



*Supplement to AESA Online News - February 21, 2017*

### **Survey results are in!**

In preparation for its February meeting of the Federal Legislation Committee, Joan Wade, Ed.D., Executive Director of AESA, requested that a survey be sent to the state leaders. The intent was that each state leader would in turn, seek additional input from their state's ESAs, and then complete the survey to provide guidance for the AESA's 2017 Federal Legislative Agenda.

The survey was constructed from ideas and feedback gathered from Federal Legislation Committee members at its December meeting, with input from Noelle Ellerson Ng and Tom Gluck, Executive Director Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units.

The survey questions were generally open-ended in an effort to generate original member input into the 2017 legislative agenda. A list of 11 possible priorities were also presented, which respondents were asked to rank order. The top five priorities were identified by that list.

Thirty-five responses were received between December 20, 2016 and January 30, 2016. The responses came from 34 different organizations, representing Educational Service Agencies, two elementary schools, and one Board of Education.

Fifty percent (18) of respondents are CEOs or superintendents of ESAs; 26.7% (9) were State Association leaders; 1 was an ESA staff member; and 7 people described themselves as "other".

The following 25 states are represented in the data: Alabama; Arizona; Arkansas; California; Colorado (2); Connecticut; Illinois; Iowa; Kansas (5); Kentucky; Massachusetts (2); Michigan; Minnesota (2); Montana; Nebraska; New Jersey; North Dakota; Oregon; Pennsylvania; Rhode Island; Texas; Utah; Virginia; West Virginia (4); Wisconsin.

The top five priorities from the survey are listed here in order of priority:

- 1. IDEA**
- 2. ESSA legislation**
- 3. Early Childhood Education**
- 4. Teacher shortages**
- 5. FCC/E-rate**

**The Federal Advocacy Committee met Feb. 8-9, 2017**

Special Report: AESA Federal Advocacy Committee work  
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The Federal Advocacy Committee met in Washington D.C. on February 8 and 9 to set AESA's federal advocacy agenda. AESA leadership took a new approach to our Legislative Committee Meeting this year. In addition to finalizing AESA's 2017 Legislative Agenda, we used this year's legislative meeting to:

- Agree on five federal policy areas we consider to be of highest priority for AESA and its member-ESAs.
- Generate a list of opportunities in the priority policy areas to advance ESA interests through coordinated national advocacy.
- Understand the next steps needed to determine which issue(s) we will select for our coordinated national advocacy efforts.

In addition, AESA organized a full day of briefings for Federal Legislative Committee members with Congressional staff, federal policy makers, and education advocates experienced in federal relations. As our committee members engaged in discussions with our presenters, they kept the following critical questions in mind:

***Are the five federal policy priorities, identified through the AESA survey, the right list of priorities?***

***What opportunities exist to advance ESA interests through federal policy changes?***

***What do we need to learn more about?***

Using their experiences and discussions from the committee's first day of meetings, and in consideration of the survey results, on the second day of the meeting, Committee members distilled the AESA's 2017 federal advocacy agenda.

**The Committee collaborated to develop the following legislative priorities for AESA, with sub-points, as follows:**

1. IDEA
  - a. Short-term: Protect Medicaid in schools
  - b. Long-term: Coordinated campaign to grow (phase-in) federal IDEA funding with a goal of achieving full funding.
2. FCC/E-rate
  - a. Continue and protect funding
  - b. Expand scope of services
  - c. Educate legislatures and others about E-rate
  - d. Create equity and opportunity.

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### 3. Teacher Shortages

- a. Ensure ESAs are eligible for federal grants
- b. Expand public service loan forgiveness for teachers in rural areas and hard to staff positions
- c. Incentivize salaries for teachers in rural areas
- d. Develop an AESA affinity group on teacher shortage

### 4. Early Childhood Education

- a. Support funding
- b. Address certification regulatory concerns
- c. Support Child Care Development block grants

### 5. ESSA

- a. Flexibility is needed in ESSA implementation
- b. Define a role for ESAs within ESSA
- c. Level the playing field for schools accepting public money (accept all students and be equally accountable)

Other legislative issues such as career and technical education and secure rural schools were also addressed and discussed at the meeting.

### **Next Steps**

AESA will continue to work with Noelle Ellerson Ng, Director of Federal Advocacy, on all education issues before Congress. The priority list is where we will focus our energies and begin to focus on a national coordinated campaign effort.