

EXCITING NEW RSVP PROGRAM INCREASES STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL DECISIONS!

What is RSVP?

Raising Student Voice & Participation (RSVP) is a program initiated by the National Association of Student Councils and endorsed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals to encourage student involvement in decision-making in their schools. RSVP was developed to counteract the sense of powerlessness and disengagement from high school that students sometimes feel. The process of RSVP involves and empowers students through a series of summits. Students trained in RSVP discuss the process with principals and teachers, and, with their support, establish the schedule and plan for implementing RSVP.

Student facilitators of the summits encourage students to identify issues in their schools and communities and to take steps to address and resolve them. In RSVP, a student leadership team, including student council leaders and others, are involved from the initial phase of planning and facilitating student summits that engage entire student bodies, to assembling student action teams that will carry out plans for resolving those concerns identified in the summits, to reporting the results of the actions to the student body.

How it is being implemented in Alaska

AASG was selected by NASC to receive a grant to train school teams in Alaska. At the AASG Summer Executive Board Meeting on August 11, 2007, the members of the Board, from 10 high schools, were trained, including Monroe Catholic, Bethel, North Pole, Barrow, Chugiak, Juneau-Douglas, Palmer, East Anchorage, Kenny Lake, and Mt. Edgecumbe.

On October 11, 2007, school teams from Cantwell, Chevak, Chugach School District, Cordova, Eagle River, Hydaburg, Haines, Ketchikan, Klawock, Manakotaq, Newhalen, Qugcuun, Sitka, and Yakutat received \$750 grants for this training to implement RSVP in their schools. Several other schools took part in the training and also plan to implement the Summit process in their schools: Bethel, Barrow, Chugiak, Juneau-Douglas, Kenai Central, and Unalaska.

The RSVP training took place just before the Fall 07 AASG Leadership Conference, at East Anchorage High School. Matt Cook, a student from Chugiak High School, is AASG's certified RSVP trainer. He was ably assisted by Megan Waggoner, now president of the AASG Executive Board, and by all the rest of the Board.

Next Steps

As these schools begin to involve all the students in the RSVP Summit Process, the AASG Executive Board is planning the next training on April 10, at Juneau-Douglas High School. The

training will be available for 15 schools, with an advisor and 3 students from each school. The application is on the AASG web site www.aasg.org . The cost for materials and the training is \$260, with \$150 waived if the team registers and participates in the Spring leadership Conference at Juneau-Douglas High School, April 10-12.