



AESA

ASSOCIATION OF
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Making a Difference

Spotlighting How ESAs Impact the Nation's Education System

Discover how ESAs partnered with their local school districts and other agencies to deliver high-impact services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Power of Nine

Washington Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD) |  Tumwater, WA

Washington State ESAs responded quickly to the need for information and PPE for students and staff, and ensured that schools operated successfully during the pandemic.

THE CHALLENGE:

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, school districts across Washington State needed access to timely and accurate information from state officials, hard to find personal protective equipment for students and staff, and instruction in best practices for moving education to online platforms.

THE SOLUTION :

Accustomed to working together to serve the needs of schools on a regional basis, AESD partnered with state and local leaders to address the increased needs caused by the pandemic. The network leveraged its collective purchasing power to acquire \$8 million in supplies and distribute them to schools. AESD created an online survey to gather questions from individual districts and communicated these questions to state officials so they could respond in a timely manner. Additionally, they provided a biweekly webinar with the

State Superintendent of Public Instruction. AESD also set up a variety of online training opportunities to help districts choose appropriate online learning management systems and enhance their virtual instruction.

THE RESULT:

Schools were able to operate successfully throughout the pandemic and increased state funding to the network will support these initiatives going forward.

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Dear Reader,

Why are you receiving this brochure? We think the work of regional Educational Service Agencies (ESAs) is amazing! In this edition, we choose to highlight the role of ESAs as we traverse the effects of the pandemic on education. As you will read, ESAs are solution-driven, highly collaborative, and a hub for services upon which many regional school districts rely.

While every state's regional system of educational service agency structure might be slightly different or may be called by a slightly different name (BOCES, RESAs, IUs, AEs, CESAs, etc.), nationally, ESAs share a common goal. They partner with public and private schools and school districts to find and provide effective and efficient solutions that support school districts as they deliver the education our nation's students deserve. I have the privilege to lead the Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESAs) and witness first-hand the quality of work they deliver.

Your support of Educational Service Agencies through policy and funding is critical to our nation's schools, our students, the future workforce, and our country. We hope you enjoy reading how ESAs truly do make a difference, not just in crisis, but every day, too. If I can answer any questions or be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me.

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Reimagining Education in the Wake of a Pandemic

Ohio Educational Service Center Association (OESCA) |  Columbus, OH

In the wake of the pandemic, Ohio's ESC Association members joined forces with state and regional partners to create a Reframing Education Initiative to help districts determine how to reframe and rethink the delivery of high-quality instructional opportunities for all students.

THE CHALLENGE:

After Ohio schools shut down because of the COVID-19 pandemic, state and regional education leaders realized there was an opportunity to help schools develop ways to reframe and rethink the delivery of high-quality educational opportunities for all students.

THE SOLUTION :

OESCA members helped launch a statewide project, the "Reframing Education Initiative," which created a decision-making framework designed to support schools in planning to meet the needs of all students in a multifaceted and multilayered manner and connect them to evidence-based resources and best practices. The initiative also created resources and a planning template to help districts develop a Remote Learning Plan that was required to be submitted to state officials last summer before the start of the 2020-21 school year.

THE RESULT:

The Reframing Education Initiative has served as the foundation for OESCA and its membership to engage in a collaborative, co-design process with the state education agency and other implementation partners in several statewide initiatives including the Remote Learning Alliance and Remote Learning, which seek to help districts establish and maintain their virtual instruction programs.

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"The time is right for Ohio to begin reframing its education model so that learning can become the constant and time and place can become the variables."

- Dr. Craig Burford, OESCA

Working Together to Keep Schools Safe

Nebraska Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council (ESUCC) | 📍 LaVista, NE

Nebraska ESUs coordinated with local and national organizations to provide hard-to-find masks, PPE, and common cleaning supplies to ensure school districts opened on time for the 2020-21 school year.

THE CHALLENGE:

Masks and other personal protective equipment, as well as common cleaning supplies, were hard to find in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Without those supplies, Nebraska school districts would not have been able to open for in-person instruction the fall of 2020.

THE SOLUTION :

ESUs in Nebraska collaborated with FEMA to purchase and distribute 2 million masks to schools in time for the first day of school. Another purchase was made in December. The ESUs also partnered with the University of

Nebraska and the Nebraska Ethanol Board to obtain 75,000 gallons of hand sanitizer to be delivered to the schools – at no cost to the schools – with the help of the Nebraska Forest Department, in time for the first day of classes. The ESUCC cooperative purchase program allowed districts to purchase more of the needed supplies at a reduced cost as they became available.

The ESUCC provided other services to state schools including communication, professional development and training, coordination to provide access to the Internet and devices for students who lacked them, and

advocacy on important issues such as school attendance, accreditation status and teacher certification requirements.

THE RESULT:

Schools were able to open on time for the 2020-21 school year and continue to operate safely.

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“When the pandemic hit, everyone realized the ESUs were a perfect solution to address a myriad of issues.” – Dr. Kraig Lofquist, ESUCC

Connecting Michigan Students & Staff to the Internet

The Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) | 📍 Lansing, MI

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools online, initial data showed that 500,000 students and educators throughout the state could not access the internet for remote learning. MAISA and its partners formed the MiConnect initiative to address internet access.

THE CHALLENGE:

The COVID-19 pandemic meant many Michigan schools closed to in-person learning and pivoted to remote learning for students. Although most students and educators were able to access the Internet from home, many were unable to do so due to the lack of appropriate devices or Internet connections. Initial data showed 500,000 students and educators could not access the Internet.

THE SOLUTION :

To assess and address the need for all students and educators to have Internet access, MAISA and its affiliate, Michigan Education Technology Leaders (METL), recognized that private and public partnerships were necessary and formed the MiConnect initiative. MAISA received a \$300,000 planning grant from one of its public partners, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, to begin that work.

THE RESULT:

A comprehensive effort to analyze the connectivity gap among Michigan students and educators is underway with the ultimate goal of leveraging public and private partnerships to close the gap and provide digital inclusion.

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Making a Difference

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Partnerships Bring Vaccine to Educators in Oregon & Texas

Clackamas Education Service District |  Clackamas, OR

When the COVID-19 vaccine became available, Clackamas ESD spearheaded a partnership to launch a large-scale vaccination clinic that vaccinated approximately 40,000 educators.

Region 10 Education Service Center |  Richardson, TX

When two local supermarket chains' pharmacies had COVID-19 vaccines available, Region 10 ESC in Richardson, Texas opened its doors to 4,400 area educators to receive the vaccine.

THE CHALLENGE:

As the first COVID-19 vaccines became available in 2021, officials in the greater Portland, Oregon area and northern Texas recognized that making sure educators were among the first to be vaccinated was a top priority. However, since there were thousands of educators and large geographic areas involved, the logistics were difficult.

THE SOLUTION :

In both states, Education Service Districts (ESDs) realized that partnerships with healthcare providers could streamline the vaccination process.

In Oregon, the Clackamas Education Service District reached out to four healthcare providers – Kaiser, OHSU, Legacy, and Providence – and helped form a partnership with the providers and two other ESDs. In less than a month, the group planned and launched a large-scale vaccination clinic in downtown Portland.

In Texas, Region 10 ESC collaborated with two supermarket chain pharmacies – Tom Thumb and Albertsons – that had vaccine and personnel but no central location. Region 10 opened its headquarters to provide a central

vaccination site. Personnel from the Oregon and Texas ESDs helped organize and coordinate the clinics in their respective states.

THE RESULT:

Thousands of educators were vaccinated at both clinics, which helped advance the statewide efforts to reopen schools to in-person learning.

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