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Dear Field Service Colleague:

It was good to see so many people this year at the Field Services meeting. We missed those of you who could not attend. Let's hope next year's economic climate will improve and even more will be there. Much happened at the AASLH Annual Meeting in Miami and enclosed please find:

1. A report from the AASLH Field Services Task Force Meeting (September 18, 1992)
2. A report from the AASLH Task Force on Regional Services and Partnerships meeting (September 19, 1992)
3. An updated list of Field Services representatives and interested colleagues.

The report from the Field Services Task Force Meeting is lengthy. I tried to give as full a description of the discussions as I could for those who weren't there. However, I am sure the report contains some omissions as far as credit for suggestions and comments goes.

Customarily, we haven't taken minutes during Field Services meetings, and this year was no exception. Afterwards several people mentioned that it would be helpful to have a record of the discussion. I wrote this report from memory and from notes I took for the recommendations to the Task Force on Regional Services and Partnerships. My apologies to anyone that I didn't credit with a particular suggestion. If you have any additions or changes please let me know. We can formally make changes in Columbus.

The second report refers to a task force newly created at the meeting in Miami. The Task Force on Regional Services and Partnerships grew out of discussions at a combined Council and Committees meeting on Tuesday, September 15, 1992. Much of that meeting was focused on the reorganization of the AASLH committee structure. However, there was also recognition that though there is satisfaction and relief that the fiscal situation at AASLH has stabilized, there is an abiding sense of urgency that some services (in addition to the publications) need to be revitalized before too much time elapses. A portion of the afternoon meeting was spent brainstorming--coming up with ideas of services that could be provided relatively quickly, inexpensively and with ease. The criteria developed asked for services

that address a need, use existing mechanisms, are inexpensive, and are not a drain on AASLH staff. There was a great energy of ideas and subsequently the AASLH Council appointed the "TASK Force on Regional Services and Partnerships" to help develop ideas that can be put into action. It is chaired by Jim Vaughn, Director of the San Diego Historical Society and former chair of the AASLH Educational Services Committee. Several people from the Field Services Task Force were appointed to the new task force including: Katherine Kane, Alice Knierim, Cherie Cook, Tom McKay and myself.

The first meeting of this task force was scheduled for Saturday, September 19th at 8:00 a.m., the morning following the Field Services meeting. Because of this, Field Services spent an extra hour meeting on Friday evening developing recommendations on how Field Services might assist AASLH in the creation and delivery of services to the field. As many of you know, Field Services has been sending messages to the Council and to the Common Agenda and Educational Services Committees for several years offering cooperation in extending AASLH services. It seemed this year was the time to develop some concrete recommendations.

The Field Services Task Force came up with three recommendations to the Task Force on Regional Services and Partnerships: 1) Develop Board Orientation Materials; 2) Pursue a joint NEH Grant Application; 3) Initiate a Regrant Program. These are described in detail in the Field Services meeting report. Four Field Services representatives were present at the Task Force on Regional Services and Partnerships meeting the next day.

The meeting began with Doug Evelyn's overview and vision for the committee and Jim Vaughn's explanation of how the task force would work on a regional basis. This is described more fully in the task force meeting report. After discussion of the regional scheme and criteria for pilot projects, the group talked about the potential for ideas that might take place at a national level. I offered the recommendations from the Field Services Task Force. The first recommendation for board materials, an idea initially suggested by Tom McKay, was enthusiastically received. Patricia Gordon Michael gave her approval and go ahead. The second two recommendations were discussed but no action was taken. Those recommendations require more lead time and the meeting focused largely on questions of what could be done in the coming months that might bear fruit in the coming year. The joint NEH application and regrant program may be ideas that can be returned to in long-term planning.

Just two days ago I received a letter from Doug Evelyn formally authorizing the Board Orientation Materials project. As detailed in the Field Services meeting report, Tom McKay and J.D. Britton will collect, write and edit the materials. John Harris from the Indiana Historical Society has offered to look through materials he has been collecting for a statewide workshop on board responsibilities. Candace Matelic (a member of the Task Force on Regional Services and Partnerships) offered to do the same, with materials she has been

collecting for her dissertation. If anyone else has ideas or contributions please contact Tom or J.D.

Sandra Clark, Director of the Michigan Historical Center, offered to work with Patricia Gordon Michael and AASLH staff to develop the production timetable. When Tom and J.D. finish the text, they will send it to members of Field Services and the AASLH staff and legal counsel for review. Then Sandra will create the design and do the layout. From there the material will go to AASLH for reproduction and distribution. We hope the materials will be ready in the spring of 1993.

This was, in fact, a busy meeting and one during which several members of Field Services took on a considerable amount of work. I look forward to the development of the board orientation materials and some exciting regional projects. It should be an interesting and fruitful year.

Sincerely,

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Enclosures

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