



For Immediate Release
November 29, 2023

Jan Hanlon Receives Women of Inspiration In Leadership Award From Association of Educational Service Agencies

Jan Hanlon, Executive Director of Mountain State Educational Service Cooperative (MSESC) in Dunbar, West Virginia, has received the Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESAs) 2023 Women of Inspiration in Leadership Award from. Hanlon received the award on November 29, during the opening session of the AESA Annual Conference in Anaheim, California.

The award recognizes an extraordinary woman leader who inspires others and has earned her colleagues' respect for her efforts as an educational leader and role model. In addition, she empowers, supports and mentors other women in leadership. This is the inaugural year of this award, which AESA has dedicated to legacy of the late Dr. Susan Leddick.

Hanlon was honored for her efforts in establishing the MSESC in 2017 after the West Virginia Legislature voted to dissolve the existing 8 Regional Educational Service Agencies. The Legislature allowed the recreation of Educational Service Cooperatives with the caveat that no state funding would be provided.

“With Hanlon's direct involvement, the Mountain State ESC created its financial structure from the ground up, handling all accounts payable and receivables in-house, eliminating the burden on a county's finance department,” said Dr. Jerry Maze, Executive Director of Education Service Center Region 12 in Texas, who nominated Hanlon for the award.

He noted that through her efforts, MSESC grew from 12 full-time employees in June 2018 to around 800 full and part-time employees today.

Without state and federal funding, Hanlon knew the loss of programs and services would have a negative impact on area educators and students. She began her efforts to build up the cooperative through research and innovation and as a result won the Adult Education, the SPOKES academic and job preparation skills program, and Public Service Training grants in 35 of their 55 counties. Through this work, Hanlon received the Champion of Adult Education Award from the West Virginia Adult Education program in 2018.

In addition, MSESC began providing grant management and financial support to the Mid-Ohio Valley Workforce Development Board and currently manages over \$18 million in emergency



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assistance funding to provide services and support to non-public schools in West Virginia. The agency has also successfully managed grants from the Benedum Foundation for Career & Technical Education services and from the Department of Justice.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, MDESC worked with districts to provide staffing solutions. The effort continues today, helping districts meet the critical need to recruit and hire quality personnel expediently. These positions include classroom associates, interventionists, nurses, occupational therapists, mental health coordinators, accountants, and financial aid advisors

As Hanlon began building the MDESC, she started working with non-member counties through a shared services model, adding programs and services that continue to grow every year. One such program, Jobs & Hope West Virginia, employs 22 agents who help citizens overcome employment barriers through training and service opportunities. The agency provides bus driver training to 19 counties, audiology services to four counties, Medicaid services to eight counties, legal services to five counties, communication services to four counties, and investigative services, including Title IX to nine counties.

The agency also offers professional development on topics of timely interest including a Trauma and Mental Health Conference and a State School Safety Conference. Under Hanlon's direction, the agency continues to seek out ways to expand or services through strategic partnerships. One such partnership with Marshall University offers graduate level programs to teachers at a significant cost savings.

In addition to her work with MDESC, Hanlon is a member of the Executive Council of AESA and serves on state level organizations and initiatives including the Stakeholder Committee for the West Virginia First Lady's Communities in Schools, which works to ensure at-risk students graduate on time through a support network.

"This award has special meaning to me personally, as Susan Leddick was a friend and colleague. Susan believed in the advancements strong women leaders could bring to ESAs. Jan's entrepreneurial spirit and perservance is truly inspiring. I am so pleased that Jan is the inaugural recipient of this very prestigious award," said Dr. Joan Wade, AESA Executive Director.

"She has made a tremendous impact on the students and citizens of West Virginia," she concluded.

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