

NABE celebrates another well-attended and exciting conference in Albuquerque, NM on March 1-3, 2018

The City of Albuquerque, along with Mayor Tim Keller, members of the Hispano Chamber of Commerce, state and local officials, Native American leaders and tribal elders and the NMABE local planning committee of the State of New Mexico joined together in extending a warm and rousing “bienvenidos” to the NABE Executive Board and more than 3,000 conference attendees. Mayor Tim Keller launched the conference by joining the NABE Executive Board, special VIPs, and over 100 conference exhibitors and sponsors to celebrate NABE’s 47th International Bilingual Education Conference at the Albuquerque Convention Center special Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at the Exhibit Hall.

NABE was delighted to welcome our 20 national and international affiliates from China, Mexico and Spain and over 30 other international participants. At the opening of the Conference, NABE paid tribute to the students and teachers who perished in the recent school shooting in South Florida. Special tribute was also paid to the victims of the perilous acts of nature in Puerto Rico, Houston, Mexico and California. NABE Executive Board contributed a small token of appreciation to the Affiliates in each of the affected areas.

More than ever before, the atmosphere of the conference, from the opening day to the final day, was charged with electricity, excitement and enthusiasm. There was a sense of “familia,” with engaged learning, and powerful performances by students and teachers. Comments that were clearly heard throughout the conference were, “...outstanding, relevant, and powerful.” Beginning with the opening day keynoter in teacher Saul Ramirez and his students who were recently featured in a movie called “The Champions” and who received extended standing ovations to the AFT President Randi Weingarten’s powerful appeal to empowerment, equity, diversity action and resistance against those that would dismiss our bilingual/dual language immigrant students, our teachers and our public education system. The third day keynoter was Richard Pecos of the Native American Tribal Council of New Mexico and former Governor the Santa Fe Tribal Territory. He provided a strong rebuke to those that would forget history and repeat the inequities and injustices of the 50’s, 60’s, 70’s in an effort to impose power and injustice against Native American language and people. All in all, there was a great sense of sharing and collaboration in the more than 400 featured and special sessions, including the BRJ and NJRP Editorial Boards and researchers session. Several presentations proved to be “hallmarks” for NABE including the Global Forum on Bilingual Education, over 100 poster sessions, more than 100 BESO Students who blogged and provided a strong social media presence for the conference.

The NABE Executive Board and staff salutes this year’s prestigious award winners: Dr. Joel Gomez for the Ramon Santiago Award, Silvia Reyes for the Leadership Award, NM State Senator Javier Martinez for the OHTLI Mexican Government Award. It was very delightful to celebrate with three dynamic, talented and

exemplary students and teachers who won the Bilingual Students of the Year Awards in Ashlie Chaidez, Isabella Lozada and Lisbeth Alonzo. The National Bilingual Teacher of the Year Award went to Nancy Alatorre and the First Place Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award went to Dr. Lucia Cardenas Curiel who also received a paid study abroad summer scholarship from the Government of Spain.

NABE Executive Board recognized Alma Flor Ada and Lily Wong Fillmore with its first “Lifetime Educators Legend” Award. Throughout the 3-day conference, most of the venues were filled with Mariachi Music and various local school presentations. For the first time in many years, the National Title III Directors joined by over 3,000 attendees made this a compelling and powerful conference. The closing night Gala Dance featured two local bands and brought out more than 400 revelers who tried to dance the night away in celebration of what can be considered one of NABE’s most upbeat conferences in recent years.

NABE Executive Board would like to give special thanks and recognition to the more than 100 BESO students and other volunteers who devoted their time, talents and energies in ensuring that the conference was successful. Especially noteworthy is the local planning committee, NMABE, DLENM and the Hispano Chamber, without whose support and collaboration this type of success would not have been possible. A very special “shout out” is appropriate for the Hispano Chamber, the Convention and Visitors Bureau of Albuquerque. The hotel and staff were all very helpful, courteous and professional. They took pride in showcasing the elegant, warmth, friendly and beautiful Albuquerque, truly the “land of Enchantment.” It was equally gratifying to observe the huge group of parents and hundreds of local talented students who were sharing, connecting and learning with ideas and much wonderful entertainment.

The Conference theme as “Resisting: Language as a Right and Power” was so very appropriate. Everyone came away empowered and united in a vision of solidarity and greater commitment to supporting our bilingual/dual language and immigrant population. Board member Francisca Sanchez challenged the audience in her final closing comments to become more passionate, purposeful, activists and advocates to reigniting and validating the work and advocacy we do in upholding the promise to see every child succeed regardless of their socioeconomics, linguistic, ethnic or their immigration status—Our children are our future and the future is NOW. .

NABE thanks everyone for being an integral part of the success of the NABE 2018 Conference and we invite you to participate in the **4th Annual Dual Language Symposium on June 27-29 in Washington, DC. We also remind you to mark your calendars to join us in Orlando, FL on March 7-9, 2019. The pre-Conference begins on March 6.**

“¡Sí se puede!

Margarita Pinkos, President
Santiago Wood, Executive Director