurialism. Participants also toured Yale University, organized by ACES International. The program explores key leadership topics, culminating in a global study experience in Singapore and South Korea in March 2025.

| 2024-25 Participant | Title | Organization | City, State |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------|
| John Bass | Chief Operating Officer | AESA | Katy, TX |
| Jason Hiruo | Director | ACES International | North Haven, CT |
| Sheila King | Chief Strategy Officer | AESA | Des Moines, IA |
| Jerry Maze | Facilitator | Alumni Member | Waco, TX |
| Joan Wade | Executive Director | AESA | Ripon, WI |
| Scott Bloomquist | Superintendent | Boone Winnebago ROE | Loves Park, IL |
| Casey Callahan | Executive Director | Region 15 ESC | San Angelo, TX |
| Tom Danehy | Executive Director | ACES | New Haven, CT |
| Rich Elsasser | Executive Director | Region 13 ESC | Austin, TX |
| Ron Hargrave | Executive Director | Sandhills REC | Southern Pines, NC |
| Flip Herndon | Superintendent | Capital Region ESD 113 | Tumwater, WA |
| Mark Klaisner | Executive Director | West 40 ISC 2 | Maywood, IL |
| Greg Koons | Executive Director | Carbon Lehigh IU 21 | Schnecksville, PA |
| Jeremy Kovash | Executive Director | Lakes Country Service Cooperative | Fergus Falls, MN |
| John Kurelja | Executive Director | Central Susquehanna IU 16 | Milton, PA |
| Tanya Larkin | Executive Director | Region 16 ESC | Amarillo, TX |
| Andrew Melin | Executive Director | Central Indiana ESC | Indianapolis, IN |
| Larianne Polk | CEO | Nebraska ESU Coordinating Council | Columbus, NE |
| Leigh Ann Putman | Executive Director | Metropolitan RESA | Smyrna, GA |
| Luke Schaefer | Executive Director | Central Regional Education Association | Bismarck, ND |
| Dan Schnoes | CEO | ESU #3 | La Vista, NE |
| Regina Speaker | Executive Director | Montgomery County IU 23 | Norristown, PA |
| Jan Webster | Executive Director | Western RESA | Asheville, NC |
| Esperanza Zendejas | Executive Director | Region 2 ESC | Corpus Christi, TX |

National Awards

Annually, the AESA's Executive Council invites members to celebrate and honor the outstanding contributions of their colleagues and peers who have significantly impacted the work of ESAs across the nation. These awards recognize individuals, teams, or agencies that exemplify leadership, innovation, and dedication to advancing education through ESAs.



Craig E. Burford

Ohio Educational
Service Center
Association

Exemplary Service Award

This award recognizes individuals for exceptional service and volunteerism to AESA. Craig Burford, who has led OESCA since 2000, was the first state association executive director elected to AESA's Executive Council in 2018. His leadership extends through his work on the AESA Perspectives Editorial Board, his role in organizing the state association executive directors' network, and his efforts in state advocacy support. Read more [here](#).



Gladys I. Cruz

Questar III BOCES, NY

Excellence in Executive Leadership Award

This award acknowledges contributions through executive leadership in advancing regional educational service agency (ESA) programs. Dr. Gladys I. Cruz, District Superintendent and CEO of Questar III BOCES, has led with vision and dedication, transforming educational opportunities across New York State. From expanding career and technical education to supporting bilingual instruction, Dr. Cruz's contributions reach students of all backgrounds. Read more [here](#).



Tim McIlvain

Learning Technology
Center, IL

Exemplary Service and Innovation For Technological Advancement Award

This award is presented to an individual or agency for contributions to technological innovation and support to local districts and ESAs. As Executive Director of the Learning Technology Center, Tim McIlvain has spearheaded initiatives that have transformed technology access and support for Illinois schools. Under his leadership, the LTC has significantly increased its reach, bringing essential tech services, cybersecurity training, and professional learning to thousands of educators. Read more [here](#).



Naomi Norman
Washtenaw Intermediate
School District, MI

Women of Inspiration in Leadership Award

This award honors an exceptional woman leader who inspires, earns peer respect, and mentors future women in leadership. Naomi Norman, Superintendent of Washtenaw ISD, is a leader who empowers others through innovation and mentorship. She has pioneered programs to address the teacher shortage, expanded equity initiatives, and uplifted women leaders across Michigan. Her visionary work is helping reshape education for a more inclusive future. Read more [here](#).



Radha Sekar
Universal Service
Administrative Company

Congressional Service Award

This honor recognizes leaders who have significantly impacted federal education policy and supported ESAs nationwide. Since 2018, Radha Sekar, CEO of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) has played a key role in closing the digital divide for underserved communities, strengthening the FCC's Universal Service Fund programs, and supporting schools, libraries, healthcare providers, and rural areas. Her work aligns with AESA's mission to address critical gaps in access to services. Read more [here](#).



Communications Team
Willamette Education
Service District, OR

Outstanding Achievement in ESA Writing and Research Award

This honor acknowledges individuals or agencies advancing the understanding of ESAs through research, writing, or publications. The Willamette ESD Communications Team has shown extraordinary leadership in educational communications, using innovative multimedia strategies to support districts across Oregon. Led by Michael Clark, their work has enhanced district engagement, crisis communication preparedness, and strategic communication support, setting a model for excellence statewide. Read more [here](#).

Expanding AESA's Digital Presence

AESA has expanded its presence on Facebook and LinkedIn, utilizing these platforms as essential tools for engaging with members, sharing important updates, and amplifying the impact of ESAs nationwide.

Key Objectives:

- Promote ESA Innovations: Showcasing the work of ESAs across the country to inspire collaboration and innovation.
- Share Policy & Advocacy Updates: Keeping members informed about legislative developments and AESA’s advocacy efforts.
- Highlight Events & Professional Development: Driving engagement with AESA’s conferences, webinars, and learning opportunities.
- Engage with Members in Real Time: Responding to comments, answering questions, and fostering discussions on key education topics.
- Use Analytics for Data-Driven Decisions: Monitoring engagement metrics to refine our content strategy and improve outreach.

By strengthening our presence on social media, AESA continues to expand its reach, enhance member engagement, and advocate for the critical role of ESAs in education. Looking ahead, we will continue to explore innovative ways to use these platforms to serve our members and amplify our mission.

| Social Media Platorm | July 2024 | December 2024 |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Facebook | 667 likes, 782 followers | 699 likes, 840 followers |
| LinkedIn | 298 followers | 650 followers |

Facebook engagement saw strong growth in 2024, with increased visibility among both followers and non-followers.

- Views: 14.5K (+81.6%) | Followers: 39% (+20.4%) | Non-Followers: 61% (+19.6%)
- Reach: 4.6K (+134.9%) | Followers: 359 (+24.7%) | Non-Followers: 4,292 (+151%)
- Interactions: 331 (+91.3%) | Followers: 215 (+110.8%) | Non-Followers: 116 (+63.4%)
- Follows: 13 (+8.3%) | Unfollows: 2 (+60%) | Net Follows: 11

With significant audience expansion, particularly among non-followers, we aim to sustain momentum through engaging, relevant content.

Financial Summary

| Revenues | June 30, 2021 | June 30, 2022 | June 30, 2023 | June 30, 2024* |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Corporate Support | \$542,303 | \$604,637 | \$582,250 | \$514,500 |
| Membership Dues | \$275,385 | \$277,000 | \$290,040 | \$367,553 |
| Sponsorships | \$11,500 | \$44,800 | \$33,150 | \$25,550 |
| Other Income | \$1,522 | \$12,600 | \$18,104 | \$30,716 |
| Investment Income | \$11,188 | (\$8,212) | \$32,595 | \$81,992 |
| Royalty Payment | \$7,627 | \$8,584 | \$0 | \$23,148 |
| Event Net Proceeds | \$158,046 | \$40,474 | \$343,701 | \$302,776 |
| Member Services | \$39,739 | \$88,100 | \$89,540 | \$154,163 |
| Loan Forgiveness Income | \$0 | \$83,648 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total Revenues | \$1,047,310 | \$1,151,631 | \$1,389,380 | \$1,500,397 |
| Expenses | | | | |
| Personnel Costs | \$614,426 | \$667,646 | \$677,979 | \$932,144 |
| Contracted Services | \$219,665 | \$182,300 | \$188,870 | \$185,888 |
| Furniture/Equipment/Supplies | \$5,991 | \$6,863 | \$6,460 | \$8,903 |
| Meeting & Travel Expenses | \$2,334 | \$91,177 | \$126,744 | \$139,186 |
| Other Expenses | \$46,000 | \$51,077 | \$25,013 | \$50,502 |
| Total Expenses | \$888,416 | \$999,063 | \$1,025,066 | \$1,316,623 |

*Unaudited

Business Partners

AESA’s Business Partners play a vital role in advancing the association’s mission by providing expertise, innovative solutions, and strategic support that strengthen ESAs. These partnerships equip ESAs with the tools, knowledge, and resources needed to stay ahead of industry trends, address challenges, and drive meaningful impact in education. By collaborating with vetted businesses offering relevant services, AESA ensures its members have access to expert guidance and cutting-edge solutions. Through these strategic alliances, AESA fosters forward-thinking approaches that empower ESAs to navigate the evolving education landscape effectively.

AESA welcomed three new business partners in 2024: Universal Benefits Consortium, Daisy Solutions, and Amergis/Sunburst.

Business Partner Directory

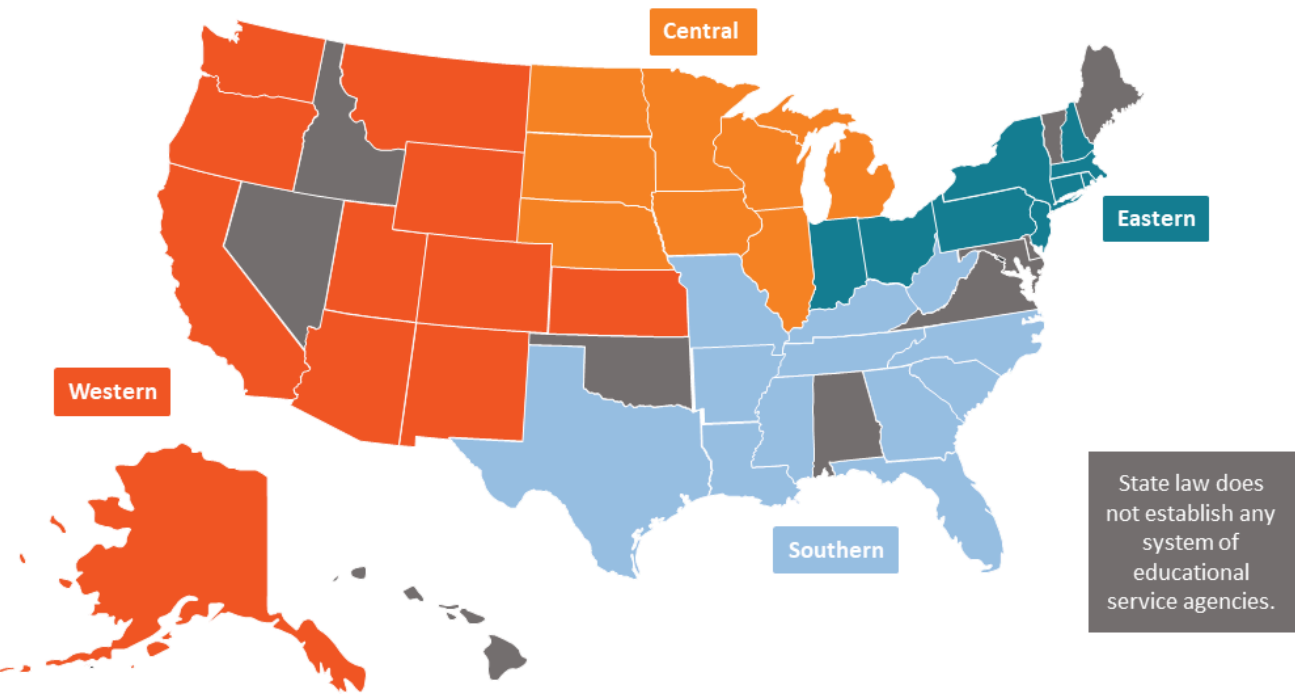


AESA Members

AESA has significantly expanded its national presence, now representing 478 member agencies across 39 states. This growing network strengthens AESA’s ability to serve as a unifying force for ESAs nationwide. With a diverse regional composition, AESA ensures that the distinct needs and challenges of ESAs in every part of the country are met with strategic, region-specific solutions. By harnessing the collective expertise and innovation of its members, AESA delivers impactful support, fosters collaboration, and drives meaningful improvements in education at both the local and national levels. Regular membership includes all ESA staff and board members, further enhancing AESA’s reach and collective strength.

Member Directory

AESA REGIONS



AESA Executive Team



Joan Wade
Executive Director



John Bass
Chief Operating Officer



Ann Fiene
Chief of Staff



Jessica Huizenga
Chief Program Officer



Jill Jackson
Director of Meetings & Events



Sheila King
Chief Strategy Officer



Chris Rooney
Director of Business Services



Olga Simoes
Chief Financial Officer



Claire Sowder
Director of Communications
& Marketing



Valentina (Tina) Viletto
AESA Foundation
Coordinator

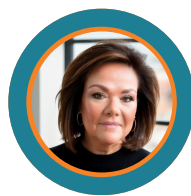
Contracted Consultants



Craig Burford
State Advocacy Advisor



Noelle Ellerson Ng
Associate Executive Director,
Policy & Advocacy



Doreen Marvin
Business Strategy Consultant



Jerry Maze
Leadership Academy
Facilitator



Tim McIlvain
Technology Leaders Network
Facilitator



Shileste Overton-Morris
Women's Leadership Network
Facilitator



Andy Pechacek
Business Strategy Consultant



Sasha Pudelski
Advocacy Director



Tara Thomas
Government Affairs Manager



George Wilson
AEPA Executive Director



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