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The Next Generation of AESA: A Redesign of our National Organization

In the summer of 2016, the Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESAAESA) came under new leadership. The context was changing rapidly, given uncertainties of new federal and state educational policy, the challenges of meeting the ever-changing needs of member agencies and the school districts they serve, and a host of other dynamic forces. Leaders sought a planning process that could produce breakthrough ideas for the long-term future of the association. They contracted Dr. Susan Leddick of PKR, Inc., to lead a design process that would **engage** stakeholders, **envision** a bold next generation of the association's development, and lay plans to **enact** the first steps toward that next generation in the near term.

AESA leaders convened a Design Team of 26 members (listed in the Appendix) to guide the process. The Design Team met for the first time at the AESA Summer Leadership Conference in Seattle, WA, on July 14-15, 2016. Soliciting structured input from the conference participants from around the nation, the team developed a common understanding of the current context, began to define the interacting set of problems they face in the complex and rapidly changing world of public education, and identified key priorities to guide the redesign. The design team finished their work on The Next Generation of AESA on September 27 in Arlington, VA.

Working through the process, the Design Team wrote the following set of underlying values and beliefs to serve as the touchstone for Next Generation AESA leaders.

1. We believe that **lifelong learning** founded on evidence-based practices leads to **continuous improvement** for all learners
2. We believe that all students have a right to learn in an environment where **diversity** is celebrated, all students are **included**, and **instruction is personalized** to students' diverse needs.
3. We believe that **authentic relationships** and collaboration that includes **diverse voices** yield **effective regional and national networks** that produce results for the common good.
4. We believe that **courageous leadership** inspires bold solutions to current and future complex challenges.
5. We believe that systemic change requires **boundary-spanning leadership**.
6. We are committed to achieving **equity** in learning by actively working to eliminate disparities and inequities.

The Design Team also developed five bold steps as the first iteration of The Next Generation of AESA. These bold steps will be presented in more detail at this year's annual conference in Savannah, GA. Bold steps include:

1. Align the national & state programs and activities to an annual association theme.
2. Design & launch a national advocacy campaign. Include state networks.
3. Initiate governance reform to assure council and membership engage & reflect diversity.
4. Establish affinity groups and documentation process.
5. Formalize the network of state directors.

We are excited about rolling out the Next Generation of AESA at our Annual convention in a few short weeks! For those of you that would like to get a jump start and review the entire document prior to the convention, you can get the white paper here: <http://www.aesa.us/about/nextgenaesacfm>

A special thank you to Susan Leddick, PKR Inc., for her continued leadership with AESA and facilitating the design process!