

Walking for a Year in the AWSP President's Shoes

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I am a concert goer

– everyone who knows me personally knows listening to live music is one of my favorite activities, even if I'm not all that familiar with the band. Last summer, I was lucky enough to be able to go to the Gorge and attend an amazing Kings of Leon concert! I downloaded some of their lesser known (to me) songs and became more familiar with the group days before the concert. "Comeback Story" soon became a favorite of mine. I really enjoyed this song and some of the lyrics I found to be ironically funny, "I walk a mile in your shoes, and now I'm a mile away, and I've got your shoes."

When thinking about what to write for my last column as AWSP President, that song came to my mind. Metaphorically, I was fortunate enough last June to put on the shoes of AWSP President, previously occupied by many other amazing administrators. Over the course of the last year, I walked that mile. My role this year was incredibly fulfilling. I enjoyed the collaboration, collegial relationships, and representing the principal's voice across the state. I felt privileged to attend events with administrators from other states, meet with legislators to discuss important education issues, serve on decision making committees, and collaborate with principals from all levels across our own beautiful and diverse state.

As I'm getting closer to stepping back into my smaller shoes and as the school year comes closer to



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completion, I considered what it means to wear not only the AWSP President's shoes, but the variety of shoes we wear. I questioned what leads us all to the metaphorical shoe store to begin with. I was recently mentioned in a tweet by a colleague, who called my attention to a post by Danny Steele, a principal, blogger, and educational leadership speaker. The post mentioned someone took a chance on each of us when they hired us for the classroom and then as a principal. It went on to comment about how we benefited by those individuals and their belief in us. It was those individuals, as well as our own teachers and administrators, that became our shoe salesperson so to speak. In my time of reflection, I keep coming back to the notion that while we all are wearing our important shoes, we also have the amazing opportunity to be selling "shoes" to others every single day....perhaps even eventually giving others our own shoes to wear. How lucky are we to

have the prospect of influencing and inspiring others?!

These are the thoughts I have as I walk the last few feet of my year. Through the lively and hectic activities of closing out a school year, I challenge each of us to take each step mindful of our potential influence. Your shoes may not be always the easiest to walk in, but you are not alone.

Ultimately, the shoes of the AWSP president do not really belong to one person, but the entire AWSP membership. Our strong and supportive organization belongs to each and every one of our members. Thank you for allowing me to wear these shoes for the past year; it truly was an honor and they've taken me to some great places. ■



Kelley Boyd is principal of Coulee City Elementary and is serving as AWSP president for the 2017-18 school year.