

AASB Virtual Fall Boardsmanship Academy

It was a privilege to be able to participate in this event. I was also able to attend the Winter Boardsmanship Academy last December and found both to be very helpful to me as a newer member of the board. This is good training for board members. I attended every session during this two-day event and included some notes for the sessions I found especially helpful or interesting. The last session ended up being the one that inspired me the most. I took some time to get myself more organized and found and saved all the documents that I should have readily available.

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) Update

Karen Melin, Deputy Commissioner, DEED

Updates from DEED and pertinent information boards need to know now.

The COVID QUAGMIRE: Legal Give and Take ... and Take and Give

John Sedor and Betsy Bull, Sedor, Wendlandt Evans & Fillippi

Information on operational legal issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. School districts are in uncharted territory exploring the risks and options of reopening schools and determining just “how open” they ought to be. While there are a few statutory waypoints to help guide us, much of what we must decide will be a function of risk tolerance, educational policy, and community goals.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Questions and Answers

This presentation focused on how to navigate social media as an elected member of the board.

What can I share?

- Information the District has already released publicly.
- Information from the open portion of the board meetings.
- Information you learned in the community.

Best Practices

- Don't comment in your capacity as a board member.
- Use social media to “LISTEN.”
- Don't have chat groups that would constitute a quorum of the board.
- Don't divulge confidential information about students, employees, or board business.
- If you do post in your capacity as a board member, retain a copy of that post!

Team Optimizing Project (TOP): What Does the Data Say About Teacher Retention?

Barbara Adams & Jerry Covey

Alaska districts are using TOP to learn about employee insights and experiences in voluntary, safe, and confidential ways using information to support collaboration between district administrators and employees that creates certainty and strengthens the workforce.

Though I was unable to get information on the costs involved with this, I believe that this would be a valuable way to gather useful information for building better relationships between administration and staff. One question I would appreciate staff having an opportunity to answer anonymously is where they see inefficiencies.

Teacher Recruitment & Retention During COVID-19

Toni McFadden, Alaska Teacher Placement Program, UAF

What recruiting teachers in Alaska has looked like since COVID-19, changes that have been made to the recruiting process, and challenges faced.

Governance without Policy = Being Blindfolded

Lon Garrison, AASB

The need for policy as a basis for governance and some best practices for keeping it up to date and readily accessible to the public.

Boards define their role through Board Bylaws and delegate through Policy. Policy makes clear the Board's direction and intention.

Board Policy

- Provides the framework for the day-to-day operation of the district.
- Keeps decision-making situation-based and not person-based.
- Helps keep the Board focused on governance and Board business.

Board Policy (BP) is the WHY - Policy tells us why and what needs to be done

Administrative Regulation (AR) is the HOW - Developed by the Superintendent, tells us how the policy is implemented

First reading – introduced, you can amend and take testimony. Second reading – reintroduced, you can amend and take testimony, if significantly changed you may want an additional reading. The board has the option to approve policy without a second reading, if needed, but be cautious.

Curriculum? What do I need to know and why does it matter?

Ted Wilson, Juneau School District and Lon Garrison, AASB

What curriculum is all about, such as: Do you really understand what curriculum is? As a board member, what do I need to know? Why is it an important responsibility of the board?

Curriculum is not just the textbook, program or listing of courses available. It includes the philosophy that governs instruction and practices that occur every year in classrooms. Includes a scope and sequence for implementation. Defines what students should know and be able to do by the end of the course/year. Aligned to and based on standards (Alaska State Standards).

Stronger Together: Building bridges between families and schools to help students succeed

Claudia Plesa, AASB

An AASB developed resource, which helps school districts engage families systematically and equitably. The session focused on the Relationships chapter of Stronger Together, and strategies that can build up student resilience through deep, meaningful, and trusting relationships with their families. Attendees strategized how to build, maintain, and repair relationships with families in our districts, and how to lean on these relationships to support student academic progress, as well as student well-being and self-growth.

Essential Items Every School Board Member Should Have at Their Fingertips

Tlmi Tullis, AASB

Having access to certain documents will not only help you as a board member but also help you in your decision making, participation in your community and work that you do each and every day to make your schools and district the best they can be. The session outlined what these items are and challenged boards to find all of them.

I decided that this challenge would be a good project for me to complete, especially as a newer board member. There have been several times I wish I had certain of these documents handy. These will be a good reference in the coming months. Many of the suggested items are readily available in the BoardDocs Library. I found all the suggested items, as well as additional documents that I thought would be helpful to have handy and linked them here. Each of these documents are now easily accessible for me and are also linked below.

Documents recommended by AASB:

- [Board and District Policies](#) and [Bylaws of the Board](#)
(Policies are also easily accessible in the top right corner of BoardDocs)
- [Current Contract for the Superintendent](#)
- [Alaska Open Meeting Act](#)
- [Cheat Sheet on Parliamentary Procedure](#)
(additional info in Board Governance Handbook Appendix)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [Board Goals](#)
- [District Budget](#)
- [Board Calendar](#) and [Annual Agenda Guideline](#)
- [School Calendar](#) plus several [variance calendars](#)
- [Parent-Student Handbook](#)

Additional documents that will be important for quick access:

- [Board Governance Handbook](#)
- [Budget Reductions Tier list 2020](#)
- [Budget Reductions History FY15 – FY20](#)
- [2021 State and Federal Legislative Priorities](#)
- [Public School Funding Program Overview](#)