

Legislative Flyin Synopsis 2/9-2/13

I left Anchorage excited to be going back to Juneau for the second year. Knowing what to expect, and having the students along to expose them to the legislative process got my educator juices flowing. On the plane, I sat next to a new Superintendent from out west and identified with her anxiety of what she was to encounter. I felt like a veteran as I could ease some of her angst and apprehension.

Education is a funny thing as you have to continue to allow yourself to be educated or help another in their education journey. I guess this sums up the role I assumed, to help educate not only legislators but the quality people of which I traveled; the results were great!. The esteemed board members who went were skilled at communicating our district needs to the many people we encountered. The special part of the trip was the bringing of our bright students and helping them understand what goes on in those halls of the capital. They, with their very capable chaperones (parents), took the capital by storm and I must say their impact was felt.

The first couple days were very similar to what I experienced last year. With students and board members from all over the state, AASB made an effort to let the participants know what was expected in the days to come. These two days were highlighted by some guest speakers who made some good points on how to pursue the advocating process.

Sen. Tom Begich stood out as he emphasized approaching legislators with a can-do attitude other than a confrontational mind set. A panel of legislators took questions from Senator Begich particularly centered around educational funding. Finally, our home grown Senator Bjorkman addressed a luncheon with a rather emotional call for action by not only the AASB participants but legislators. Glad to see that he was on our side.

Annaleah Karron was a pleasant addition to our entourage and our group developed a scheme to attack the capital. With her scheduled appointments and ours, we planned the most effective way to communicate our needs and to whom we might address.

With each student leading conversations we spent two days at a frenetic pace. Highlights included; meeting with local legislators, supporting Maggie Grenier as she paged on the legislative floor, Jeren Nash fervently discussing education with the local legislator of his district, and of course our district's emotional and powerful testimony to the Senate Education committee.

I can not emphasize that the most impressive part of the fly-in was the energy our group brought to the Capital. With very capable chaperones (Shea Nash, Janell Grenier), our CTE coordinator (Annaleah), as well as Jeren and Maggie our district stole the show. Everywhere we went at the end of the week we received compliments of our impact in Juneau. Since leaving I have had lots of correspondence from statewide acquaintances of our effectiveness.

The following are suggestions for improvement next year if it happens again:

1. A better plan for travel logistics should be developed in order to minimize costs.
2. Students are an **absolute** must.
3. The double schedule of the CTE coordinator and students made our visibility more effective.
4. Students and chaperones speaking and leading conferences were better received by the legislators.
5. Planned testimony to whatever legislative hearings happening should be a priority.

Finally, I ran into an old friend and they observed this of me..."**On your way to doing your civic duty something got in the way ... Politics!**" Who would have thought it?

From the desk of.... *Tim Daugharty*

Educator, coach and youth advocate.

