

The Alaska Association of Student Governments (AASG) developed from the Western Alaska and Southeast Alaska Student Council Associations, under the leadership of the Western Alaska Principal's Association and Southeast Alaska School Activities Association. The first regional activities may have occurred in the spring of 1963 in Southeast, and Bill Butler, Principal of Palmer High School initiated the Western Alaska group in the mid-60's. Loosely organized conferences occurred in each area of the state for several years.

The Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals (AASSP) assumed active sponsorship of AASG in 1968. Larry Graham (Anchorage) was appointed the first State Executive Secretary (State Director) in 1971. The Constitution and Bylaws were adopted at a November 1972 meeting of AASSP. Mr. Graham and three students attended the National Association of Student Councils (NASC) Conference in 1973. The first statewide conference was hosted at Service High School in the fall of 1973.

Lance Bowie (Anchorage) was appointed the State Executive Secretary in 1975. A non-voting ex-officio student AASG representative was invited to sit on the ASAA Board in 1978.

As more schools from rural Alaska participated, AASG recognized the challenge to give all schools a voice in the organization. It came to the forefront at conferences in 1978-79. One region collected proxy votes for officer candidates from rural Alaska. These proxy votes elected a president from rural Alaska for the first time.

A task force chaired by Teresa Johnson and composed of advisor representatives and student officers from all regions met to draft a constitution that would promote a voice for all schools. The goal for AASG was identified: it would promote the understanding, cooperation and inclusiveness of all Alaska students.

The new constitution of AASG was approved at the Spring 1980 conference at Dimond High School. The constitution established a regional representation structure. It also established rotating conferences in order to allow students to see different parts of Alaska and to increase cultural understanding.

Teresa Johnson became the State Executive Secretary in 1980. Ms. Johnson also was elected to the Region VI advisor position on the NASSP (the parent organization of NASC) Advisory Board, the first time Alaska was represented nationally. Summer student leadership camp and traveling training programs were developed.

In 1983, AASSP asked the Alaska School Activities Association to assume sponsorship of AASG as it was becoming too large and complex to manage. At ASAA's 1984 fall meeting, sponsorship was accepted.

Student Leadership Organization funding through the state was financially supporting the organization in the 1980's and early 1990's. Dennis Johnson (Anchorage) was the State Director from

1986-90.

At the Fall Conference in 1989 at Palmer High School, the advisors decided to form their own organization, the Alaska Association of Student Government Advisors (AASGA). A task force met in the winter and spring of 1990 to develop the structure of the association. The AASGA Constitution was accepted at the Fall 1990 Conference at Chugiak High School, and the Bylaws were adopted in 1997 at the Conference at Tri-Valley.

State Directors for 1991-92 were Co-directors Kris Forrester (Palmer) and Rick Luthi (Palmer), and for 1992-93 Co-directors were Jane Braun (North Pole) and John Novak (Healy). Lois Gantner (Bethel) was the State Director from 1993-1999. Ron Gleason (Juneau) was appointed for 1999-2001, and Arlie Swett (Denali Borough) began her position in 2001.

The ASAA Board approved in the creation of an AASG Administrator position in 1997 to work closely with the Director. Kevin Roudebush was the first Administrator, with Mimi Brothers holding the position from 1999-2001, and Peggy Robinson serving in that position from 2002-04.

In 2004, the AASG Executive Board, AASGA, and ASAA agreed to combine the Administrator and State Director jobs into one position. Carol Waters was hired as the first Executive Director.

Since 2004, the Executive Board has identified themes to structure their programs. The first theme, selected at Yakutat in Spring 2004, was Rural Urban Unity. The Humanities Forum Rose Exchange funded the AKStudentForum to encourage student communication across the state. AASG also established student council exchanges, travel scholarships, a poster contest, and the Golden Mouse Award to encourage unity across Alaska. The Unity theme continued for 2 years.

In 2007, the theme focused upon environment. The 3-2-1 program was initiated. The Ban the R Word Campaign was also begun. In 2008, "Youth Strength through Involvement" was declared the focus, with activities around political action and service. Debates and a mock election were part of the Fall 2008 Conference in Palmer HS.