



membership matters!

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Get involved and grow yourself and ACSA

It is no secret that members are the lifeblood of ACSA and volunteer leaders are essential to the association's viability. ACSA's success over the last 40 years is due, in large part, to its members and their dedication to leadership and participation.

Mark Anderson, vice principal at Nogales High School in Rowland USD and Region 15's representative to the Equity, Achievement and Diversity for Success Committee, likens ACSA to a professional learning community.



Anderson

"It is our community where we share practices, data and stories and use each other to build ourselves up," Anderson said. "When we read the work of Meg Wheatley, Fritjof Capra, Stephanie Pace Marshall, Michael Fullan, etc., they describe education as a living system. Successful living systems survive through symbiotic relationships – different parts of the system sustain, nourish and build up each other."

Anderson is a good ACSA example of this. He was invited to join the association and then became actively involved after he was encouraged to attend local activities and was afforded the opportunity to experience the organization's culture of support for himself.

It is through such an active member-driven system that ACSA has been able to achieve its mission to effectively support California's educational leaders for 40 years. More than 450 members this year have invested their skills and expertise on state job-alike councils, special issue committees, task forces and advisory bodies.

The coordinated groups provide guidance and support across all aspects of educational leadership and help promote best practices, provide professional development, help create a positive view of school administration, and work tirelessly to advocate for their profession in the legislative arena.

"We all want to make a change for the better in the lives of the students of our communities," Anderson said. "New administrators, in particular, carry a large amount of hope and vision for what is possible, and it is important to nourish this hope and vision."

But how much time does this take, you might ask? ACSA education leaders like Anderson recognize the profession often operates with pressing demands and in an age of increased accountability. School leaders are now required to do more with less, all while trying to find a balance between work and family. Still, Anderson knows participation pays off.

"If we want ACSA to be of value to us, then we need to be of value to it," he said.

Anderson became more involved in ACSA when his principal signed him up to present his own work at region events and at a Leadership Summit.

"It doesn't have to be just one more thing on your plate," he said. "They do all work together, and I was able to integrate my work, school and ACSA into one."

Members who are involved also take the greatest advantage of networking, education, sharing and relationship building opportunities that are almost unavoidable while actively participating.

"Because people encouraged me to be involved, I have forged positive working and personal relationships in my district, across the region, and even the state," Anderson said.

Contact us and learn more

Each of ACSA's opportunities for involvement requires different levels of commitment, and while some state-level leadership roles require a day of travel, many do not.

With the ability to videoconference between ACSA and any county office of education or a laptop equipped with a webcam, travel time away from the site is becoming less of an issue than it used to be. The only requirement is access to good technology and advance planning.

If you would like to learn more about serving at the charter, region or state level, please contact your region's consultant at the email address listed on this page, or visit www.acsa.org/regions.



Region Consultants

- Region 2, Kathleen McCreery, region2consultant@acsa.org
- R-3, Lynne Ganas, Lganas@msn.com
- R-4, Rob Phillips, Robphillips@sacsa4@gmail.com
- R-5, George Robinson, Georobin@pacbell.net
- R-6, Bob Giannini, Bobgiannini@comcast.net

- R-7, Mary Ann Sanders, Masanders2123@sbcglobal.net
- R-8, Pat Einfalt, Pjreinfalt@sbcglobal.net
- R-10, Peter Gutierrez, Riopony@sbcglobal.net
- R-11, David Tonini, davidto02@comcast.net
- R-12, Louise Bigbie, Louisebigbie@yahoo.com
- R-14, Mary Ann McCuiston, Maryannmccuiston@me.com
- R-15, Michael Seaton, region15consultant@acsa.org
- R-16, Jack Moscovitz, Jmoscow@lausd.net
- R-17, Jan Billings, Jancomm@roadrunner.com
- R-18, Tom Teagle, Tteagle@gmail.com
- R-19, Sari Kustner, Sariok@aol.com

Five reasons to get involved

- 1 Build your network of support. The more you participate, the more contacts, resources and access to information you will have. It is through shared learning that you will find the answers to questions facing you. Odds are, someone in the ACSA membership has "been there/done that."
- 2 Demonstrate your professionalism. Membership support demonstrates a commitment and dedication to school leadership. It also shows a "giving back" typically associated with expertise maturation. By being an active part of ACSA, you serve as a model for those entering the field as well as have an opportunity to share your own insights and expertise with peers and colleagues.
- 3 Build your own skills in a supportive environment while learning from your peers. Associations offer many avenues for learning both from your peers as well as experts in your area of interest. In addition to information, members are often accorded the opportunity to stretch their own skill set by practicing new skills among supportive colleagues. For example, members are encouraged to write articles sharing knowledge or present at state and region meetings, building public speaking or leadership characteristics.
- 4 Have a voice that is loud and clear. One of the most important roles of ACSA is advocacy – that is, helping decision makers understand what members do in the workplace and why it's important. The larger the group, the louder the voice, and the more your contribution will be known.
- 5 Give yourself a professional advantage. Network and gain professional insight both vertically as well as horizontally. By being part of ACSA, you stay on the leading edge of education leadership.

Leadership opportunities at the state level

Through committee and council participation and contact with ACSA staff, members have the opportunity to articulate how local and national policies will impact education. The following are the coordinated bodies of power that help shape your organization.

State Committees:

- ACSA/CAPEA • Co-Administration
- Equity, Achievement and Diversity for Success
- Legislative Policy • Member Services
- Retirement • Small School Districts
- Urban Education • Leadership Summit

State Councils:

- Adult Education • Business Services
- Career Technical Education
- Classified Educational Leaders
- Curriculum, Instruction and Accountability
- Educational Options • Elementary Education
- Human Resources • Middle Grades Education
- Secondary Education
- Student Services and Special Education
- Superintendency

Special Groups:

- ACSA Technology Leadership Group
- Women's Leadership Network Task Force
- Representatives to FCMAT
- Representatives to WASC • Awards