



AESE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING – Minutes

November 21, 2024 // NEWESD 101, 4202 S. Regal St., Spokane, WA 99223

3:30pm – 5:30pm Panorama Room

5:45pm Member Networking Dinner @ [Twigs Bistro](#) (4320 S. Regal)

Executive Board

President

Terry Brandon, ESD 123

President Elect

Dale McDaniel, CRESO 113

Members

June Sine	NEWESD 101
James Sebree	ESD 105
Darlene Stickle	ESD 112
Dale McDaniel	CRESO 113
Ann Byrnes	OESD 114
Mehret	
Tekle-Awarun	PSESD 121
Terry Brandon	ESD 123
Marcia Henkle	NCESD 171
Merle Kirkley	NWESD 189

Superintendents

Rob Roettger	NEWESD 101
Shane Backlund	ESD 105
Tim Merlino	ESD 112
Flip Herndon	ESD 113
Aaron Leavell	OESD 114
John Welch	PSESD121
Steve McCullough	ESD 123
Michelle Price	NCESD 171
Ismael "Ish"	
Vivanco	NWESD 189

AESE Staff

Jessica Vavrus, Exec. Director
Melissa Gombosky, Legislative Liaison
Shayna Burmeister, Assistant

Meeting Minutes

Executive Board Members Present: Terry Brandon, Ann

Byrnes, Dale McDaniel, Darlene Stickle, James Sebree, June Sine, Marcia Henkle, Mehret Tekle-Awarun, Merle Kirkley (virtual).

Superintendents Present: Aaron Leavell, John Welch, Ismael Vivanco, Michelle Price, Tim Merlino, Rob Roettger, Shane Backlund, Steve McCullough.

Staff Present: Jessica Vavrus, Melissa Gombosky, Shayna Burmeister (virtual)

Welcome

President Terry Brandon called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM, led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance, introductions, and a review of the agenda.

I. Consent Agenda

Lead: President, Terry Brandon

For Reference: [9/17/24 meeting minutes \(draft\)](#) | [Today's Meeting Materials](#)

Dale McDaniel moved to approve the 11/21/24 agenda and 9/17/24 AESE Executive Board meeting minutes. Ann Byrnes seconded the motion. The 11/21/24 agenda and 9/17/2024 AESE Executive Board meeting minutes were approved.

II. ESD Hot Topics, Updates, & Top of Mind Discussion (around the table)

a. District financial health updates

- Ismael Vivanco provided updates on the enhanced oversight the Marysville School District is receiving with the help of a special administrator.
- Dale McDaniel commented on how quickly Business Managers have responded to the support provided on financial health at the district level.
- Aaron Leavell shared there are currently four school district superintendent positions open within the OESD 114 region. A mix of resignations and retirements.
- John Welch shared there have been 79 new superintendents within PSESD region in the last six years. Johns shared that most are due to vacating positions and not due to the impact of retirement. The group discussed that a broader story is being told with this number of changes.

III. Legislative Updates & AESE Priorities

Lead: Melissa Gombosky

For Reference: [AESE Behavioral Health Request to OFM](#) | [AESE 2025 Legislative Platform](#) | [2025 AESE Behavioral Health 1-Pager](#)

Melissa Gombosky provided an overview of the AESE 2025 Legislative Platform. The two primary focuses are restoring funding and removing barriers for School-Based Mental & Behavioral Health. And closing the gap between what state allocates and the actual operating cost for Student-Centered School District Support. Melissa would like when legislators see "our" faces, they immediately think Special Education, Transportation and MSOC (Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs).

IV. AESD Business: Constitution Update

Lead: Terry Brandon

For Reference: [Summary of Proposed Amendments](#) | [Draft Constitution Amendments](#)

During the 2024 Nominating Committee process, it was discussed that clarification was needed as to whether it was necessary to also put the current President-Elect on the ballot. Terry Brandon revisited this issue with the Board and proposed minor adjustments to the Constitution that would clarify and resolve any confusion in which officer roles should be balloted by the Nominating Committee. He reviewed the Summary of Proposed Amendments, including the rationale for the amendment, and the draft/proposed Constitution language amendments.

Mehret Tekle-Awarun made the motion to approve moving the proposed language changes to the Constitution forward to AESD Membership in their April business meeting at the Annual Conference. Terry Brandon seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

V. AESD Annual Conferences

a. 2025 Conference Updates

Lead: June Sine/Rob Roettger, Jessica Vavrus

For Reference: [2025 Draft Program](#) | [2025 Conference Web Site](#)

Jessica Vavrus shared the draft for the 2025 AESD Annual Conference. Jessica shared that consideration is being given to beginning the conference on Wednesday afternoon with a government-to-government session.

The group discussed potential breakout and keynote sessions. June Sine shared the recommendation from the Conference Design Team to shift from having a second keynote session on Friday to having more learning sessions. This option allows additional breakout sessions and rotations. The Board discussed potential breakout sessions and provided input on their priorities. This information will be compiled and presented to the Design Team in January.

The group concurred that the raffle baskets should remain as part of the conference, though the process of the raffle may look different in 2025. More details will follow.

A new idea was brought forward from the Design Team to highlight unique work/programs at each ESD. To showcase this work, further brainstorming will be done with the Conference Design Team. The group recommended that each ESD have a booth (this could be difficult with travel) and/or develop a short video which could be played prior to each conference session and/or done as a PSA during breaks, introductions etc. Additional discussion and guidance will take place in January.

Jessica shared the conference website is live. And currently highlights the three 2025 sponsors. Registration instructions and conference information will be shared after the January 13, 2025 AESD Executive Board meeting. Another round of outreach will also occur with potential sponsors.

b. 2026 Venue Discussion

Lead: Ann Byrnes/Aaron Leavell, Jessica Vavrus

For Reference: [2026 Venue Options](#)

OESD 114 is scheduled to host the 2026 Annual Conference. OESD Superintendent Aaron Leavell brought forward three options regarding the 2026 conference venue. Due to the high satisfaction with the 2024 conference venue, the board made the recommendation to allow the host ESD the choice to have the AESD Annual Conference in their own region or host in Chelan, WA at Campbell's resort. Securing contracts for multiple years in a row could potentially have a positive impact on cost to hold the event in one location.

Aaron led the group in discussing cost/benefit of hosting the 2026 conference in Poulsbo, WA or Chelan, WA. The group reviewed the [2026 Venue Options analysis](#) and determined that due to the date range available in 2026, that the event should occur in Poulsbo, WA. The host hotel will be the Suquamish Clearwater Resort. To additionally showcase options in OESD 114 region, the Thursday evening Award & Recognition dinner will be hosted at the Kiana Lodge. Transportation will be provided.

VI. AESD Updates

a. Accreditation (AESD Network)

Lead: Ismael Vivanco

For Reference: [Link to 9/17/24 overview](#) | [AESD Accreditation Web Site](#) |

Ismael shared there will be updates provided at the January meeting. The 2025 Dates are set as May 13-15 (Tumwater) & May 19-20 (Spokane). Ismael believes that numbers may be lower in 2025/26.

b. AI Innovation Summit Collaboration

Lead: Jessica Vavrus

For Reference: [AI Summit Web Site](#)

Jessica Vavrus provided an update on the October Summit that originally had been scheduled to occur in SeaTac was instead moved to Spokane due to the hotel worker strike on the west side of the state. The content was meant for school district teams and appeared to be well-received. The Summit which was originally planned for the west side of the state is scheduled for February 3-5, 2025 at the SeaTac Doubletree Hotel.

VII. Good of the Order & Upcoming

Lead: Terry Brandon / All

Terry Brandon reminded the group that the meeting in January would be virtual.

VIII. Adjourn

Terry Brandon adjourned the meeting at 5:40 PM