

DATE: February 24, 2020

FROM: Patti Truesdell, B.Ed., and KPBSD Board Member

TO: Penny Vadla, KPBD Board President

REGARDING: February Leadership Fly-In Report

I guess I have to begin by thanking you for allowing me the opportunity to attend the fly-in this year. While this was not my first trip to the capitol, or my first “lobbying” experience ... it has been many years since I have been there; and I welcomed the opportunity to go there again on behalf of our school board and to work on behalf of our 42 schools, staff, students and to represent our KPBSD board. Thanks again for affording me this opportunity.

Saturday’s Schedule: As a new member of our KPBSD, I knew there would be a high learning curve, so I was grateful to have two days with the other board members from around the state. The agenda put out by the AASB and Director Norm Wooten was extensive and began Saturday morning at 8:45 am with a discussion “**Realty in Alaska**” by Norm Wooten and Dr. Lisa Skiles Parady”.

Saturday we also met with the Education Commission Mr. Johnson. In that meeting, we got our first look at the Alaska Reads Act, or Senate Bill 6.

To wrap up this busy day... we also had meetings on school boards and their involvement in the budget process including a systematic look at the school funding formula, which I found extremely interesting. I have seen it before... but really liked how detailed the presentation was and I think it was an extremely well done presentation.

Sunday: We got up early and started looking at the legislation that was coming before the Legislators. We spent the day in small groups reviewing legislation currently being considered and discussing which ones to focus on when we were in our meeting the next two days. We had groups on advocacy, and how best to approach our meetings with the various legislators and their staff. In the afternoon, we met in small groups to determine which bills we were going to focus our efforts on, which bills were the most important to our individual districts. The idea being to focus our time with the Legislators where it could do the most good for our Districts.

Monday morning: The highlight of my five days came on Monday morning. Senator Begich gave the opening remarks to the Fly In participants and spoke about the Alaska Reads Act. He talked about how the act came about, and how he and Governor had decided to work together to make it happen. He took questions and comments from the Board members ... talked about the changes being added to the bill already, and how important it was to get input from the AASB members! Then we were off to the Capitol.

We as a group decided to have Debbie Carey take the lead and start us off having Debbie testify before the Senate Education Committee. She did a great job! She answered questions about our District, SEL, and the Alaska Reads Act. Then Kaegen Koski also answered questions about his literacy program and SEL. We met with eight other legislators that day. Topics covered included the Alaska Reads Act, SB 6, Forward Funding Education, SEL, the Tribal Compacting bill. Whew! Many topics to discuss ... and we talked about our District, our schools, and reviewed our packet of information we brought with us! Whenever and wherever we could, we bragged on our programs!

On Tuesday, we began again. This time, Debbie and Kaegan again testified, and we met with more legislators for 25 meetings in all! (25 in two days)

Tuesday afternoon we were able to have a meeting with the Commissioner of Education, Michael Johnson, to discuss the Alaska Reads Act. This was an opportunity for us to be able to discuss with the Commissioner some of our concerns about the bill, while at the same time let him know that we do support its passage. It was nice to be able to have input into this important legislation for our students.

Finally tired but feeling like we had accomplished a lot for our time on the hill, I had the pleasure of joining Virginia Morgan, the Cooper Landing students, and the entire Close Up students for dinner!

Special thanks to Pegge for her hard work setting up the packets and arranging all the meetings and Debbie Carey was a "rock star" with her testifying three times before three different committees. Kaegen? Well... Everyone loved him, and he represented his school very well. Me? I was pleased with our well we were received and how respectful we were treated by everyone we met with. Twenty-five offices, three meetings, five days of running around, every one so busy, and yet people were so respectful and working so hard. I was, to be honest, very proud to be there representing my district. I felt like most, if not all, of the legislators if

met with were honest men and women trying hard to do the people's business. I came away feeling a lot less cynical than when I left Soldotna. Thank you Ms. Vadla for allowing me this opportunity.