

## NDSBA Conference Report by Brent Seaks

Attending the ND School Board Association Annual Convention was extremely beneficial, especially as a new board member. Here are some highlights from the different seminars, speaker presentations, and workshops I attended.

New board members are required to attend the New Member Seminar the first day at the conference. This was helpful as we learned more about the chain of command we must follow as board members as well our role and responsibilities as board members. This session reinforced the four key responsibilities of the school board which include hiring and evaluating the Superintendent, planning, approving the budget, and overseeing and creating policies. I especially appreciated the information shared about school finance including information about the local levy authority, ND school funding formulas, and factor tables.

Our first conference speaker was long time honored educator Murray Banks who talked about how to build team work and collaboration. This speaker talked about how humor, fun, and optimism energizes others. He emphasized that our attitude is contagious and reinforced the concept that how you say something is often as important as what you have to say. He shared that what we focus on as people always expands.

Our first speaker on Friday was the highly decorated combat veteran and Navy Seal hero Robert O'Neill who is has the distinction of being the man who killed Osama Bin Laden. He was not only an engaging speaker but informative as he shared strategies on preparation, stress management, and never giving up. Some tips he shared were to: take emotion out of decision making, remember that people work harder when morale is higher, that stress is self-induced, and that success leads to complacency and complacency kills.

My first workshop on Friday was by Legacy Principle Tom Schmidt and was about their use of the Flex Mod/Personalized Scheduling for students and all of the many benefits of such a system. Tom believes that this model best prepares students for careers and college. It was very interesting and I believe it is worth researching for our district. Principle Schmidt said he would be willing to come to our district to talk about it and would be happy to host tours of Legacy High School for us as well.

My second workshop was called *Superintendent, Business Manager, and Board Evaluation* and included a thorough review of the Rocky Mountain Evaluation software. This seemed like an excellent evaluation tool that would be much better than what we are using at this time and would also be simpler to use.

My final workshop was about finding strategies to improve balance between life and work. An interesting tip she shared was that friends from work tend to make work problems seem bigger, and friends outside of work tend to make work problems seem smaller. That is why it is important to have friends outside of work. She also shared the concept of positive gossip which was only sharing the good things people do with other people.

I also attended both business meetings and was a voting delegate. The group passed all of the resolutions recommended by the NDSBA.

In summary, it was a very useful conference, and I look forward to implementing what I learned to be a better board member. I appreciate the opportunity to attend this conference.