

Summary Report: North Dakota School Board Association Annual Convention 2016

Submitted by: David W Wilkie

Thursday, October 27, 2016

8:30 – 2:30 - New Member Seminar

The new member seminar is a presentation on the roles and the regulations outlining the position of a school board member and the school board in general.

All the information presented during the new member seminar was extremely helpful in creating a better understanding of my role as a school board member. The seminar touched on conflict of interest, board leadership, open records, legal issues and school finance.

The seminar was concluded with an open question/answer format which featured three experienced school board members as the panel. I found this question/ answer portion of the presentation to be very informative. The questions the panel said they had as new members, are exactly the same questions I've had since becoming a school board member. Their answers were very insightful and made me feel more at ease about being a new member.

3:00 – 3:45 – Opening Convention Session – Murray Banks

Murray Banks was a very entertaining and experienced speaker. His high energy and sense of humor was uplifting after sitting for approximately 6 hours in the new member seminar.

Mr. Banks spoke about teamwork and leadership skills and how they enhance problem solving and adapting to change.

Mr. Bank's catch phrase, "its show time!" struck a resonant chord with many of the people present at the session and was heard several times in other sessions over the convention.

4:00 – 5:00 – First Business Session

I attended the first business session which consisted of the nominating committee report, a reading of the candidates for office, a resolution report, board membership service awards and the presentation of the 2016 Barb Norby Scholarship.

Friday, October 28, 2016

8:00 – 9:00 – General Session – Robert O’Neil

Robert O’Neil was an outstanding speaker. As a Navy Seal and a member of Alpha Team Six, his instant credibility as a person who never quits was never questioned.

Mr. O’Neil spoke about what he did to successfully complete Navy Seal training and how he applied that thinking to everyday living.

The thing I took away from Mr/. O’Neil’s training was, not to concentrate so hard on the long-term goal, but to break it up into several short-term goals. This makes for small victories every day.

9:30 – 10:15 – Collective Bargaining – Andy Sever

Andy Sever is Director of Labor Relations with the Montana School Board Association. Mr. Sever was very knowledgeable about collective bargaining.

Mr. Sever explained strategies used to protect management rights and create contractual language that is understandable and not subject to misinterpretation.

10:30 – 11:15 – Open Records and Meeting Laws – Sandra DePounts

Sandra DePounts is an Assistant Attorney General of North Dakota. Her knowledge and ability to speak at a layman level, on the subject of open records, made her presentation very informative. Ms. DePounts used an open question/answer format enhanced by her powerpoint presentation to help those in attendance understand the material presented.

I enjoyed her presentation and wished it could have been 30 minutes longer.

11:30 – 12:15 – Investigations: Role of School Administrator and School Board – Lisa Kudelka

Lisa Kudelka is an experienced Human Resource Manager with Bismarck School District. Her experiences in school investigations was apparent as she answered questions raised by the audience.

Ms. Kudelka explained the process and steps of an in-school investigation. She also pointed out at what point the school administrator gets involved and when the school board would get involved.

Ms. Kudelka’s presentation helped me to realize what the school board’s function is during an in-school investigation.

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1:15 – 2:15 – General Session – Story Musgrove

Story Musgrove was the lead spacewalker on the Hubble Telescope repair mission for NASA.

Mr. Musgrove reported that he did not graduate from high school, but due to hard work and using his natural abilities to his advantage, he was able to acquire over 20 honorary graduate degrees.

Mr. Musgrove took us on a chronological tour of his fascinating life and reminded us that we are the only thing holding ourselves back from achieving our own goals. Mr. Musgrove spoke on the subject of always continuing to look forward, but never forgetting past lessons learned.

2:30 – 3:15 – Raising the Bar: Changing and Creating a Positive Culture for Students – Jeff Brandt

Jeff Brandt is the current Principal at Solen High School.

Mr. Brandt spoke about the changes he implemented at Solen HS when he first became Principal. His changes included creating new policies, eliminating old policies, removal of teachers, and creating a new culture within the school building.

Mr. Brandt explained the obstacles he faced when implementing his new plan and how he overcame them. Mr. Brandt was also honest about the changes that are still required in his school.

3:30 – Second Business Session

During the second session of the convention, we voted on the resolutions and the voting results were announced. There was very little discussion on any of the measures voted upon.

First of all, thank you for sending me to the convention. I found it enlightening and very helpful in easing some of the anxiety I had about entering into this new role as a school board member.

A vast majority of my questions were answered during the convention, and those that were not, I understand will be answered in time as I gain experience.

Secondly, I enjoyed the opportunity of getting to know my fellow school board members on a more personal level. I feel we have the best interests of the school district at heart and each of us hopes to do the best possible job as school board members.