

AASB report from Joshua Hills and Heidi Young,

First we would like to thank the district for allowing us the opportunity to attend the conference. The conference was an amazing way to learn more about board operations, team building, partnering, and communication to name only a few of the things we learned at this conference. Here is a brief list of sessions we attended and our overviews.

Day one 11-09

Joshua Hills- I attended the Board member Boot Camp. On day one of the boot camp we covered a lot of subjects including board responsibilities, Boardman ship, effective board meetings, policy, education finance, curriculum, and school law. We heard from John Sedor the attorney about his services. The one major takeaway for me from this first day was that a well-oiled, functioning board with a good working relationship with their one and only employee the superintendent will be the most effective board.

In the evening meeting I attended the Rural District Caucus. This was a meeting of board member and superintendents from rural districts discussing the AASB resolution that were on the table for this year's vote. The hot topic this year was resolutions 1.2 about mandated borough formation. This is a resolution to support the AASB standing up against such actions. There was also several other resolutions discussed but mostly for wording changes. The general idea was to include the phrase culturally minded to most education resolutions. The group discussed what issues were our top priorities for REAA schools. The top five priorities decided by this group are:

- 1- Early funding (State budget done by April 1st)
- 2- Funding for quality Pre-K
- 3- Teacher / staff retention and recruitment
- 4- Alternative pathways to certification
- 5- Funding for behavioral health

Heidi Young- I chaired the resolutions committee on governance. We worked as subcommittees and reviewed and discussed all of the resolutions presented as the framework for AASB.

Day two 11-10

Joshua Hills & Heidi Young- We started with a general session. The keynote speaker was Joe Nelson the vice Chancellor of the U of A SE. He gave a great talk about cultural diversity and the need to integrate native ways of learning into all school. "We are all native to somewhere".

Joshua Hills- after the general session I attended the second half of board Room boot camp. This session focused on policy building, community engagement, and social emotional learning and school climate. My takeaway from this session was that we need to do a better job informing our staff, students, and public of our policies, our order of operations, and open communication lines.

Joshua Hills- In the afternoon session I attended Why collect data? This session was all about the testing and test data. I learned a lot about the various tests and that not any one test can show us a full view of the progress or lack of in our schools. They showed us that when you compile the data from multiple testing types it shows a fuller picture of puzzle that is DATA. After taking this session I believe we need

to do better explaining the test data we receive from the multitude of tests our children take every year to the parents and even the staff.

Heidi Young- I attended Hot topics and listened to Sarah Sledge talk about CEACC priorities for this year, the nationwide teacher shortage, how impact aid is used, and then attended a chaperone meeting.

We attended and supported the Awards banquet and June Nelson scholarship fundraiser. The fundraiser raised enough money to fund eleven \$1500 scholarships. All of the auction items were donated by school districts. I felt bad that our district was one of only a few that did not donate to the fundraiser. I encourage the district to ensure that we support the AASB next year at the fundraiser by donating an item or two.

Day three 11-11

Joshua Hills & Heidi Young- Started with General session #2. Today our key note speaker was Zaretta Hammond. Zaretta is an author and educator speaker. She wrote the book, Culturally Responsive Teaching and the brain. She gave an amazing talk about working with each child to find out their story. The point I took from her speech was that we don't know what our kids have been through or what they are facing at home every day, and that we need to take those things into mind when planning how to teach them.

Joshua Hills- My next session was by far my favorite session of this conference. How to engage with youth. But it was way more than just how to engage with youth. Thomas Azzarella was high energy and fun. He encouraged us to mingle and gave us questions to ask one another. The class had about twenty students present and 45 adults. He separated the students and adults and had each group list things we thoughts were most important when building a relationship. Turns out the students and adults listed the same things. Not that I expected a huge difference. The main point of the session was this: We too often talk to each other and our students with closed questions. Those that do not foster conversation. Like do you like pizza? He gave us a list of open questions that allow the other person to speak and encouraged us to listen to learn not to reply. Communication is the only way we will learn about our students and gain trust which was the number one thing on the student list of important parts of a relationship. At first, I was not all that comfortable walking up to strangers and starting conversations, but by the end of this conference I found a new confidence and ease in starting conversations.

Heidi Young- I attended the follow up with Zaretta and it was an uplifting experience. Her premise is a simple one. Students will thrive in setting they feel safe in. Her idea is to make a playlist and start off every day with a song to get the kids moving and in a positive mood. As a group activity we made playlists titled Pump me up, Its Gonna be alright and Walking on sunshine. I will share the playlists with the districts. I would like to see our district utilize this concept.

Joshua Hills- At lunch we had a luncheon business meeting. This meeting included speeches from the AASB board candidates. We had a nice lunch while listening to the candidates and discussing the future of the AASB.

After lunch we attended the Roundtables and gained feedback from the youth about what are the biggest issues in their communities and what the solutions could possibly look like. It was interesting to see the different issues in Anchorage were many of the same as in rural areas.

Joshua Hills- In the afternoon session I attended the Rural REAA forum. This was a great opportunity to sit with other small school board members and discuss our boards. I enjoyed sitting with more experienced board members and hearing their stories and learning from their board models. This brought to my attention that all districts have similar issues and there are great resources to help boards with any and all issues.

Heidi Young- I attended YLI with the youth and participated in a very cool cross the line activity, which was done anonymously and was a lot of fun and a very eye-opening experience. It is something I hope to replicate with the youth of our island.

Awards Banquet - The school board member, and board of the year were recognized as well as the superintendent of the year. The YLI also did a brief presentation.

11-12

We attended the resolution meeting. This is the time in which all of the attendees come together to discuss, amend, and approve the resolutions. The AASB resolutions are the guidance from the membership that help keep the AASB doing their part to help all of our districts. The membership also voted on the AASB board of director seats. It was great to be a part of the resolution process. We worked as a group to discuss any issues with the resolutions and in the end all the resolutions were approved.

Joshua Hills & Heidi Young - We then attended the session on Partnering with families and community for student success. We discussed ways that different districts communicate with their students, staff and communities. One of the coolest things we heard about was a program called the Reminder App. It is a program that has many levels of communication that would allow the district, schools, and selected staff to send messages, reminders, and schedules to anyone in the system. We would recommend the district to look at the app or something similar to help improve communications with our students, staff, and communities.

Joshua Hills- We attended the Sunday luncheon and wrap up meeting. At this meeting they introduced the new board members. Said a fair well to board members leaving.

In summary we would highly recommend that the district continue to send board members to the AASB events. There are more than one a year. Not only did we learn more than we thought possible at this conference we had the opportunity to meet other board members from around the state and learn from them. We believe it is an invaluable asset to our district to have our board and staff informed on current issues, trained to handle any issues, and to be part of the AASB.

Thank you again for this amazing opportunity. Joshua Hills & Heidi Young