A Message from the President

President Maggie Perez

The AESD Executive Board met for a mini retreat in Ellensburg on September 19, 2005.

The purpose of our retreat was to identify AESD Goals and Strategies that would assist us in edifying a stronger collaboration with our school districts; build capacity to ensure student success; create partnerships with those involved in the welfare and services of students’ pre-K-12; and to develop an AESD communication plan to be utilized by all members to advocate for AESD systems, goals and strategies.

Superintendent Rich McBride and Eldene Wall, North Central ESD 171, presented the board with their achievement and implementation of the AESD website, www.aesd-wa.org. We are tremendously appreciative of Rich and Eldene for this great accomplishment — our own AESD web site. Thanks again!

Our AESD retreat was a huge success. I am appreciative of being part of our Executive Board, and value the talent and passion all board members convey. It is evident that our vision and commitment is to the education of all children to receive quality education in Washington State.

ESD 101 Superintendent Terry Munther represents ESDs on the Washington Learns K-12 Advisory Committee. After attending the first advisory committee meeting, Terry believes the Washington Learns Steering Committee will look to change ESDs and other parts of government to become much more effective parts of a state-wide pre-K through higher education system. Terry suggests that ESDs should take the lead in this thinking and planning rather than merely reacting to any changes that the Washington Learns Steering Committee may propose. Terry suggests that AESD address the questions he’s projected:

• How have we been able to demonstrate a statewide system success?
• What are we doing about standardization and capacity among ESDs?
• What are some examples of cost effectiveness we can demonstrate?

Discussion to address Terry’s questions will take place at our Executive Board meeting in Seattle, Thursday, November 17, 2005.

Personally, the mini retreat was an exceptional learning experience. I’m happy to have a role in AESD advocating the importance of education in this educational system. I am learning daily and loving it.

2006 AESD Conference Preview

2006 AESD Conference keynote speaker Erin Gruwell

The 2006 AESD Conference, hosted by Olympic ESD 114, will feature keynote speaker Erin Gruwell.

As an idealistic twenty-three year old English teacher in Long Beach, California, Erin Gruwell confronted a room of “unteachable, at-risk” students. One day she intercepted a note with an ugly racial caricature, and angrily declared that this was precisely the sort of thing that led to the Holocaust — only to be met by uncomprehending looks. So she and her students, using the treasured books Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl and Zlata’s Diary: A Child’s Life in Sarajevo as their guides, undertook a life-changing odyssey against intolerance and misunderstanding. They learned to see the parallels in these books to their own lives, recording their thoughts and feelings in diaries and dubbing themselves the “Freedom Writers,” in homage to the civil rights activists “The Freedom Riders.” Erin Gruwell will inspire listeners with the story of how a teacher and 150 teens used writing to change themselves and the world around them.

News from Washington State ESDs

ESD 101: The Northeast Washington Education Council — the non-profit foundation affiliated with ESD 101 — has been awarded its first federal grant. NEWEC has been named the recipient of a $50,000 award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The grant was made through the Compassion Capital Fund (CCF) Targeted Capacity Building Program.

The federal program is designed to help promising community organizations bolster their infrastructure, sustainability and, ultimately, their ability to serve constituents. Organizations serving at-risk youth are a CCF priority.

NEWEC is a relatively new foundation whose goal is to advance the educational and public service mission of ESD 101. The Council exists to receive, manage and distribute income and gifts for the benefit of ESD 101 and the districts, schools and students it serves. The Council accepts gifts from individuals, foundations, corporations, associations and government sources. As a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization, gifts to NEWEC may be tax deductible.

NEWEC will use the grant for both infrastructure development — including specialized data base software — and an outreach campaign raising awareness of the foundation’s mission. For more information on NEWEC, please visit http://www.newec.org.

ESD 105 received a three-year grant of $2,531,038 from the U.S. Dept. of Education called the Diverse Partnerships for Early Literacy Project. This innovative project will develop the cognitive, oral and printed language skills of Head Start and preschool children. It prepares them for kindergarten through a unique combination of family involvement, class activities, technology and partnerships with three local school districts.

The first year of the project will initiate this January. ESD 105 will partner in this work with Puget Sound ESD, which is in the third year of a similar grant and has established training modules that will be used in the local project.

This new partnership will serve the Wapato School District preschool as well as the three Yakama Nation Head Start sites whose children will attend kindergarten in the Toppenish, Wapato and Mt. Adams school districts. The project will involve approximately 220 children, their families, and 34 preschool staff members, and affect the approximately 750 kindergarten students in the three participating school districts. ESD 105 will be the fiscal agent for the project and provide training and tech-

AESD Dispatch**

*Dispatch: “The sending of a message with promptness and efficiency.”

AESD Dispatch is a newsletter for directors of ESDs in Washington State, published quarterly during the year, circulation 100.

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See the AESD Website for the calendars of events and other AESD information.

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News from Washington State ESDs

NWSED 189 has received a three-year $7.9 million federal Department of Education grant to support a comprehensive approach to better ensure Skagit County children are safe and have access to community and school support systems dedicated to their education, health, and safety.

This community partnership will support the following goals:

- Safe and drug-free school environments.
- Appropriate mental health treatment, case management and support services to school age children.
- Early childhood staff training and parent education, as well as family support services, to high-risk new mothers to improve the social/emotional development of children.
- Community-based organization and individual partnerships with school, community, and Consortium prevention activities.

Goals will be accomplished by:

- Ten additional Prevention/Intervention Specialists.
- Providing and teaching Best Practices Prevention Curriculum and Programs.
- Parent/guardian participation in drug, alcohol and violence prevention programs.
- Community-based mental health prevention, screening and assessments; with early intervention and follow-up services to children and families from early childhood through grade twelve.
- Three Early Learning Specialists.
- A Welcome Baby Coordinator
- The creation of a Nurse-Family Partnership Program.

Puget Sound ESD will be operating from their new Renton headquarters beginning November 7. They are very excited about their new facility and the opportunities it affords them to serve their region in new and improved ways. The new switchboard number is (425) 917-7600 and new address is 800 Oakesdale Ave. SW, Renton WA, 98055-1221.

In other news, they conducted a regional customer perception survey last spring that was completed by 4,100 teachers, administrators, related services personnel, paraprofessionals, classified and early learning staff from 30 school districts. The survey gave them valuable information regarding services and delivery of them.

Participants rated the importance of their Board’s Ends, and performance in achieving them. Of most importance to their constituents: Helping school districts to improve student learning; helping districts to improve safety; civility and support in learning environments; and facilitating districts’ ability to increase economic efficiencies and resources.