

Michael Sellers

Summary of ASTE 2020 Conference

February 21 – 25, 2020

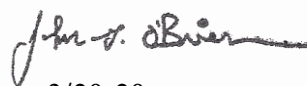
Anchorage, AK

This conference was extremely productive for me. My two primary areas of focus were 1) eSports and 2) Wellness/Mindfulness in the tech era and how to maintain or build resilience in our staff, students and parents.

A growing number of students have been showing an interest in pursuing an eSports team at Nikolaevsk. Prior to ASTE I was less than supportive (*How much screen time do they already have? They play when they get home. Some parents have voiced concerns about the amount of screen time*). After attending a number of discussions on the subject of eSports I am now in full support of starting up an eSports team at Nikolaevsk.

How much screen time is too much? Well, how much food should you eat - Are you eating junk or nutritious healthy food? Screen time is similar. What is the purpose of the screen time? Are you partaking in healthy activities or consuming junk online? Are you discussing what you are consuming or doing online with a trusted adult? As I learned, all of the positives gained through more traditional sports (teamwork, how to win, how to lose, grit, team spirit, etc.) are also learned through the participation of eSports. The key component is the adult mentor. By providing eSports opportunities for our kids, we can reach some of those individuals who do not typically participate in traditional sporting activities. We can also involve kids in adult supervised activities for those parts of the year when other sports are not available.

Several years ago, I started pushing Maslow before blooms at the school. After the staff incurred some trauma of their own it became apparent that it was just as important that the adults track their position on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Over the past few months, the staff and I have been discussing ways to authentically involve parents in their children's lives at school. As we discussed most of these attempts have failed in the past. Parents don't show, kids feeling get hurt, some parents come with ulterior motives,... It occurred to me that many of our parents are suffering from their own trauma. Most are doing the best they can, but lack the tools to deal with day-to-day life. The internet and social media has made this worse. While at ASTE I attended three separate trainings (plus one extended hallway conversation) with ISTE author, Susan Brooks-Young. Through these trainings, I learned several techniques for helping myself. During the March Nikolaevsk SBC meeting, I shared what I learned at ASTE with the SBC members. I also discussed what I learned with a few of our Title 1 parents. I purchased each staff member a copy of Pathways to Well-Being: Helping Educators (and others) Find Balance in a Connected World by Susan Brooks-Young. We began our "Book Talk" as the main theme of our 3/6 inservice with special emphasis on how we communicate with parents. I will also be starting a book talk with interested parents in coming weeks. By addressing some of the underlying issues, I feel we can make greater strides in communication and building a positive connection between school and community.



3/20-20