

Affinity Groups Stimulate Networking Opportunities

Recently, AESA completed a redesign process to help guide it toward a thriving future. One of the Bold Steps that emerged from the redesign process was the formation of Affinity Groups. Affinity Groups have begun and you can become a part of them.

What are Affinity Groups?

The purpose of Affinity Groups will be to broaden your professional networks. They are open to the employees of the ESAs that are members of AESA. Affinity Groups are formed around common interests or issues, rather than common job titles. Meetings occur electronically throughout the year. If you work for an ESA that is also a member of AESA, you can join an Affinity Group that interests you!

Blended/Personalized Learning

This Affinity Group is exploring the changing instructional landscape as it moves from a traditional teacher-led model toward various student-centered models of blended and personalized learning. Participants will share ideas and approaches about how ESA's can support this changing landscape, particularly around ESA services that support

schools and promote the shift of instructional practice around these 21st century pedagogies.

Technology used: Quarterly Zoom meetings & Google Docs.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule: June 14, 2017; September 13, 2017; December 13, 2017

Lead contact: Sally Lindgren
(IA) sally.lindgren@gpaea.org.

Ed-Fi Alliance use by ESAs

This Affinity Group will discuss deployments of the open-source data standard Ed-Fi by education service agencies. Ed-Fi is a nationally adopted data standard that supports a data store and early warning dashboard and is in use in more than 30 states. Ed-Fi enables faster sharing through its use of a data standard which provides a pre-agreed data structure that vendors, systems and databases can all use to make the movement of data more seamless and powerful. More information on Ed-Fi can be found at <http://ed-fi.org>

Lead contact: Rick Wahlstrom, CIO, Northwest Regional Education Service District, 5825 NE Ray Circle, Hillsboro, OR (503) 614-1412, rickw@nwresd.k12.or.us

Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice

An Affinity Group discussion about equity, inclusion, and social justice is already underway and is open to any employee of any member-ESA interested in sharing resources, new learning, and successes around this topic.

Technology Used: Basecamp

Lead Contact: Scott Menzel (MI),
at smenzel@washtenawisd.org.

Special Education Service Providers Think Tank

Interested special education director/coordinators will connect quarterly to share their successes, challenges, trends, and innovative ideas related to the delivery of special education services. Participation in this national forum will offer ESA leaders insights related to the provision of cutting edge special education service to anticipate and meet the needs of their clients.

Technology Used: Quarterly Zoom video meetings & Google Docs.

Upcoming Meeting schedule: August 29, 2017, November 28, 2017, February 27, 2018.

Lead Contact: Sherry Zubeck (PA) at sherry_zubeck@iu13.org.

Open Education Resource (OER)

This Affinity Group will explore the changing instructional landscape as it moves from a traditional paper textbook and materials toward various Open Education Resource (OER) materials for online and face to face instruction.

Participants will share ideas and approaches about how ESA's can support this changing landscape, particularly around ESA services that support schools and promote the shift of instructional practice around these 21st century pedagogies.

Technology Used; Quarterly Zoom video meetings & Google Docs.

Meetings Schedule: August 9, 2017, November 15, 2017, February 14, 2018

Lead Contact: Evan Abbey (IA) eabbey@aeapdonline.org.

The group will meet quarterly (3rd Wednesday) beginning in May, 2017.

Visible Leadership

Demographics of students and families are rapidly changing across our country. Simultaneously, infrastructure and financing of ESAs is often in flux. Diversity in clientele served, and in business and office operations, demands steadfast leadership that is nimble and responsive. The time is now. Join the Visible Leadership Affinity Group and reap the benefits of collective AESA experience and intellect. Participants will be empowered as they in turn lead their teams in the design and delivery innovative solutions. Focus Themes (to initiate discussion, more topics to evolve):

Growth Mindset (Visible Learning - John Hattie)

Observation & Feedback (eWalkThrough®)
Meaningful Coaching Conversations (Better Conversations
- Jim Knight)
Culture of Collaboration (Adaptive Schools®)

Technology Tools: Dedicated “Visible Leadership” website (or other digital formats), to include Visible Leadership Forum (threaded discussion board) and Leadership Resource Hub (e.g. videos, research articles, links). Virtual meetings (scheduled to address critical topics that emerge from the group) with access to archived videos of all meetings. Twitter - follow @eWalkThrough and join monthly Twitter chat #eWalkThrough

Lead Contact: Dr. Kelly Gillespie, CEO, Southwest Plains - Kansas (kelly.gillespie@swplains.org)

Communications/PR

The Marketing and Outreach Affinity Group is a professional learning community and support group for those individuals at ESAs around the country with a job function, interest, or expertise related to marketing, branding, communications, social media, design, public relations, and the like!

This is a place for AESA members to post questions, suggestions, ideas, innovations, resources, links, or documents that everyone will have access to. We will work together to address common issues and to share what we are doing to get the word out to members about programs

and services. There is so much we can learn from one another about messaging, design elements, types of materials, best practices, social media, etc. So please join us to learn together about what is working and what may not. Help us create a peer community, an online network, and a repository of shared resources!

Lead contact: Amy Grover, Director of Planning, Southeast Service Cooperative

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Other Affinity Groups coming soon

Early Literacy (will start in August)

Nonprofit Organization Entrepreneurism

ESA Programs/Services Evaluation