

Notes/Report on the 2019 AASB ANNUAL CONFERENCE

To: Debbie Tressler, Administrative Secretary
Penny Vadla, KPBSD Board President

From: Patti Truesdell, KPBSD Board Member

Subject: Board notes/follow up

Thursday 7, 2019 – Friday 8, 2019:

My first two days were spent in the **Ready, Set Govern!** - Or better known as “new member boot camp!” There is a lot packed into these two days, and I admit that it left me a little overwhelmed at first! The attorney who led the first two sections on legal rights and responsibilities of school board members, Mr. Sedor, did an excellent job of taking us through the legal rights and responsibilities of school board leadership. I had not considered a few areas, so I was glad to have this information so early in my time on the board. Later in that first day, we also talked about the budget, curriculum, board policies, and wrapped up day two doing a mock board meeting. I asked many questions, and met with Mr. Sedro for a few minutes on Friday to discuss some questions I had about the budget process. He suggested/recommended that I try to find time to sit down with our own finance director for a one-to-one time to review or go over our district budget whenever time is available to do so. He recommended this for new board members to do whenever possible. I told him I would take his advice!

On Saturday – We broke out into small groups and I attended several different ones that were very interesting.

Youth Mental Health First Aid Overview:

Wendy Shackleford from UAA was the facilitator of this group, and I admit I was a little confused in the beginning about what this training /staff offered to schools. I was told that some of our schools/teachers in the KPBSD had received the training. It seemed to be about teaching students to be available to their peers as a first responder in the event of a risk for suicide. It seems that this group from UAA trains teachers to train students (I think I have that right) to alert students how to listen to their fellow students if they seem to be at risk. There were many students at the AASB conference and many students in this session. The need to identify students who are struggling and having difficulty is important. The room where this workshop was being held was very crowded, and there were no handouts, and very little ability to ask questions. I talked to Ms Shackleford after the session, and she told me that she had done trainings for KPBSD schools in the past but could not exactly remember which schools. I need to follow up on this. It sounds like a good program. Something to keep an eye on and something that maybe we could access for more of our schools.

Business Luncheon and Roundtable with Students – I enjoyed that very much with the students.

Science Curriculum Standards: This group reviewed some of the major shifts for the small schools in the area of coding. It also looks like the new science curriculum will include some

major shifts and wrap around relative to engineering and the nature of science and engineering. I was very interested in this new curriculum and the assessments, which are scheduled to be out for grades 4, 8 and `10 in the spring of 2022.

I also attended interesting workshops on Saturday on school climate, Alaska Native Work at NSBS, Hiring a Superintendent, and finally a short group on Teen Activism. These were round tables after lunch on Saturday that were short and provided brief snap chats and just a little bit of information in a round table discussion.

Sunday Morning Breakfast for Everyone – and then Working with “Our Team” on the final Resolutions:

Woke up early and had fun working with the team on resolutions. Penny, Debbie, Matt and I worked together to be certain we had the resolutions we wanted to present at the final session. We checked the wording and worked with other Board members until we had reviewed the Resolutions that were going to be presented in the final session.

IN CONCLUSION:

Finally ... Our big luncheon and then the resolutions on the last day. It did seem like everything and everyone came together for the big final. As a newcomer to all of this ... I could see at least a little bit how it all fit together. Seeing all those different Boards from all over Alaska so amazing to me. So many young people in attendance and so many Board members young and old. I met people from places in Alaska I could not pronounce and had never heard of or knew even existed! Some of the boards had five people on them and only met four times a year. One Board member had been on the Board for 35 years! One Board member was 20 years old and he had already been on the Board for a year! But a common focus they all had was their purpose/their goal to work for Alaska’s students. Amazing! All with the same purpose. To help young people and to have better schools and to educate our young people. I heard a lot of laughter, and saw a lot of smiles ... but I also heard no voices raised in anger. I saw passion, and some voices that did ring out for their young people when they spoke of the need for drug and alcohol programs, safety for their students, and more training and resources for their communities, and yes – some sadness and grief over losses. One mind and one heart to do right by families and our children in our schools. I saw a lot of passion and focus.

On Sunday, we worked together to develop Resolutions as the State of Alaska School Boards to stand together as one body, and I was proud to stand with them. I had barely ten days in office, but I felt proud to be one of them as we work to provide a better education for our Alaskan schools and each and every Alaskan student. It felt good to be a part of this cause

Thanks so much for sending me to this Ms. Vadla ... I enjoyed this first venture out for the Board. I learned so much.

Patti Truesdell,
KPBSD Board Member

November 27, 2019

