

**Association of Alaska School Boards
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Virginia Morgan**

The Business of Union Business – The Janus Case and Its Aftermath

Allen Clendaniel – Sedor, Wendlandt, Evans & Filippi
Mike Wenstrup - Attorney, NEA Alaska

What is an “Agency Fee?” Non-members of a union could be forced to pay a portion of dues, even if they weren’t members. Union has to represent non-members and members, so they had to pay for part of that service.

The problem with compelling contributions – It came down to free speech. The government can’t compel someone to pay for something they don’t agree with. June 27, 2018

NEA had a decrease in membership around 4-6%. NEA is focusing on making membership valuable and making people want to be members.

“Rather, to be effective, the waiver must be freely given and shown by “clear and compelling” evidence.”

You have to have authorization in writing to deduct union dues from paychecks.

School districts should not actively encourage employees to not join the union. That could be considered an unfair labor practice.

Student Safety in Schools and SROs

Clint Campion – Sedor, Wendlandt, Evans & Filippi
Officer John Carroll – School Resource Officer

Proactive engagement with school administrators, teachers, staff, and students.

Attempt to reduce juvenile crime through law enforcement and education and preventive programs.

Benefits – Presence in schools = much faster response times to law enforcement incidents than officers responding to schools.

Prevention presentations on cyberbullying, social media.

Educations presentations on use of force by law enforcement, 4th amendment issues, etc.

Officers cannot interview kids at school for an investigation unless they prove that it must be done there. Surveillance videos cannot be released to officers without a court order.

The Business of Health – How Health Insurance Works

Curt Hebert, Marsh & McLennan Agency

Alaska has the highest per capita cost of health care in the United States. United States has the highest cost of health care in the world.

Trend is the projected increase in cost of a claim from one period to the next. Alaska’s annual health care trend increase the range of 8-10%.

Trend amplifiers: general medical inflation, utilization increase (including advance in medical technology), specialty drug explosion, cost shifting between gov't and private commercial insurance, ACA fee/benefit mandates.

Fully insured – less risky – pay an insurance company and they assume the risk, they hold the reserves, they keep as profit any funds left over at the end of the year.

Self-insured – most risk

Stop loss insurance protects for unpredictable claims. Specific coverage in our district?

Association Health Plans for School Districts: Premera's Alaska Political Subdivision Plan, Public Employers Health Trust

Claims make up 75-80% of costs.

Does our district get detailed claims data?

The Business of Superintendent Contracts – Negotiating for the Top Spot

John Sedor, Sedor, Wendlenandt, Evans & Fillippi

Just because we're negotiating a contract doesn't mean it has to be adversarial. Relationship between board and superintendent is a team. (Watch Moneyball.)

"We can't give the superintendent a raise, because we didn't give the union a raise." This is not necessarily true.

Negotiate – to obtain or bring about by discussion.

Find a way over or through an obstacle or difficult path.

Recommendation 1: Negotiate

Recommendation 2: Know the Law and Process

Contract may not be for more than three years.

Superintendent may not acquire or obtain tenure in a district.

Recommendation 3: Remember, you are building a 3-legged stool. Superintendent, School Board, TRS

Students: The Law of Special Needs – IDEA and 504

Lea Fillippi - Sedor, Wendlenandt, Evans & Fillippi

Tying it All Together – Business As (Un)usual: Students Education in Alaska in 2019

DEED Commissioner, Michael Johnson

Advice – Always ask a second question.

The consequences of not asking enough questions...

The Taboo Topic of Students in Poverty

Timi Tullis, AASB

"Poverty is the worst form of violence." Ghandi

Brain prioritizes survival first

Stresses like poverty (without some resiliency factors) can lead to measurable changes and deficits in brain development.

“The kids who need love the most ask for it in the most unloving of ways.”

Students in poverty are more likely to:

- Be retained
- Assigned to lower tracks
- Labeled as problem kids
- Absent most often
- Earn lower scores on tests
- Drop out

Long term effects of poverty:

Opportunities:

- Better nutrition, school breakfasts and lunches
- After school/summer programs
- Intentional focus on building protective factors

8 Practices for Improvement:

- District leadership
- Engage families and communities
- High expectations for poor and culturally diverse students
- Target low-performing students; start with reading
- Align, monitor, and manage curriculum
- Create a culture of data and assessment
- Build and sustain instructional capacity
- Reorganize time, space, and transitions

Alter the environment

- Change the school environment
- Reduce the parallels with prison
- Reduce homework stress by incorporating time for homework in class or right after class
- Use cooperative structures

- Help students blow off steam by incorporating celebrations, role-plays, and physical activities
- Incorporate kinesthetic arts

Empower students

- Help students increase their perception of control over their environment
- Introduce conflict resolution skills
- Teach students how to deal with anger and frustration
- Introduce responsibilities and the value of giving restitution
- Teach students to set goals to focus on what they want
- Role modeling how to solve real-world problems
- Give students a weekly life problem to solve collectively
- Teach social skills
- Introduce stress reduction techniques

Build Core Skills

- Attention and focus skills
- Short- and long-term memory
- Sequencing and processing skills
- Problem solving skills
- Perseverance and ability to apply skills long term
- Social skills
- Hopefulness and self-esteem

5 Ways to....

Teaching with Poverty in Mind Eric Jensen

Turning High-Poverty Schools into High-Performing Schools William H. Parrett and Kathleen M. Mudge

Students in Poverty

Mark Stock, Anchorage School District, Deputy Superintendent

How do we define it? How does it define us?

Poverty is relative to the dominant culture in which we're operating in.

"The extent to which an individual does without resources."

(Brainstorm list: shelter, food, jobs, education, choices, teachers, safety, technology/equipment, internet, language)

- Financial (money to purchase goods and services)

- Emotional (The ability to control emotional responses without engaging in self-destructive behavior. It shows itself through grit, perseverance and stamina.)
- Mental (The intellectual ability and skills learned such as reading, writing, and computing.)
- Spiritual (A belief in divine purpose and guidance.)
- Physical (Health and mobility. Stress management, sleep, etc.)
- Support System (Friends, family backup resources and knowledge bases one can rely on in time of need.) government resources, family resources, etc.
- Role models (Frequent access to adults who are appropriate and nurturing to the child and do not engage in self-destructive behavior.)
- Knowledge of the hidden rules (Knowing the unspoken cues and habits of a group) Teach the culture of the American middle-class, so they know how to have success in this culture.

Poverty is more than money. It's relative in the dominant culture.

Amish school system – poorest economy, highest test scores

How do we help educators stay encouraged when working in high poverty schools?

- The four major lenses for looking at student performance
 - Status – the most commonly used achievement measure. Answers the simple questions “How are we doing?” Compared to what (Proficiency cut scores, etc.) Compared to whom? (National norms, states norms, etc.)
 - Growth – the most important measure of all. Looks at how much progress has been made between assessments. Some schools with high status have low growth. Some schools with low status have high growth.
 - Improvement -
 - Predicted vs. actual – All schools deal with environmental conditions (headwinds, tailwinds, crosswinds)

Great data charts! Look for them in the presentation! Scores are greatly affected by poverty, absenteeism, English language learners

Conclusions

- Poverty matters
- When school accountability increases, growth measures need to supplement status measures
- Schools cannot directly impact poverty
- Schools CAN do three things that are necessary in high poverty environments
 - Building strong relationships with students (support systems, emotional, role models)
 - Use rigorous direct teaching to build cognitive structures (intellectual, mental)
 - Teach the hidden rules of middle class so students have options

School Board's Role in Teacher Retention

Dian Hirshberg, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage

Alaska teacher salaries are about 15% below where they should be (statewide). (report online)
There is 116% difference between lowest and highest recommended salaries.

Teacher turnover can't be fixed with salary alone. Compensation matters, but working conditions are a bigger factor in teacher turnover decisions than pay.

- What Can You Do?
 - Find community members to mentor/guide teachers
 - Raise the status of teachers in your community; make teachers feel valued
 - Encourage parents to get to know teachers, and help teachers get to know community leaders
 - Look at your salary and benefits structure. If you can invest more in teachers, you could recoup the costs in not having to replace them...
 - Find out why teacher in your district might be leaving
 - Field an anonymous survey (maybe use an outside entity to engender trust)
 - Be prepared for difficult truths
 - Be ready to have hard conversations with teachers, principals, and district administrators
 - Address issues that you can affect...
- Issues you can address:
 - Working conditions matter
 - Have an honest conversation about the adequacy of teacher housing
 - Make sure teachers feel like they have the materials they need in the classroom
 - Support in the school & district matters
 - Make sure that teachers feel supported by administrators as well as parents
 - Make sure there are meaningful professional development opportunities
 - Grow more of your own
 - Too few teachers home grown, from rural and/or Indigenous backgrounds; < 5% teachers are Alaska Native
 - Encourage youth in your communities to go to college
 - Ask current teachers to mentor students
 - Pay for H.S. graduates to get a teaching degree (e.g., LKSD)/take advantage of loan forgiveness (state Teacher Education Loan)