

AESD EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 11, 2025, 9:30am – 11:30am (box lunch to go)

Location: Puget Sound ESD, Duwamish Room

Executive Board

President

Terry Brandon, ESD 123

President Elect

Dale McDaniel, CRESO 113

Members

June Sine	NEWESD 101
James Sebree	ESD 105
Darlene Stickel	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	PSESD 121
Steve McCullough	ESD 123
Michelle Price	NCESD 171
Ismael "Ish"	
Vivanco	NWESD 189

AESD Staff

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

Executive Board Members Present: Terry Brandon, Dale McDaniel, Ann Byrnes (virtual), Darlene Stickel, James Sebree, June Sine, Marcia Henkle, Mehret Tekle-Awarun, Merle Kirkley

• **Board Members Absent:** None

Superintendents Present: Aaron Leavell (virtual), John Welch, Ismael Vivanco, Michelle Price, Tim Merlino, Rob Roettger, Shane Backlund, Steve McCullough, Flip Herndon

• **Absent:** None

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

I. Welcome & Consent Agenda

Lead: President, Terry Brandon

For Reference: [1/13/25 meeting minutes \(draft\)](#) | [Today's Meeting](#)

Materials

President Brandon welcomed the group and invited introductions around the table. He led the group in the Pledge and reviewed the agenda. President Brandon welcomed review and comment on the January 12, 2025 meeting minutes. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes and Consent Agenda. James Sebree moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Merle Kirkley seconded the motion. The 1/13/25 minutes and the 3/11/25 Consent Agenda were adopted.

II. Legislative Updates & AESD Priorities

For Reference: [3/11/25 Legislative Update](#) | [AESD Legislative Priorities Website](#) | [AESD Behavioral Health Request to OFM](#) | [AESD 2025 Legislative Platform](#) |

President Brandon welcomed AESD Legislative Liaison, Melissa Gombosky, to the meeting via Zoom. Melissa provided an update and overview of the 2025 legislative session, status of AESD and school district priorities, and welcomed questions from the group.

III. ESD Hot Topics, Updates, & Top of Mind Discussion

This time is for Executive Board members and ESD superintendents to elevate important topics of interest and relevance for group learning and discussion. President Brandon welcomed additional topics and invited discussion on the following topics.

- a. **District financial health updates:** The conversation covered consistent themes in each of the regions. The Superintendents shared how the districts in binding conditions are working their way through the process. And are seeing successes. Proactive measures to keep districts out of bidding conditions include financial health watch lists, dashboards and ensuring systems are in place to prevent these situations in the future. The group discussed how bad practices carry over with new business managers. As an example, the reality of signing contracts today which, with a change in funding down the road, can easily contribute to ongoing issues.

It was also shared that many school board members are new to this level of involvement in public education and need to have a clear understanding of process and the ESDs roles, especially evident in the case where board members have been appointed.

- b. **Federal policy & funding landscape:** The group discussed impact of DEI Executive Order on ESD programming, potential funding. The groups shared that they are holding off on any changes until they have a clear understanding of federal funding. The group shared that they are gathering a landscape of federal funding to ESDs that may be impacted. There was also discussion about the WA state response and guidance to districts and how that may impact funding to ESDs and school districts.
- c. **Accreditation panel schedules & updates:** For reference: [Accreditation Flyer & Schedules \(as of 3/5/25\)](#). Superintendent Vivanco (189) shared an update on the upcoming Accreditation panels in May: May 13-14, Tumwater (at ESD 113) & May 19-20, Spokane (at ESD 101). He reminded the group to solicit board members to participate in the panels.
- d. **Other ESD Updates or Top of Mind Issues?** No other items were raised for group discussion.

IV. **AESD Association Business: Association Budget Update & 2025/26 Proposed**

Lead: Terry Brandon, Jessica Vavrus | **For review:** [2024/25 Association Budget Projections & 25/26 Proposed](#)

President Brandon and Jessica Vavrus reviewed the materials that will be presented to membership at the AESD Annual Business Meeting regarding the Association Budget. Jessica provided an overview of the projected 24/25 budget and went through the items in the proposed 25/26 budget. The role of the Executive Board is to approve the proposed budget to move forward to AESD membership for formal adoption at the Annual Business Meeting in April. Merle Kirkley made a motion to approve the proposed budget to move forward for adoption. Marcia Henkle seconded the motion. The motion was adopted.

Following the motion's approval, Mehret Tekle-Awarun asked about whether the budget should include AESD staff time and effort that goes into supporting the Executive Board and annual conference. Jessica shared that she, Shayna, and Kristen Jaudon (Communications) have been keeping track of their time spent on AESD Association business. This information could be quantified into an estimated budget expenditure to account for staff support time and effort. Since this information was not included in the proposed budget, the group agreed to gather the information and discuss in June.

V. **Annual Conference Updates: For Reference:** [2025 Conference Web Site](#)

a. **Registration & Budget Status Update**

Lead: Jessica Vavrus | **For reference:** [3/6/25 Registration & Budget Update](#)

Jessica Vavrus provided an update and overview of overall conference registration, projected budget, and anticipated sponsorships. The number of sponsors continues to rise with more interest in joining the event to network with ESD leaders. She also shared attendance estimates for the pre-conference Learning Session: Strengthening Tribal Consultation for ESD Boards and Staff. Jessica shared that Henry Strom, Maxine Alex and Shandy Abrahamson are

designing this workshop specifically for ESDs and their board members. Hopefully there will be a good showing at the session.

b. Program Updates

Lead: June Sine, Rob Roettger, Jessica Vavrus

The group reviewed the following topics regarding the program for the 2025 AESD Annual Conference: [At-a-Glance](#) and [ESD snapshot video topics](#). They discussed the adjustments to breakout sessions and content ([link to discussion document](#)). Jessica Vavrus confirmed the business meeting items and the timeline to send to membership by 3/18/25. Terry reviewed the proposed 25/26 budget with the group and the [Proposed Constitution amendments](#) which were approved by Exec Board in November of 2024. Jessica Vavrus shared update on Award of Distinction nominations & selection process.

c. 2026 Conference Considerations

Lead: Terry Brandon, Dale McDaniel | **For Reference:** [Annual Conference Rotation Schedule](#)

President Brandon led the group in a discussion regarding questions and considerations for proceeding with planning for the 2026 conference at the Clearwater Resort and Kiana Lodge. Possibly take action regarding future annual conferences and the rotation schedule.

The group discussed the importance of having an annual event where people can come together and learn together. The purpose is professional development, and many boards have a board policy that supports board member professional development. Dale McDaniel shared the comment, "The conference is our Board Members connection to what is going on. The conference is well-managed and well-funded."

The conversation leaned to the reality that virtual options do not produce the same outcomes. The group agreed to proceed with the 2026 conference as planned. The next step will be to identify a Design team to consist of host ESD board members from OESD 114 and Executive Board representatives.

VI. Good of the Order & Upcoming

Lead: Terry Brandon / All

President Brandon led a round robin for group sharing.

VII. Adjourn

President Brandon adjourned the meeting at 11:43am