

## OAASFEP 25 YEARS (K) NEW

At our Spring conference in April, 2008 we will recognize and celebrate our association's twenty-five years of service and leadership to our Ohio members who work in state and federal education programs. We will also look and plan ahead for the next twenty-five years. Impossible you say because of our rapidly changing world. True, but as a NAFEPA state affiliate we will have the information and support to make necessary adjustments. We also have twenty-five years of experience making our association work. Like NAFEPA, we have never had more resources and members who want to understand state and federal education programs and make them effective for the students and their families that we serve.

As a founding member of OAASFEP, its President when we affiliated with NAFEPA in 1985, and the Ohio representative on the NAFEPA Board, I offer what I believe are some points to consider as we look ahead.

**Change** – In state and federal education programs no year (or day) seems to be the same. Someone from my office attends every state meeting on our grants and grants processes and procedures. I attend meetings on the state and federal budgets and plans for the next state and federal budgets. I learned many years ago that the annual new Title I coordinator's meeting in Ohio is not just for new administrators but where you learn about the state's view of state and federal grants priorities and how they are going to be implemented and reviewed.

**Relationships** – Although there are many new forms of communication, there remains a need for face-to-face contact both formal and informal. In Ohio we have a Spring and Fall Conference and our Board meetings are monthly unless they are not needed. For several years many of us also saw each other at quarterly state urban school meetings. It's easier to clearly respond to questions when they are asked face-to-face.

**Communications** – For many of us the most difficult skill is listening, especially if we don't care for the speaker or their ideas. I try to be an active listener and especially want to learn from legislators and others who do not seem to have a favorable view of public education. For most of my career, these have been the people who have been in leadership positions in Ohio and at the federal level. I've tried to consider what they are saying and see if there are ways to take advantage of ideas and programs they support. Both OAASFEP and NAFEPA have offered speakers that represent a wide range of views.

**Leadership** – We are fortunate that over the years both OAASFEP and NAFEPA have had a culture of leadership where power has not been the goal. Rather, our national and state governance structures and practices have provided opportunities for the best thinking of each of us to be contributed as we work toward achieving our common goals. If you want to be on an OAASFEP or NAFEPA committee or be considered to run for an office, you just need to volunteer.

Services to students – As state and federal programs administrators it is easy to become focused on regulations, finances, staffing, and assessment and forget about the programs that are for services to students and their families. At OAASFEP and NAFEPA conferences we have included sessions on best practices programs and had students speak and perform. As we look toward the future, we may want to consider additional opportunities for students and their parents at our conferences.

Humor – Most of us enjoy a joke or political cartoon even when it is at our expense. We recognize the irony in what we do and realize that politics sometimes may be responsible for effective programs being discontinued and different ones started. Few state and federal programs administrators are whiners. We are too busy and it often serves no purpose. At our conferences we provide opportunities for stress relief with what we can do on the difficult issues we face.

Thank you for allowing me to share a few of my ideas on what makes OAASFEP and its affiliation with NAFEPA effective. We invite your comments and participation as we go about our important work.

Dr. Everett C. Mann  
NAFEPA Representative