



association of
ALASKA
school boards

Key Roles & Responsibilities

For School Board
Presidents

February 2022



As a School Board Member, you are a leader in your community. As School Board President, you are also the leader of your School Board. Being elected as Board Chair you are now in the position to be focused on facilitating the work of the board in addition to your own perspective and interests. As Board President you are **“the most important and least important member of the Board at the same time”** (Ann Macfarlane, Jurassic Parliament).

Serve as a model for the rest of the Board, other members of the Board can't be expected to behave better than the President.

Building an Effective Team

- Ensure that everyone understands and has copies of essential board documents:
 - Policy
 - Bylaws
 - Standards
 - Norms
- Develop clear, shared goals, and a visionary mission-oriented focus.
- Ensure the district has an active strategic plan.
- Establish a common understanding of how the Board will operate, including procedures and norms of behavior and communication.
- Promote healthy deliberations of the Board team.
- Build a relationship with the Superintendent.
- Focus the Board on learning their roles and responsibilities, as well as always growing as professionals.
- Ensure members are kept fully informed. The President and the Superintendent should make sure that all information is accurate and reliable.
- Ensure a proper Superintendent evaluation is conducted annually.
- Provide training & annual review in Media, OMA, Ethics, Fiscal Accountability,
- Coordinate the Board self-assessment process where the Board also reviews the effectiveness of their goals.

Expectations & Relationships

- Represent the Board when speaking to the public.
- Act as a sounding board for the Superintendent and serve as a liaison between the Board and the Superintendent.
- Encourage all Board members to educate themselves on being good Board members.
- Report to your community about school operations and Board actions via numerous avenues and opportunities.
- Encourage the Superintendent to come to you with problems that might come to the Board.
- Schedule a Board work session for the purpose of reorganizing as a team.

Meetings

- Work with the Superintendent to plan the meeting agenda.
- Preside over all board meetings.
- Understand basic parliamentary procedures, including votes and motions.
- Ensure all members have the opportunity to participate.
- Be responsible for orderly conduct of all board meetings.
- Act as a resource to the Superintendent on decisions that may require further information between board meetings.
- Organize the Board's work:
 - Electing officers
 - Orienting for new school board members
 - Appointing all committees, including ad-hoc & task forces
 - Establishing the Board-administrative team
 - Adopting policies, rules and procedures to guide the Board and the school district's operations
- Support and defend the policies and programs adopted by the Board.
- Ensure the Board gives authority to the Superintendent for administration of the schools.
- Keep the Board aware of its commitment to work as a unified body whose greatest concern is the education of all students in the District's schools.
- Direct everything through proper channels.
- Know the difference between policy and administrative regulations (AR) and help the rest of the Board make this distinction.

The Key to Success

Presiding at Board Meetings is just part of the job!



Scheduling of Meetings

- What do the Board's by-laws say about meeting schedules?
- Map out the entire year while establishing the school calendar.
- Stay consistent with days/evenings, times, and locations.



Creating Meeting Agendas

The agenda is the Board's "road map" for effectively conducting a meeting. Working in partnership with the Superintendent, the Board President plans the agenda for each Board meeting. The Superintendent may prepare a draft agenda to review with the Board President, or the two may meet first to discuss the agenda.

- Work with the Superintendent and Board secretary/administrative assistant on adding agenda items.
- Know the reason each item is on the agenda.
- Prioritize order and placement of items on the agenda.
 - Ensure important items are prioritized.
- Predict problems that might arise from an agenda item.
- Estimate how much time each agenda item might take.
- Know what reports the Superintendent and staff members will make.
- If an item refers to policy, list the policy number.
- If an item is part of the district strategic plan, list the goal it aligns with.
- Ensure there is time for public comments.
 - Ensure rules for public comments/participation are shared.
- Identify celebrations and recognition of staff, students, or community to occur at the meeting.
- Identify routine items to be placed on a consent agenda.
- Include time to speak to future agenda items.



Before the Meeting

As a leader of the Board, the Board President also takes responsibility for ensuring, or delegating to the Board secretary or Superintendent, to:

- Ensure all Board members receive meeting/information packets in the time frame outlined in the district's by-laws.
- Ensure Board members, the public, and media know dates, times and locations of meetings.
- Arrange seating so all Board members can see and hear one another, and the audience can see the Board. AASB recommends a U-shaped set-up.
- Make the Board room as comfortable for visitors as possible.
- Have enough chairs, good ventilation and attractive surroundings.
- Have the District's Vision, Mission and Strategic Goal Areas posted in the room.
- Ensure members of the public, or observers, are greeted and have information on who the Board members are, how people can address the Board, and why the Board goes into executive sessions.
- Provide all visitors with clear information about how and when they can comment on agenda items.



AASB Tip: Facilitators

When the Board is first getting used to doing a regular self-assessment, and a superintendent evaluation, it may be a good idea to have a facilitator for the first year. A facilitator will push the Board to dig deeper and have the difficult conversations necessary to push it to improve. After the Board has gone through the process, the Board can then decide if in subsequent years to continue with a facilitator or continue on its own.



Chairing the Meeting Checklist

The President's style of presiding is as important as the rules they follow. Knowing the rules, and using common sense, will determine their leadership ability.

- ✓ Start and end meetings on time (as advertised).
- ✓ Set a positive tone for the meeting.
- ✓ Speak in order to be heard by everyone.
- ✓ Welcome members, the public, and guests to the meeting.
- ✓ Delay discussion and voting on any issue before the Board until a motion and second have been made.
- ✓ Encourage all members to express themselves
 - Keep track of which members have spoken, and who has yet to speak.
- ✓ Keep discussion centered on the issue.
- ✓ Encourage all members to express themselves by promoting discussion and allowing individuals on all sides of an issue the opportunity to be heard.
- ✓ Progress through the published agenda efficiently in order to conclude the meeting in a reasonable period of time.
- ✓ Repeat all motions in their entirety a number of times:
 - When the motion is made
 - Before taking the vote.
 - When announcing the result of the vote
- ✓ Announce the results of the vote, and the action to be taken.
- ✓ Treat all Board members fairly and equally.
- ✓ Ensure all meetings comply with Alaska's Open Meetings Act.
- ✓ Ensure accurate minutes are kept to document actions.
- ✓ Ask someone to preside while taking the floor to speak on an item.
- ✓ Adhere to the adopted rules of order.
- ✓ Declare the meeting adjourned.

The President as a Member of the Board

Being Board President does not take away an individual's rights as a Board member. The President may curb their participation to allow others to speak first, but the President can, and should, have an opinion. As an elected official the President is **expected** to take part in Board actions. However, as the Board's leader, the President must be cautious to not dominate the discussion or force an opinion on the Board.

The President may make motions and does not have to leave the chair role to participate in discussions. AASB recommends the Board President turn over the chair to the Vice-President when making a motion, so the Board President doesn't get in the position of ruling on his or her own motions.

The Board President, like all Board members, is expected to vote on each motion, provided there is no conflict of interest.

As a Member of
the Board

Executive Session

Executive Session exists so the public can be aware of what an elected governing body is doing. There are four reasons a Board can enter executive session:

Matters, the immediate knowledge of which, would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the public entity.

Subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion.

Matters which by law, municipal charter, or ordinance are required to be confidential.

Matters involving consideration of government records that by law are not subject to public disclosure.

When the Board come out of Executive Session, the President will reconvene back into the open meeting, then preside over deliberations and actions which result from time in Executive Session.



AASB Tip: Consent Agenda

The Superintendent and Board President can determine which items are administrative, routine, and/or non-controversial and list them on the agenda as “consent items”. At the meeting any Board member could remove an item from the consent agenda and place it on the regular meeting agenda for discussion. All remaining items on the consent agenda are handled with one single motion. The President asks, “Do I hear a motion to approve consent agenda items A through H?”

Leadership Outside of Meetings

The School Board’s authority is granted to the Board – not individual school Board members, including the School Board President. Outside Board meetings, the President is simply a community citizen. Individual members of a Board have no power. The Board only has power when convened in an official public meeting.

- Ensure all members receive the same information, or communication, at approximately the same time so no one feels left out or isolated.
- Insist members use the Board-adopted procedure for handling complaints and suggestions.
- Contact and communicate with every member frequently and repeatedly.
- Ask for suggestions and recommendations for improvement of your leadership.
- Be consistent in your treatment of all members; don’t show partiality.
- Remind yourself regularly, you are setting a model of behavior for others to follow.

Orienting New Board Members

Orienting new school board members is essential for their understanding of their role. It is the President’s responsibility to ensure new members are brought up to speed on:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Governance vs Management;
Roles & Responsibilities | • Board culture |
| • District Policies | • Background information |
| • The Strategic Plan and Goals | • Curriculum and instructional material |
| • Budget | • Communication Flow |
| | • Open Meetings Act |

Board Self-Assessment

The Board President is responsible for the annual board self-assessment process, a recommended best practice to ensure that boards are fulfilling their duties & responsibilities. Options include self-evaluation tools or hiring a facilitator to assist with the evaluation. Each Board should choose the evaluation format that best fits its situation. AASB offers several resources to assist school Boards with this annual review.

As President, the steps and elements of evaluation are:

- Schedule at least one evaluation yearly.
- Get buy-in from the entire Board.
- Establish the process, including the tool the Board will use.
 - If necessary, hire a facilitator.
- Schedule and advertise the evaluation work session.
- Use results to develop a Board self-improvement plan.
 - Stick to the plan.

Reasons for conducting a board self-assessment:

- The Board will become more effective in working together on behalf of the students.
- The Board will improve its relationship with the Superintendent.
- The Board will become more effective in communicating with the public.
- The Board will allocate more resources to finance the items outlined as priorities.

As a Member of
the Board

Professional Development

Ongoing professional development is critical for board members to stay current and be effective in their role as school board members. School Board Presidents are responsible for encouraging members to commit to activities to strengthen their skills, knowledge and teamwork.

Opportunities Include:

- AASB Leadership & Legislative Academy (January or February)
- AASB Spring Boardsmanship & Legislative Academy (March or April)
- AASB Fall Boardsmanship Academy (September)
- AASB School Law and Equity Academy (December)
- AASB Annual Conference (November)
- NSBA National Conference & Exposition (April)
- AASB Webinar Series (Live & on-demand throughout the year)

Working With the Superintendent

Just as a Board Chair needs cooperation among Board members, they also need the cooperation of the Superintendent to make a complete team.

The Board Chair/President will find the Superintendent to be a reliable and essential resource. They are equipped to handle the day-to-day administrative details of the school district, while the President and the Board tackle the essential tasks of planning and policy-making.

Shared Responsibilities

The Superintendent shares certain responsibilities with The President. This includes:

- Serving as spokesperson for the Board.
- Communicating information.
- Soliciting community support for the school district.
- Helping develop policies and programs through recommendations to the Board.
- Acting as an advisor to the Board.

Urge Board members to relay all concerns, problems, issues and information relating to Board or school issues to the Superintendent.

Ask Board members to use Board policy for handling complaints so citizen or staff concerns are relayed to the Superintendent, or to the person immediately responsible for solving the problems.

Deal with problems by starting with the Superintendent. The Superintendent and Board President set the tone and direction for the school district. The better each party communicates, the better combined leadership they will have.

Communicating with Your Superintendent

Because there are so many ways the Board President and the administrative team work together, it is essential to approach each other with trust and respect. The Board President needs to be able to discuss and agree openly and honestly regarding their roles and responsibilities.

- Talk frequently with the Superintendent to give and receive information about the Board and district operations. Don't wait for the one or two times a year during the formal evaluation.
- Encourage and help the Superintendent keep the Board well enough informed so Board members don't hear surprises from others, including problems.
- Board members should first hear about issues regarding the District from the Superintendent or Board President.
- Schedule ample time at work sessions and retreats to discuss important matters such as the Board's performance, Superintendent's performance, and the relationship between the Board and Superintendent.
- Include the Superintendent at the table in every meeting, including discussion of the Board self-assessment, and the evaluation of the Superintendent's performance.
- Deal with problems by starting with the Superintendent. The Superintendent and Board President set the tone and direction for the district. The better their communication, the better the combined leadership.



AASB Tip: Superintendent Communication

Help the Superintendent identify what information and details the Board needs to make good decisions and ensure Board members receive sufficient information on issues in advance of Board meetings or actions. Ask for relevant facts and additional data when needed on behalf of the Board.

Evaluating the Superintendent

The Board President coordinates the superintendent evaluation process on behalf of the Board. A few general guidelines:



REFLECT

Reflect on Board policy to establish and guide evaluation.



CONDUCT

Conduct evaluation annually. Engage the Board in reviewing the timelines and procedures the Board has approved.



DEVELOP

Develop a sound understanding of the evaluation process, and the steps necessary to complete it.



FACILITATE

Facilitate the process or ask for help. AASB offers a Superintendent evaluation service which provides facilitators to help the Board and Superintendent set goals and indicators and evaluate progress throughout the year.



GOALS

During the formal evaluation discussion, keep the Board's focus on the agreed-to goals and indicators.

What are the district goals or priorities the Board gave the Superintendent?



ACTION

Most often these conversations are held in Executive Session; be sure to come out of the session and take action in the open public meeting.

Often this action is to extend or approve a modification in the Superintendent's contract.

At the end of each year, the Board President has the responsibility to make sure a written document is put into the Superintendent's personnel file.

The Importance of Community Relations

People will form opinions of what organizations do whether or not those organizations try to interpret their own activity. If school districts don't speak up for themselves, others will, and public opinion may get out of control.

The Board President leads the Board in conveying messages to the public.

Today's educational system is much more complex than it was a few decades ago. It faces obstacles that were unheard of then, such as: social media, new media scrutiny, increased competition, demographics, and rampant cynicism.

While schools have improved their educational services to better respond to an increasing demand of complex student needs, it is

ironic the perceptions lag behind the reality. Education absorbs many public anxieties about values, cultures, race, crime, taxes and jobs.

Recognize angry reactions from the community go with the territory. When anger arises during a school Board meeting, it is up to the Board President to defuse the situation using compassionate language. It may mean taking a short break at which point the Board President, in their kindest tone, declares a five-minute break. The President must not give in to the impulse to yell, become combative or let anger show during a meeting.

Lastly, remember when responding to communication, you are representing the full Board rather than your own perspectives.

Community Relations



INTERNAL GROUPS

Groups of people directly associated with the school district include:

- Students
- School Board members
- Administrators
- Principals
- Teachers
- Paraprofessionals
- Support Staff
- Executive Administrative Assistants
- Bus drivers
- Maintenance workers
- Food Services Staff

EXTERNAL GROUPS

Those people who are part of the school community outside of the school have indirect relationships with the school or school district:

- Families & Guardians
- Community Organizations & Businesses
- Tribes
- Civic groups
- Elected officials
- Media
- Government agencies
- Professionals
- Seniors
- Other Community Members

The Many Faces of Our Community/Communities & Groups

Communities is plural because in every District, there are different groups of people with different interests in what is happening in schools. There is no effective way of reaching all groups the same way.

Family Support

Family support is vital to the success of a school. As much as children need their families' love and support, our schools can use their nurturing as well. Families need to feel connected and welcomed in their child's school. It is the responsibility of the school Board to help achieve this goal by supporting family engagement initiatives and urging an "open-door" policy.

Students

No stakeholder group is more important to the positive perception of schools than students. The more positive students feel about their school, the more positive the community will feel about their schools.

Community
Relations

As Board President, here are ways to support a positive school climate:

- Recognize student achievement at each meeting. Emphasize all areas of achievement, not just test scores or sports!
- Support youth leadership opportunities, including student councils, youth leadership trainings, and having a student school board representative.
- Invite student input into Board discussions.
- Set a standing time on your board meeting agenda for student input.
 - Invite student representatives from different groups to present.
- Ensure every child has an opportunity to participate in at least one quality extra-curricular program.
- Talk with the students. Having honest conversations with students can be the quickest way to improve school climate.



AASB Tips: Engaging with the Community

- 1. Stop Talking.** You can't listen while you are talking.
- 2. Empathize with the Other Person.** Try to put yourself in their place so you can see where they are coming from.
- 3. Ask Clarifying Questions.** When you don't understand, when you need further clarification.
- 4. Stick to the set time limit.** Follow the Districts by-laws as they outline speakers time limits.
- 5. Look at the Other Person.** Looking individuals in the eyes as they talk helps you concentrate too and makes them feel you are listening.
- 6. Leave Your Emotions Behind** (if you can). They may prevent you from listening well.
- 7. Control Your Anger.** Try not to get angry at what they are saying. Your anger may prevent you from understanding their words or meaning.
- 8. Get Rid of Distractions.** Put down any papers, pencils, etc., you have in your hands; they may distract your attention.
- 9. Don't Argue Mentally.** When you are trying to understand the other person; it is a handicap to argue with them mentally as they are speaking.
- 10. Avoid Classifying Speaker.** Too frequently we classify a person as one type of person and then try to fit everything they say into what makes sense coming from that type of person.

Media Relations

The role of President becomes more important to the community and the reporters covering the work of the Board.

Lead the Board in developing a plan and related policies for working effectively with the media. Identify messages the Board would like to communicate to the community.

Ensure Board members understand what the District's policy says about speaking on behalf of the Board.

Schedule activities at Board meetings to celebrate success. Invite the media, they probably won't report all the results but they likely will report some.

Try to meet regularly with the reporters who cover the district. This might mean visiting their offices, getting together for lunch, chatting with them at community meetings or having a media briefing.

Community
Relations

The Board President provides the leadership in communicating with the community and helping to build an understanding of the needs of its schools and generating public support to meet those needs. One of the most effective and efficient means of accomplishing this is through the media and the reporters covering the work of the Board.

The President not only needs to be skilled at listening, but should set an example for other Board members. Every Board member should strive to become a good listener.

Advocacy Action Plan

By participating in advocacy programs and events, including those sponsored by AASB and NSBA, the Board can help set legislative agendas by examining the school district's needs and setting legislative priorities. The Board President should take the following action:

- Select or have the Board elect a legislative liaison for each level of government.
- Participate in legislative opportunities through AASB such as the Legislative fly-in's each Spring.
- Participate in the National School Boards Association's Federal Relations Network (FRN). Members of these networks receive updates throughout the legislative sessions highlighting pertinent education legislation and requesting action on a number of school-related bills.
- Provide regular advocacy briefings at Board meetings to report on recent legislative activity.
- Develop and submit resolutions to AASB. Each year AASB legislative priorities are based on resolutions and belief statements adopted by the Delegate Assembly at AASB's Annual Conference.
- Ensure the Board is represented at legislative functions, especially those directly involving education issues. This can include city council meetings, AASB's legislative fly-ins, NSBA's Federal Relations Network Conference; and the AASB delegate assembly.



HABITUAL

In order to have a real impact on policy decisions made in Juneau and Washington, D.C., remember the golden rule – make advocacy a habit.



YEAR-ROUND

Effective advocacy for education is a year-round job. It's not enough to wait until there is a crisis in Juneau or on Capitol Hill. To win in the advocacy game, Boards need to work throughout the year to develop and nurture relationships with members of the State Legislature and Congress and/or their key staffers.



ACTIVE

Tools to help the Board in its advocacy work include passing advocacy policy and/or developing an advocacy action plan for the District. The Board President has a responsibility to make sure the Board takes an active role in the legislative and advocacy process.

This plan will explicitly state the District's commitment to advocacy for education, with the regular advocacy actions it will implement. It can also include:



A review of background information on issues.



Actions which will be taken regarding education issues.



Details on how to send letters or emails to the District representatives.



Suggestions to meet with the District's representatives during both state and national visits OR when they visit your communities. This is a great time to set up the meeting to discuss critical issues.



Identify the issue(s) most important to the school district to discuss with members of the legislature/Congress, and/or send a letter(s)/email(s).



Arrange time for members of Legislature/Congress to visit schools in the district in the fall. This can be a request the Board President or Advocacy Committee Chair makes in a letter, email, or in-person.

14 Pointers for the Board President

Following are some pointers to guide the President in leading the Board to achieve its maximum effectiveness.



1. Get to know the Board members

The Board President probably already has some information about their personal lives, but getting to know and understand viewpoints, interests, strengths, weaknesses, and their approach to decision-making and problem-solving will help improve the relationship with the members. Learn which Board members like to analyze information, to discuss at length, or move an entire agenda at once. Recognizing these traits in Board members will help the President to bring out their best qualities.



2. Realize the collective knowledge of the Board is superior to that of an individual

Everyone brings their own backgrounds, experiences and unique perspectives to an issue, and when a Board explores solutions with each member's full participation, the outcome is usually more creative and cost-effective than it would be otherwise.



3. Establish a tone of cooperative leadership

Emphasize cooperation and work to reduce conflict. The Board President has the major responsibility for establishing good working relationships with the Superintendent and other administrators and among school Board members. Set the tone for Board member relationships by speaking of the need for cooperation and mutual respect, and by allowing for diversity of opinion.



4. Firmly take charge of school Board meetings

Be prepared, positive, and assertive in steering discussion and keeping it on target. Use the power of the presidency to keep the Board dealing with Board business rather than wandering into unproductive, political, or philosophical areas. Move on when it's time to move on. It's this power of the President that keeps a meeting from turning into a circus when touchy topics are on the agenda. Learn the Board's operating procedures. Using judgment about when to be firm and when to be lenient about applying the procedures is the true test of knowledge and skill.



5. **Lead the Board, but don't be so far ahead of the other Board members or constituents**

The President personifies the Board. A good President will allow the Board to be viewed as good. A weak or ineffective President will lead to the public also viewing the Board as weak and ineffective.



6. **Include each Board member in the decision-making process**

The President may have been elected by a certain coalition on the Board, but as President, you are the group's leader and often expected to be the mediator. Don't play to one side. Share information and consult each Board member on an equal basis. Initially, this may be uncomfortable, but in the long run, the Board will be more effective if all members think they are being treated fairly. Besides, Board majorities shift on Boards. They can shift from issue to issue, and the President may be in the minority someday. The others will remember that.



7. **Communicate with Board members & district administrators frequently**

As Board President, be in close contact with the district administrators. Make sure the Board members are immediately notified of any newsworthy incident. Develop a system of communication for other issues, whether it be a weekly report from the President through the information packet, a telephone call or a text message to a member. In order to represent the Board accurately to administration, the President needs to know their pulse.



8. **Listen**

Recognize the issue on the table or being discussed privately with the President may be rooted in another concern all together. The overwhelming quality necessary for effective Board leadership is to listen. People who address the Board must be reassured they have been understood and their concerns are noted. It helps for the President to say something like, "The Board appreciates you coming to voice your thoughts. While the Board cannot respond due to open meeting laws, your comments have been noted." People at meetings or hearings keep saying the same thing over and over because they are not sure the Board understands since they do not respond to comments. The smart Board President listens carefully and tries to make sure everyone understands what is going on. Eye contact is an important part of good listening. It shows that the Board is listening.



9. **Make sure Board members know the President can be trusted**

The Board President may often be their sounding Board for ideas or complaints. Their concerns are real-- don't gossip about them. Where appropriate, address these concerns without pointing fingers or naming names. If Judy complains to you that Mark dominates discussion at meetings, then use leadership skills to make sure everyone has an opportunity to be heard.



10. **Be prepared for meetings**

Part of the Board President's homework is being involved in planning the Board meeting agenda and going over upcoming items with the Superintendent. Also included in the President's take-home assignments is thorough preparation for each Board meeting, including making sure all necessary background materials are made available to fellow Board members. It takes twice as much homework time to be a good Board President as it does to be a prepared Board member.



11. Plan for Board development

It's up to the President to ensure the Board continuously becomes more effective. This includes both setting an example, encouraging Board members to attend local, state, regional, and national meetings - and bring back the word to the other members of the Board. It also includes planning Board retreats, self-evaluations and other workshops designed especially for the Board.

Workshops, meetings, and professional development are what help keep school Board members, not what size community they serve- open to new ideas in education. Meetings add perspective unavailable in a local community.



12. Build the Board/Superintendent relationship

A Board President needs to understand and to interpret for others the difference between the roles of the Board and the Superintendent. The Board President should make sure Board members understand their proper role as policy makers who work through the Superintendent. There is definitely a teaching role on the part of the Board President, especially when new members come on Board. The fine line between what is policy and what is administration makes it essential that the Board President be able to clarify such situations for the Board as a whole.

Another part of the Board President's role in

establishing the proper Board/Superintendent relationship is to foster a sense of integrity where the Board and Superintendent can be trusted to be honest with one another.

At the very least, the Board and Superintendent should generally agree to praise publicly and criticize privately.

The Board President can help foster a feeling of mutual trust and respect by interpreting Board action to the Superintendent and vice versa. The Board President can offer the Superintendent support, serve as a sounding Board, give constructive criticism when needed, and help analyze individual and community reactions to district action.



13. **Build good relationships**

The Board President is in an excellent position to help foster good relationships between the Board and the staff, the Board and the media, the Board and the public, the district and other community and government organizations and among Board members themselves.

The President can encourage Board recognition of staff accomplishments and two-way communications with school employees. They can ensure members of the community feel welcome at Board meetings and have access to the Board. They can maintain communications with other community leaders and government officials and can serve as a Board spokesman to the press.



14. **Stay cool, even if you come under attack**

It's inevitable some school Board decisions, no matter how carefully deliberated, will upset some members of the community.

Advocates for Alaska's Youth

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