

November 2014

School Board Members and administration,

Thank you for the opportunity provided to attend and learn a little more about what North Dakota has going on in the school districts and at the state level. My report of the North Dakota School Board convention is probably going to be pretty brief considering the events since the convention adjourned.

My time at the NDSBA convention actually started off by attending the School Law Seminar, Thursday morning through early afternoon. Mr. Reep gave me prior permission to point to his notes of the day, so for a full account of the day please refer to his notes. However, here are a few things that I would like to point out of what I learned among many other things:

- NSBA has a new website, and as you look at it you will find that it has more of a focus on advocacy.
- COSA (Council of School Attorneys) has some “Big” issues that are being looked into, primarily on: **student data privacy, equity guidance, racial discrimination and student discipline.**
- There was an overview of the state contracts, procurement and the P-card. I look to having our district look into these activities offered by the state.
- Session on “Board Communication with the public and responding to complaints” by NDSBA Legal Council and Director of Policy Services was mostly a refresher. However, we are to have the policy BCBA and BCBA-BR at **every** meeting and read them aloud if there is public comment. This will help in setting public decorum at our board meetings.
- From the NDSBA Legal Council: we are to **take a roll call vote every time** for any non-procedural votes; we are to **avoid “reply all”** when emailing.
- “What every school should know about the first amendment: A PG-13 review of the hot topics I employee online speech” was packed with a lot of information. This session covered a lot of different court cases and their outcomes. All of which have merit within school districts. It was brought to our attention that by “liking” something or someone it is considered speech.

Thursday, October 23, 2014

3 pm Opening convention was a guest speaker, Juli Burney. She was funny and wanted everyone to remember that “It’s all about good humor!” We have the ability to change challenges to use humor and to educate others of the reality of the challenge. Take a step back and not take it personally. No matter what your title is, our approach and attitude changes the world—good or bad!

4 pm Was the first business session

Friday, October 24, 2014

8 am Dr. Jack Levin lead the general session on how to prevent Juvenile violence and school rampage shootings. (BTW-he does look like Einstein.) Sitting in the back, I heard a lot of commotion in regards to some of the things he was saying. His experience was taken from inner city and not much in the rural areas such as North Dakota. However, some of the research he has done/seen is relevant to us here in North Dakota. Such as: juvenile crime rates are highest between 3-7, school is out and parents are home yet; gangs are more violent today with guns and knives verses fist fighting and drag racing; and a lot of the school rampage shootings are for revenge. Regardless of inner city or rural violence, the best thing is to prevent.

9:30 What’s new at TFFR; 2014 update, standing room only.

- TFFR– ND Teachers Fund for Retirement, for active and retired teachers

- Goals
 - Improve the Plan's funding status to protect and sustain current and future benefits.
 - Minimize the employee and employer contributions over the long term.
 - Avoid substantial volatility in contribution rates and fluctuations in funding status.
- With approved 2011 legislative changes, funding recovery is expected to occur gradually over time.
- Time is needed for changes to show positive funding results, it will be a long & slow process.
- New GASB (Government Accounting Standards Board) standards
 - Recently approved 2 new standards that will change the accounting and financial reporting of public employee pensions.
 - Statement #67 provides for accounting with respect to governmental pension plans like NDTFFR.
 - Statement #68 establishes new accounting and financial reporting requirements for state and local governments (participating employers, school districts).

10:30 Education Data Collection and how it is used by Regional Education Associations (REA's)

- Introduction to Succeed 2020 (collects data to figure out if the 2020 goal is accomplished)
 - Findings—gaps ND has to address
 - Approximately 25% of college freshmen require remedial course work
 - Rural students have limited access to AP courses and career & tech. education
 - Need for earlier and expanded college and career counseling
 - Native American students in ND are not doing as well as others, only 67% graduate high school.
 - North Dakota has the highest graduation AND attrition rates in US.
- Goal: Successful transition to college/careers for ALL students
 - Technical skills are needed before going into careers
 - RUREadyND.com
 - students can use to get better
 - parents can use to help guide students
 - teachers can use to guide students in providing experiences
- Using data better by REA's
 - Must be used earlier and more frequent.
 - Use to help assess needs of the districts.
 - Tailor programs and activities to meet specific needs.
 - Help determine whether programs appear to be making progress in addressing needs.
 - Helps communication with districts and other stakeholders about the work they do.
- Other
 - Grades are a substitute measure of ability to finish work, in and out of the classroom.

11:30 Update from Legislative Focus Group—School administrators discuss education funding.

Another standing room only session.

- NDASA legislative focus group is comprised of: 12 superintendents, NDCEL, NDSBA, ND united, NDSOS, district business officials and state officials.
- Interim Education Funding Committee Bill
 - Foundation Aid formula payment increases: only about 40 school are at formula
 - PD—looking for a 3rd required year, and 4th and 5th days of PD provide weights of .005 toward funds.

- At risk factors:
 - Construction
 - Formula Factor reductions
 - many factors they are looking into

I also attended the Policy Services breakfast and the afternoon delegate assembly on Friday, both of which Mrs. Kris Fehr clearly explains in her convention report and I have permission to have you review her report for such information.

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the 2014 NDSBA Convention.

Sincerely,
Tanya Rude
Dickinson Public School District
School Board Member