

Presidential Ponderings by Joe Bartell

Hello colleagues, and welcome back to another year. As we begin our journey again, it is apparent that some things have changed since we left last spring. Many of us are teaching subjects or grade levels that we have never taught before. Some of our closest friends are no longer with us at our sites, or even in the district. One thing, however, is still the same – the kids. The only thing in education that will never change is the fact that we as teachers have the sole responsibility of educating our youth and inspiring the future members of our society.

With increased budget woes from the State continuing to hurt the students and teachers, it is safe to say that we are in uncharted territory when it comes to our profession. However, teachers are some of the most resilient people in this world and I know that each and every one of us will find a way to persevere and work through these tough times. It is not an impossible journey; things will get better. We just have to stay the course and continue to do what we all love so dearly – teaching the children of our communities and making a difference in their lives.

As we return to our classrooms with less resources, more students, and dwindling time, we must remember that we are not superheroes. We are only human and there is only so much that one person can do with such limited assistance. It is ok to trim down some projects, it is ok to change the way that you cover a certain content area topic, it is ok to strive for perfection and only reach acceptable. There are going to have to be sacrifices made and it is up to us to determine our own limits. This is not to say that we should go into this year with the goals of mediocrity, but rather to go in with the goals of reality based upon our situation.

Together, as an Association, a family of peers and colleagues, we will work together to support one another and to pick up the slack where we are able to. It should also be said that together as an Association we need to maintain unity and strength during what will be another trying year. Only when we come together for a common purpose and we work as one can we truly succeed in our endeavors. Your leadership is well aware of the difficulties that lie ahead and we are prepared to lead you through it and provide you with opportunities to voice your concerns, express your opinions, and share your ideas.

Throughout the past year you have heard me refer to the Association as **your** Association. This is true to the very core of what a labor group is. The leadership and vision is only as strong as the power of its members. Therefore, this year you will see even more opportunities for teachers to come together to receive and share information. Your leadership is going to be more visible and more accessible so that the lines of communication never cease to exist. Each board member that you elected into office is here to work for you and to protect your rights.

This summer I had the opportunity to attend some great conferences to further develop myself as leader of our Association. Even though it meant time spent away from my family, I knew that it would be important for me to do this for the members of BOTA. I have learned many new things and have been rejuvenated and motivated to come back this September and work as hard as I can for each and every BOTA member.

In closing, I would like to thank each and every member who voted for me this last spring. It is an honor to know that you have put your faith and trust in me, Celeste, and the rest of the Executive board. Even though we each have our own jobs, goals, and deadlines, it is a privilege to work for so many inspirational individuals who are some of the kindest, most generous people to walk this planet. We as teachers are definitely a breed of our own and no one ever can really quite come close to being like us. It is my goal as your Association Co-President to make sure that we, as an elected leadership, continue to work for each of you by protecting your interests, fairly representing you, and fighting for what we truly deserve.

Have a great year,

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