



Northwest Arctic Borough School District

Board Training

Thursday August 27, 2026

Provided by the Association of Alaska School Boards

Jenni Lefing, Senior Manager
Board Development



School Board Training

Thursday August 27, 2026

8 am- 12 pm

School board members in attendance earn five (5) Boardsmanship Points, which are applied toward their Boardsmanship level in AASB's Carl Rose Boardsmanship Award Program.

Our Agreements

- In every chair, a leader.
- We are responsible for our experience.
- Take care of yourself; take care of each other.
- Value our time together.

Our Agenda

8 am Welcome & Gathering

- Setting the Groundwork
- Board Self-Assessment Review
- Identifying Board Priorities
- Looking Forward: Strategic Planning
- Closing

Gathering: Please Introduce Yourself

1. Name, Community & Length of Time on School Board
2. Why did you run for school board, or why do you continue to serve?
3. If you could pick up any skill in an instant, what would it be?

Northwest Arctic Borough School District

Strategic Plan January 2023- June 2027



Vision:

To graduate all students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for a successful future.

Mission:

To provide a learning environment that inspires and challenges students and employees to excel.

Core Values:

Respect • Perseverance • Learning • Hard Work • Ability to Adapt • Resilience • Cooperation • Belief in yourself • Accountability

Focus/Goal Areas

- Goal 1: School and Culture
- Goal 2: Operational Improvement
- Goal 3: Instructional Support
- Goal 4: Wellness
- Goal 5: Growing Your Own
- Goal 6: Board Development

Think about your district.

What are you celebrating in your district? (ie.successes)

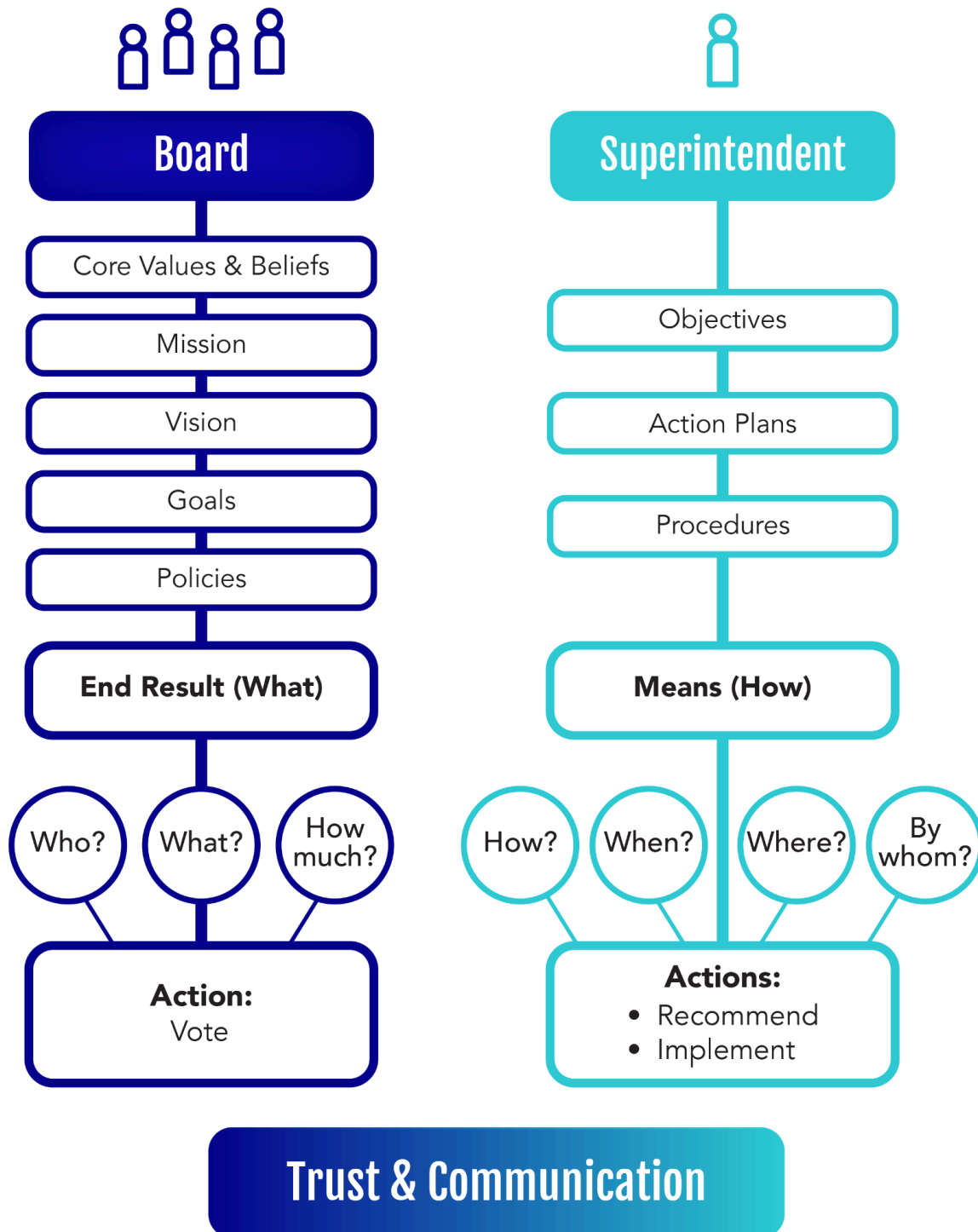
How is this connected to your district's mission/vision?

Setting the Groundwork

Key Roles of the School Board



Board/Superintendent Roles



An Effective School Board

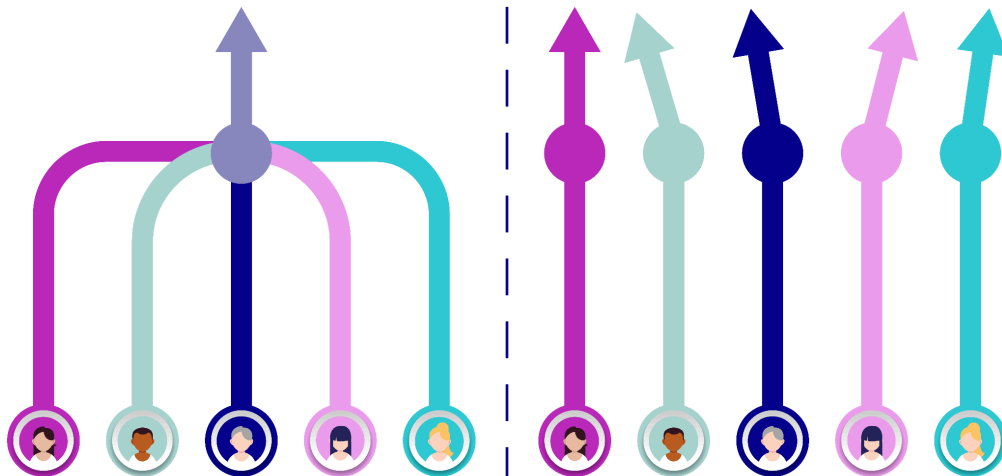
“Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals towards that vision.”

- *Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards*

A. Unified leadership with common vision and goals.

OR

B. Collection of individuals each with their own vision and priorities.



Communication & Work Styles

1. **Does your style resonate with you?** Why or why not?
2. How do you see your style **in your role as a board member?**
3. **How is this played out on your board?**
4. How can you **apply this at your next meeting?**

Best Practices for Board Members

- **Act as One Board:** Support the decisions of the full board. Individual members do not act on behalf of the board or direct the superintendent. All members share equal authority and responsibility.
- **No Surprises!:** Don't surprise each other in public. Communicate openly with the superintendent and fellow board members.
- **Stay in Your Lane:** Respect the distinction between governance and operations. Direct concerns through the proper channels and follow the chain of command.
- **Share Your Perspective:** Your input matters. Thoughtful contributions strengthen board dialogue and lead to better decisions.
- **Fulfill Your Duty to Vote:** Vote on all matters unless there is a conflict of interest. Participation is a fundamental responsibility.
- **Be Prepared:** Review materials in advance and come to board meetings prepared. Ask questions ahead of time when possible and focus on what is essential.
- **Demonstrate Respect and Professionalism:** Be courteous, respectful, and solution-oriented in all interactions. Help maintain a positive and productive board culture.

Board Self-Assessment (Check-In)

Board Member Team
Board Member Orientation & Continuing Development
Board & Superintendent Relations
Policy
Budget & Finance

Curriculum & Instructional Material
Personnel (Article 4 Personnel)
Meetings
Community Relations

Thinking of Your Board Assessment & Discussions

Where have we been and ideas for where we can go

Looking Back

1. Where have we been?
 2. What stood out to you?
 3. What have we done well over the past year?
-

Looking Ahead

1. What matters most now?
2. What should we continue to build on?
3. What do we want to be better at (a year from now)?

Current Board Priorities

Board Priorities (2024 Board Retreat)	Who will champion?	Status	Keep? Modify? Move on?
1.Improve new Board Member orientation	Tillie		
2.Executive Committee to meet quarterly for planning outreach and engagement with regional partners	Margaret		
3.Improve Board comprehension of student data (especially as it relates to the Alaska Reads Act)	Marie		

Board Priorities for Year Ahead



What	Who will champion?	When?

Strategic Plan Focus Areas



Focus Areas

- Goal 1: **School and Culture**
- Goal 2: **Operational Improvement**
- Goal 3: **Instructional Support**
- Goal 4: **Wellness**
- Goal 5: **Growing Our Own**
- Goal 6: **Board Development**

1. What have we accomplished?

2. What progress have we made?

Types of Goals

- **Big Picture Overview** (Vision, Strategic Plan)
“Road Map for District”
- **Board Self-Improvement** (The Board Will)
- **Board Priorities/Goal** (The Superintendent Will)

Strategic Planning Big Picture Overview

Where are we right now?	STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, WEAKNESSES, THREATS	AASB Strategic Planning Process
Where do we want to be?	SHARED VALUES: Statements of the core beliefs & principles, that the group holds true for the district.	
	VISION: Hopes and dreams that are real for us, what we want to see become a reality. Focuses on the FUTURE as a way to inspire and motivate. Empowering every student to take ownership of their learning, choices and future. (Fairbanks)	
	MISSION: A broad statement of the unique purpose to which the district is committed, and the basic means of accomplishing that purpose. Concentrates on the PRESENT and informs about the desired level of performance. As a community, we create supportive learning environments where all students thrive. (Fairbanks)	
How do we get there?	FOCUS AREAS: An overarching principle that guides decision-making, long-term aims. (ex. Community partnerships, staff retention, supporting access & choice)	
The “What” & the “How” (Leadership Team)	OBJECTIVES: Specific, measurable steps that can be taken to meet the focus areas. They are an expression of the desired measurable or demonstrable result for the program.	
	STRATEGIES: Broadly stated means of deploying resources to achieve the school district’s mission, vision and goals, and objectives/outcomes. The word “strategy” in this instance refers to the means used to achieve the objectives.	
	ACTIVITIES: A sequence of steps that must be taken, or activities that must be performed well, for a strategy to succeed.	
Ongoing: How are we progressing	MONITOR & CHECK-IN throughout the year	
	FOUNDATION for Superintendent Evaluation & Board Self-Assessment	

AASB Strategic Planning Checklist

1. Beginning the Conversation:

- ☐ Confirm the Board of Education's support for and commitment to the strategic planning process.
- ☐ Identify potential dates (1.5-2 days) to hold strategic planning session.
- ☐ Ensure staff have adequate time to prepare for and participate in the strategic planning process.
- ☐ Determine whether a budget is needed to support participation from other communities or sites. Consider costs such as travel, lodging, meals, and other expenses.
- ☐ Identify who should be invited to participate on the Strategic Planning Committee. *(such as school board members, tribal representatives, families, staff, elders, community members, local business representatives, local government representatives, students, etc.).*

2. Getting Started with AASB

- ☐ Contact AASB to discuss strategic planning services.
- ☐ Sign MOA with AASB.
 - ☐ Note: If the District is part of an AASB grant program, it may support the process, and may require more pieces to the process, like community dialogues and training.
- ☐ Schedule dates for 1.5 - 2 days in person strategic planning session.
- ☐ Discuss whether additional activities, such as community dialogues or training, should be included.
- ☐ AASB will identify a timeline for the strategic planning process.

3. Data Gathering (send to AASB)

- ☐ Current strategic plan & vision/mission statement.
- ☐ School Climate & Connectedness Survey (SCCS) results.
- ☐ Other relevant district information.

4. Gather Community Input

- ☐ Work with AASB to develop a pre-strategic planning community survey.
- ☐ Send survey out to school communities (include school board, families, staff, students, community members).

5. Prepare for the Strategic Planning Session

Confirm day and time.

- ☐ Select a location (for 20- 30 people)
 - Identify location large enough for the expected number of participants.
 - Ensure the space can accommodate both large-group and small-group discussions.
 - Consider holding the session in a location other than a school, if possible.
- ☐ Invite participants (ensure representation of school communities). AASB will send invite templates.

6. Plan for Travel and Logistics

- ☐ Inform AASB if more than 30 participants are expected.
- ☐ Check with the facilitator to determine whether assistance is needed with logistics.
- ☐ Arrange travel for participants coming from other communities, if needed:
 - Flights
 - Lodging
 - Local or on-site transportation
- ☐ Arrange travel and lodging for the facilitator, if needed.
- ☐ Check the facilitator to determine what supplies are needed.
- ☐ Arrange for meals/snacks for participants.

7. During the Strategic Planning Session

- ☐ The Superintendent or Designee is the 'host' of the event.

During the Strategic Planning Session continued

- ☐ AASB Staff will facilitate the strategic planning session and guide group to:
 - **Assess Where We Are Now:** Conduct a SWOT analysis to identify current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges.
 - **Identify Where We Want to Go:** Key focus areas to guide the district “How do we get there” Identify Focus Areas.

8. After the Strategic Planning Session

- ☐ Receive and review post-strategic planning report,
- ☐ Board adopts focus areas & vision/mission. *AASB can provide a script for the board chair.*
- ☐ AASB will develop a graphic representation of the plan with board input.
 - Board adopts graphic representation of strategic plan.
- ☐ Promote and share strategic plan with school communities.
- ☐ Leadership team Identifies the “what” and “how” (objectives and strategies) for focus areas.
- ☐ Leadership team or designee creates Implementation plan to carry out strategies.

9. Monitor & Check-In

- ☐ Provide progress updates to the Board at a frequency determined by the Board.
- ☐ Superintendent checks in with the leadership team to monitor progress and make adjustments as needed.
- ☐ Use the strategic plan to guide Board priorities and the superintendent’s evaluation.
- ☐ Regularly review and update the strategic plan to ensure it continues to guide the district’s work effectively.

Your Strategic Plan Will :

- Be a **guide for the district**
- Be a **living document**
- Be a foundation for the **annual superintendent evaluation**
- Be included in the **annual board self-assessment**
- Be used to support **staff professional development.**
- **Demonstrate leadership** to the school community.

Takeaways from Today's Training





Thank you!

Jenni Lefing
jlefig@aasb.org

Association of Alaska School Boards
1111 W. 9th Street, Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 463-1660
aasb@aasb.org