

The conference was an activity-packed five days that focused on the many ways we, as board members, along with youth leadership attendees, presenters, chaperones, and honored guests continue to define and redefine education in the state of Alaska. It was exhausting and exhilarating at the same time.

There were many take-away moments! Here are a few shining moments followed by my schedule:

The work completed at the Thursday Resolutions committee meeting is not an easy process. It is, however, a very worthwhile process because this meeting is where attending board members review, revise, and make recommendations to the AASB Core Resolutions so the resolutions are ready for the body as a whole to review at the Like-Sized meetings and also to vote on during our Business Board Meeting on Sunday. I learn so much about the resolutions each time I go through this process.

Performances by East High Swing/Jazz Choir and Ravenwood Elementary School Choir - FABULOUS!

Lt Governor Valerie Davidson's speech was memorable in many ways. Her ideas: the unknown is difficult – always share what is important to you; do something that is hard, someone has to be first; people will do the most amazing things under the most impossible conditions during the most difficult times; and her life lesson from her grandmother – when you lead with love, you will never stand alone.

Nick Hanson "Eskimo Ninja" and Ninja Warriors competitor was one of the most inspirational keynote speakers I have had the pleasure of listening to at an AASB conference. Despite many hardships in his early life, he overcame the challenges by realizing that 'Our connections are what makes us'. How we 'make community changes and improves us'. 'It forced me to do, think, and act with perseverance'. 'I decided to focus on positives'. He believes in the importance of connecting with kids and giving them skills so they have the knowledge to set the stage for their future. 'Knowing WHO you are is most important to your life...that is your foundation'.

Bentham and Watson Ohia, Transformational Leadership Facilitators from New Zealand, were also very inspirational keynote speakers. I gained insight about enhancing and advancing the dreams and aspirations of the Maori educational system in NZ, and I also learned how a dedicated and determined group of Maori women led the way through this change. The NZ Educ System aims to balance the aspirations of community driven Maori schools with the requirements of the state. 'Our children have Maori education and the preparation to achieve in society'. It is vital to listen to and hear all voices!

Board President Workshop Dealing with Difficult Behaviour – (I would prefer the word different) Take-away ideas/reaffirmations: Sometimes we work better with different styles so we can hear all of the voices. Listen attentively and remember 'listen has the same letters as silent' by Alfred Brendel. Step back and look at the Lens of Understanding of each individual. When communicating with others remember to monitor tone, be positive about your intent, tactfully interrupt interruptions, blend and redirect, and be ready to listen. Most of all, Remember it is all about the kids!

Facilitating the Like-Sized District Forum where we, as a group, selected and discussed resolutions of interest for the group and came up with our group priorities was both interesting and enlightening. I have co-facilitated smaller groups in a similar meeting but not at this stage in the process. The process went well. The group was an informed, engaged, and worked together efficiently. We listened, debated issues, and came to consensus.

My level of involvement as a presenter, moderator, facilitator, and audience member gave me the opportunity to see through a different lens, to work with different groups, to see through different sets of eyes, and to listen to ideas from different sets of ears. This experience has been inspirational.

My Attendance and Activity Schedule:

Wednesday Board of Director meeting;

Thursday Resolutions committee, Chair of Budget committee meeting, and Large District Caucus Mtng;

Friday Performance of East High Swing/Jazz Choir, Keynote Speaker Nick Hanson Eskimo Ninja, Board President Workshop Moderator and attendee, co-Presenter of workshop - What Does Membership in AASB do for ME, attendee/bidder June Nelson Memorial Scholarship Fundraiser;

Saturday Performance of Ravenwood Elementary School Choir, Keynote Speakers Transformational Leadership Facilitators Bentham and Watson Ohia from New Zealand, Presenter Budget Report, Roundtable Discussions, Co-Facilitator of Like-Sized District Priorities Forum, and Awards Banquet;

Sunday Business Meeting, and a joint ASA/AASB BOD meeting;

Monday all day BOD meeting.

I also enjoyed visiting with other board members and sharing ideas with them. Most important though, I really enjoyed having some time to visit with fellow KPBSD board members, our superintendent Sean, and our student rep, Tanis and her Mom during coffee/tea and meals.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to attend the AASB Conference in Anchorage.

Respectfully,

Penny Vadla, KPBSD Board President