

2017 NDSBA Annual Convention Report – by Board Member Brent Seaks

This was my second State ND School Board Association Convention, and it was beneficial. I appreciate the opportunity to attend and learn.

As a long-time Pittsburgh Steeler football fan, I was excited to hear Rocky Bleier speak in the convention session opening. It was especially interesting to me when he talked about how having a new head coach really changed the culture and the performance of the team. When Chuck Noll was hired by the Steeler's things really changed for the better. Chuck's philosophy was make a commitment to be better or be replaced. That went for everyone who was part of the organization. Otherwise, you will either be stuck where you are or regress. We can become what we want to become. It takes leadership to mold and shape talent.

Rocky's life story was both interesting and inspiring. There were definite takeaways as to how we can make our district better.

The first general session on Friday, Crucial Conversations about America's Public Schools by Dr. John Draper was excellent. He spoke of a lot of popular myths regarding public education, and then shared what was true and what was not true. Some key points I took from this include:

- Equal treatment of unequal children will not work
- Poverty is the number one factor among low achieving children (we must make sure children's basic needs are met if we have a shot at properly educating them)
- Idea of parents being challenged to fill out a form committing to spending one hour per night helping their child learn (like some charter schools do)
- USA does not do well at teaching creativity, but we are good about not stamping it out like some other countries.
- Share school success stories every chance we get – focus on the positive
- Commit to do four things:
 - Be Positive
 - Never Bad Mouth Another Educator in Public
 - Share One Positive Story Per Week in our Personal Networks
 - Monitor our Progress

I then attended four Clinic Sessions on Friday. Here are the highlights from each:

Budget Forecast 2017-2019 - by Pam Sharp, Director of ND Office of Management & Budget

- We are likely to be in a "hold even" scenario next year
- There is 5.3 billion in Legacy Fund at the end of the biannual
- The oil revenue estimates were based on a price of \$47 per barrel in ND with just under a million barrel production. Right now price of oil is higher than they forecasted.

- In a worst-case scenario, they may still need to replace a \$740 million short fall

From Good to Great – Four Tips for Creating a World Class Organization by – Dr. Cory Steiner

- Simple Shared Philosophy
 - Choose your attitude
 - Be present where you are
 - Play
 - Make someone's day
 - Be on-time
- Strive to be Exceptional
- Have a "Why Statement"
- Retain faith that you will prevail in the end
- Stick to the big things.... Raise the level of your urgency
- Everyone makes a difference- reinvent yourself regularly to make a positive difference
- Acknowledge greatness – when ordinary people do extra ordinary things

Maverick, Malcontents, and Mutineers - by Dave Koempel, Senior Consultant of the Texas Association of School Boards:

- Talked about difficult types of people to work with including:
 - Demanding
 - Arrogant
 - Whining
 - Uncooperative
 - Unreliable
- Reviewed six strategies to deal with them
 - Stop
 - Communicate (listen)
 - Curiosity
 - Breathe
 - Principles
 - Attitude

Medical Marijuana in Schools – by Renae Sisk, Division of Medical Marijuana at the ND Department of Health

- Law went into effect 4/17/17 but will still take another 12-18 months to put law in effect. Also want to ensure:
 - Prevent distribution to minors
 - No revenue to gangs
 - No crossing state lines
 - No "drug" driving
 - No growing on public lands or federal properties

- Medical marijuana will not be prescription based as it is not FDA approved
- There will be 2 manufacturing facilities and 8 dispensaries. The application fee will be \$5,000 per application and rejected parties will not get their money back. They already received 97 letters of interest.
- Manufacturing facilities and/or dispensaries must be 1,000 feet away from any schools and medical marijuana is not permitted in any schools, buses, or at any school sanctioned events.

Our Final General Session was by C. Ed. Massey on How Communication and Relationships Impact Student Achievement. He talked about the importance of students being college, career, and life ready. He talked about the shift from where school board were to be “tolerated” to school boards are to be “engaged”. He talked about the importance of standing committees, and he talked about the importance of involving people in processes. They may not agree with the decision, but they will respect it.

It was a lot of information over a short time, but most of it was helpful and useful. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn as I do my best to serve Dickinson Public Schools.