

Northwest Arctic Borough School District Board Retreat

August 27, 2026

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Senior Manager, Board Development



Expectations

- **Build Trust & Commitment to Teamwork**– Work to create a strong foundation for an effective Board–Superintendent relationship
- **Effective Governance Clarify Roles** – Develop a shared understanding of responsibilities and expectations
- **Set Priorities** – Identify key priorities and areas of focus for the team



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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

-Adapted from First Alaskans Institute



Gathering

Please Share:

- Your Name, Community , and Tenure of School Board
- Why did you run for school board, or why do you continue to serve?
- If you could pick up any skill in an instant, what would it be?



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Our Agenda

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



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SETTING THE GROUNDWORK



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

Northwest Arctic Borough School District

Strategic Plan January 2023- June 2027

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**



Think about Your District (mission, vision, etc.)

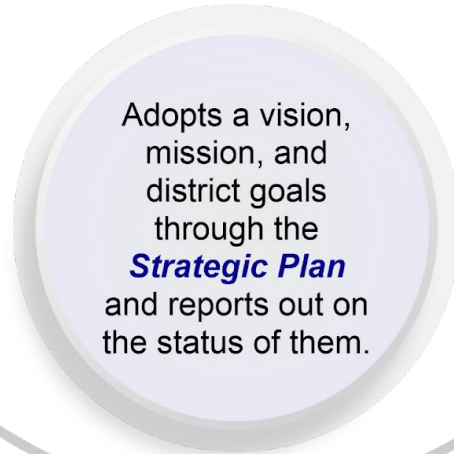


1. What are you celebrating?
2. How are these connected to your district's strategic plan?

Key Work of School Boards



Hires and **evaluates** a superintendent.



Adopts and approves **policies** for governance of the district.



Reviews then approves the **annual budget** and ensures necessary funding for the district's strategic plan.



Approves recommended **curriculum** based on standards, goals, and policies.



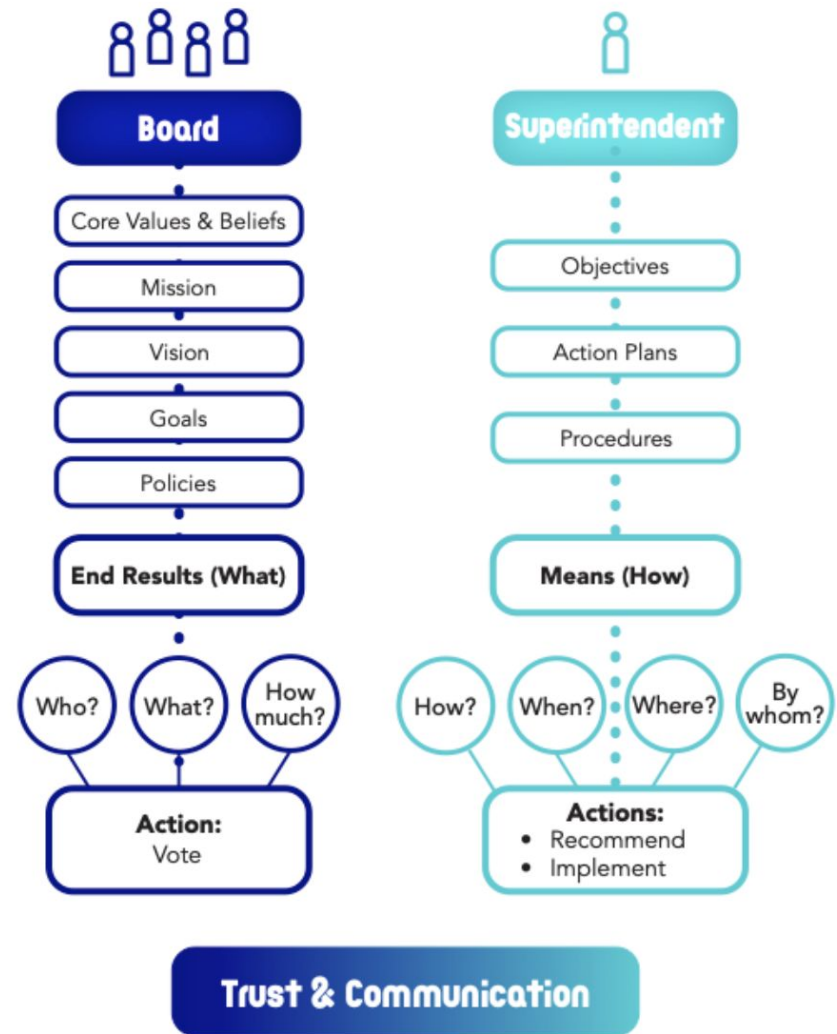
Atautchikun Iñuuniatigun

Through Our
Way of Life
Together as
One.

Culture • Safety •
Student Learning

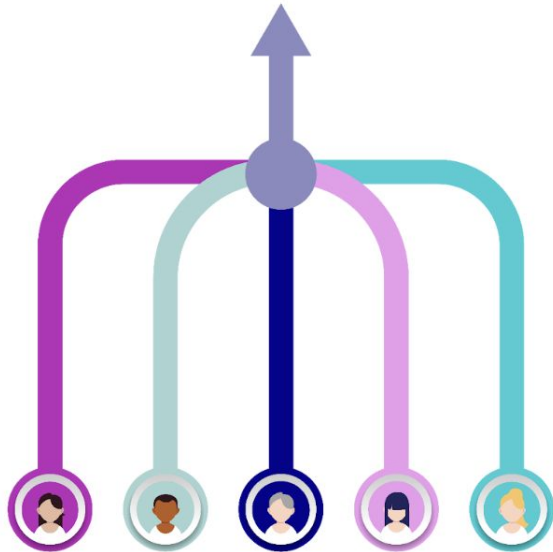
Board/Superintendent Roles

The Board
governs
&
The Superintendent
manages



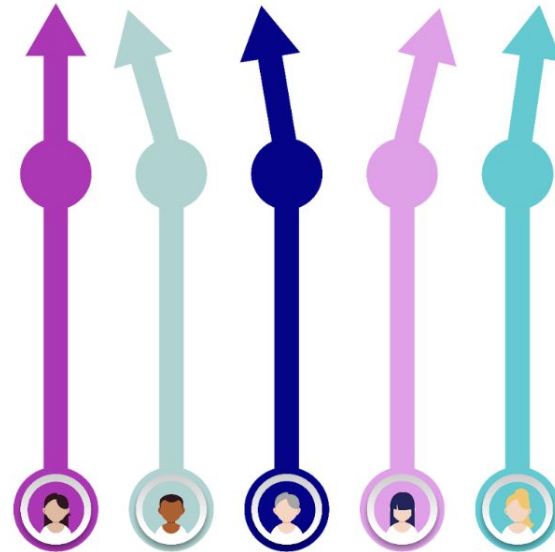
What Makes an Effective School Board?

A. Unified leadership with common vision and goals.



OR

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



How Know if Have an Effective School Board?

**It all comes down to
Relationships.**

“The board-superintendent relationship is arguably the most critical factor in effective school governance.”

*Ballotpedia’s Virtual School Board
Listening Tour*

Get to Know Your Team



Understand your own **communication and work styles**, as well as those of your team members.

Communication & Work Styles

- For each row, look at the word in columns **A** and **C**. Select the word that best describes you and mark your choice.
- When finished, count how many times you selected each column and record the totals at the bottom.
- Repeat the same process for columns **P** and **T** below.

Communication & Work Style Questionnaire

Compare each line of words under the columns labeled "A" and "C". Choose the word from either column "A" or "C" that best describes you and mark your choice. Proceed down the list choosing the word in either column "A" or "C" that best describes you. Total the number of choices in each column and write that number at the bottom.

"A"	"C"
☐ Participate	☐ Observe
☐ Act First	☐ Think First
☐ Intense	☐ Relaxed
☐ Finish	☐ Procrastinate
☐ Adventurous	☐ Cautious
☐ Self-Reliant	☐ Prefers Guidance
☐ Competitive	☐ Cooperative
☐ Talker	☐ Listener
☐ Volunteer	☐ Wait to be Asked
☐ Challenges	☐ Accepts
☐ Informs	☐ Inquires
☐ Forceful	☐ Subtle
☐ Outspoken	☐ Restrained
☐ Animated	☐ Calm
☐ Creator	☐ Supporter
Total:	Total:

Repeat the selection process between "P" and "T" below:

"P"	"T"
☐ Impulsive	☐ Methodical
☐ Relationship Oriented	☐ Task Oriented
☐ Communicative	☐ Thinks Things Through
☐ Takes Risks	☐ Cautious
☐ Responsive	☐ Self-Controlled
☐ Non-conformist	☐ Conventional
☐ Adaptable	☐ Resists Change
☐ Casual	☐ Proper
☐ Spontaneous	☐ Planned
☐ Visionary	☐ Down to Earth
☐ Makes Friends	☐ Gets the Job Done
☐ Sociable	☐ Professional
☐ Open-Minded	☐ Traditional
☐ Creative	☐ Systematic
☐ Emotional	☐ Logical
Total:	Total:

"A-P" The EXPRESSIVE

Strengths:

Optimistic • Expressive • Visionary
Sense of humor • Accepts conflict
Courageous

Challenges:

Struggles to listen • Not detail-oriented
Experiences highs and lows
Wants social approval • May personalize subjects

In Meetings:

Can be a creative problem-solver
Welcomes change and flexibility
Would be happy spending the meeting on the most controversial issue

"A-T" The DRIVER

Strengths:

Decisive • Logical • Confident
Strong work ethic • Politically astute
Competitive

Challenges:

Too aggressive • See things in black and white • Judgmental • Trouble balance goals and people (goals focus)
Can be perceived as unapproachable

In Meetings:

Appreciates a clear agenda
Stays on task
Frequently makes motions
Keeps the meeting moving along

"C-I" The ANALYST

Strengths:

Values intelligence • Punctual • Logical
Task-oriented • Holds high expectations of self • Methodical

Challenges:

Perfectionists • Uncomfortable discussing feelings • Doesn't accept criticism well • Will never have enough data • May withhold communications

In Meetings:

Information takes precedence over time
Will try to arrange agenda and discussion into logical order • Ensures data receives adequate attention

"C-P" The AMIABLE

Strengths:

Stable • Has good self-insight and insight into others • Sincerity • Empathetic • Good listener • Tolerant • Collaborative

Challenges:

Risk-averse • Indecisive • Trouble balancing goals and people (people focus) • Not assertive

In Meetings:

Prefers flexible agendas • Plays key role in consensus building • Open to others' ideas • Can discuss topics to death • Difficulty making tough decisions

*Adapted from TASB &
Merril & Reid Social Styles*

Communication & Work Styles

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

What's Your Communication & Work Style?

1. Does your color description feel accurate for you?
2. How do you see your color description in your role as a school board member?
3. How is this played out on your board?



What is Good Governance?

Effective School Boards

1. Commit to a vision of **high expectations** for student achievement and define **clear goals** toward that vision.
2. Have **strong shared beliefs** about what is possible for students and their ability to learn.
3. Spend less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to support **student achievement**.
4. **Align financial resources** to meet district goals.
5. **Embrace and monitor data.**
6. Have a **collaborative relationship with their community and communicate** to inform and engage.
7. **Lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with mutual trust.**
8. Take part in **team development** and board training.

Best Practices for Board Members

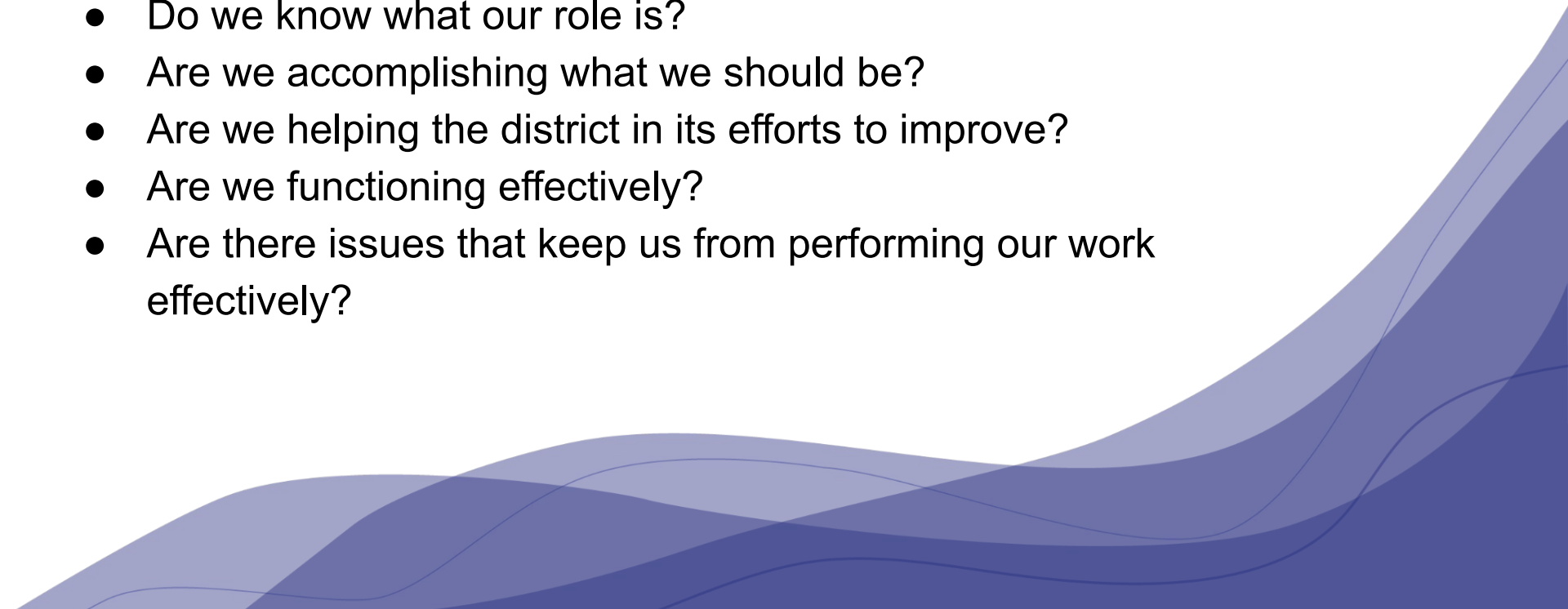
- **Act as one Board and Support the Board.** No single board member can obligate the board to do or take action – don't communicate the wrong message.
- **Encourage the public to follow appropriate channels for expressing ideas, grievances, and concerns.** Redirect concerns from anyone to the lowest level possible. Direct issues to the staff who have the authority and responsibility to help. Follow the Chain of Command.
- **Express your own opinions.** They are valuable and help feed the discussion at the board table.
- **Vote!** It is your obligation unless there is a conflict of interest.
- **Come to Board Meetings Prepared.** (Is there ample time for Board Members to read and process information pre-meeting?)
- **Be courteous and respectful.**
- All members have equal rights, privileges, expectations.

How the Board Works Together



Board Self-Assessment

Helps you as a board think about:

- Do we know what our role is?
 - Are we accomplishing what we should be?
 - Are we helping the district in its efforts to improve?
 - Are we functioning effectively?
 - Are there issues that keep us from performing our work effectively?
- 

Your Board Self-Assessment

9 responses

Group 1

- Board Member Team (3)
- Board Member Orientation & Continuing Development (3)

Group 2

- Board/Superintendent Relations (4)
- Policy (3)

Group 3

- Budget & Finance (3)
- Meetings (2)
- Curriculum & Instructional Materials (3)

Group 4

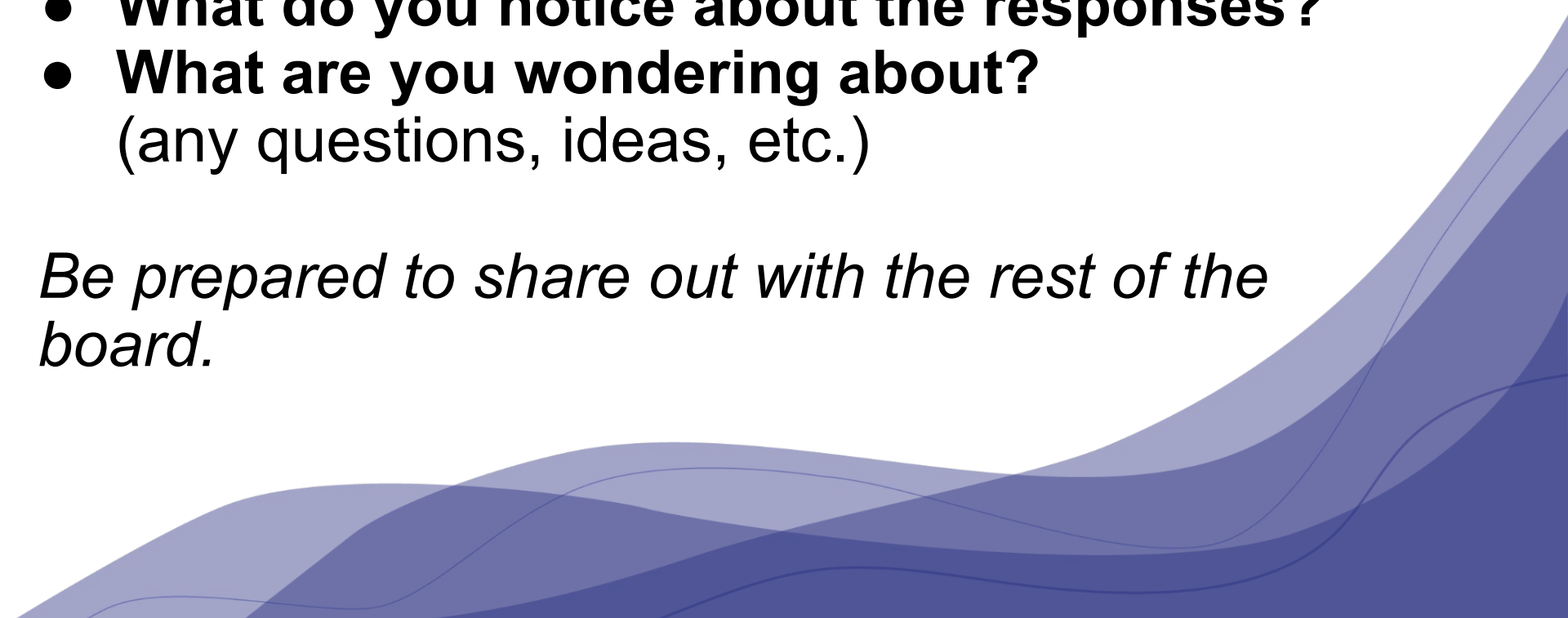
- Personnel (3)
- Community Relations (5)

In Your Small Groups

For each of your topics:

- **What do you notice about the responses?**
- **What are you wondering about?**
(any questions, ideas, etc.)

Be prepared to share out with the rest of the board.



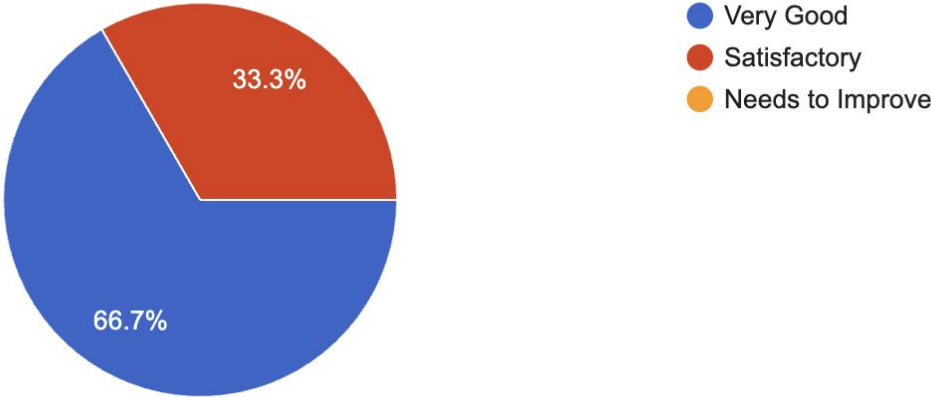
26 NWABSD Board Self-Assessment

The Board Member Team

1. The Board is open and honest with each other and maintains mutual trust and respect.

9 responses

 [Copy chart](#)



Looking Back

Where have we been? What stood out to you?

1. *Three minutes: **silent work on your own-** identify 3 priorities the board should focus on this coming year.*
2. *Five minutes: **discussion in small groups.***
3. ***Write your ideas on half-sheets** and bring to the wall (one idea per sheet).*



Looking Ahead

To be a more effective board — What matters most now?
What should we continue to build on?

1. *Three minutes: **silent work on your own**- identify 3 priorities the board should focus on this coming year.*
2. *Five minutes: **discussion in small groups**.*
3. ***Write your ideas on half-sheets** and bring to the wall (one idea per sheet).*



Board Priorities (2024 Board Retreat)

1.Improve new Board Member orientation

2.Executive Committee to meet quarterly for planning outreach and engagement with regional partners

3.Improve Board comprehension of student data
(especially as it relates to the Alaska Reads Act)

- What did we accomplish?
- What progress did we make?
- What did we **not** accomplish—and why?
- What still needs our attention?



Board Priorities (2024 Board Retreat)

Status

**Keep,
Modify,
Discontinue**

1.Improve new Board Member orientation

2.Executive Committee to meet quarterly for planning outreach and engagement with regional partners

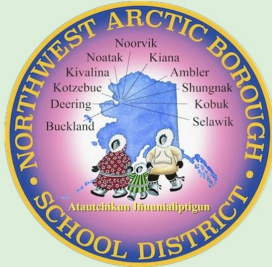
3.mprove Board comprehension of student data (especially as it relates to the Alaska Reads Act)



Board Priorities for Year Ahead

	What	Who will champion?	When?
1.			
2.			
3.			

NWABSD STRATEGIC PLAN JANUARY 2023 – JUNE 2027



Adopted by the Board XX/XX/20XX

Ambler · Buckland · Deering · Kiana · Kivalina · Kobuk · Kotzebue · Noatak · Noorvik · Selawik · Shungnak

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**

Goal 1: School and Culture

What have we accomplished? What progress have we made?



Goal 2: Operational Improvement

What have we accomplished? What progress have we made?

The bottom half of the slide features a decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy, translucent blue shapes. These shapes create a sense of movement and depth, starting from the left and flowing towards the right, where they become more dense and layered.

Goal 3: Instructional Support

What have we accomplished? What progress have we made?

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Goal 4: Wellness

What have we accomplished? What progress have we made?

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Goal 5: Growing our Own

What have we accomplished? What progress have we made?



Goal 6: Board Development

What have we accomplished? What progress have we made?

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Goal 6:

What have we accomplished? What progress have we made?

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Goal Setting for School Boards



Types of Goals

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

STRATEGIC PLANNING

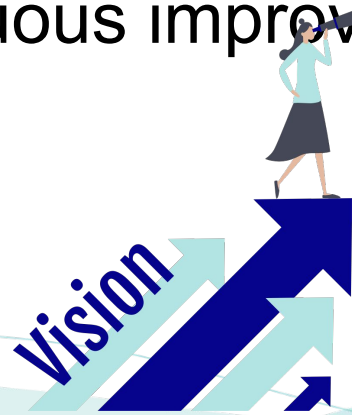


**What do
you see?**



What is a strategic plan ?

A district's strategic plan is a living, breathing entity—a compass that guides you and your school leaders through purposeful, continuous improvement.



Family Engagement (AFEC) & NWABSD Strategic Planning

Community
(families) + school
& district staff

Pre-planning
& data
gathering



Strategic Plan

Where
are we
now?

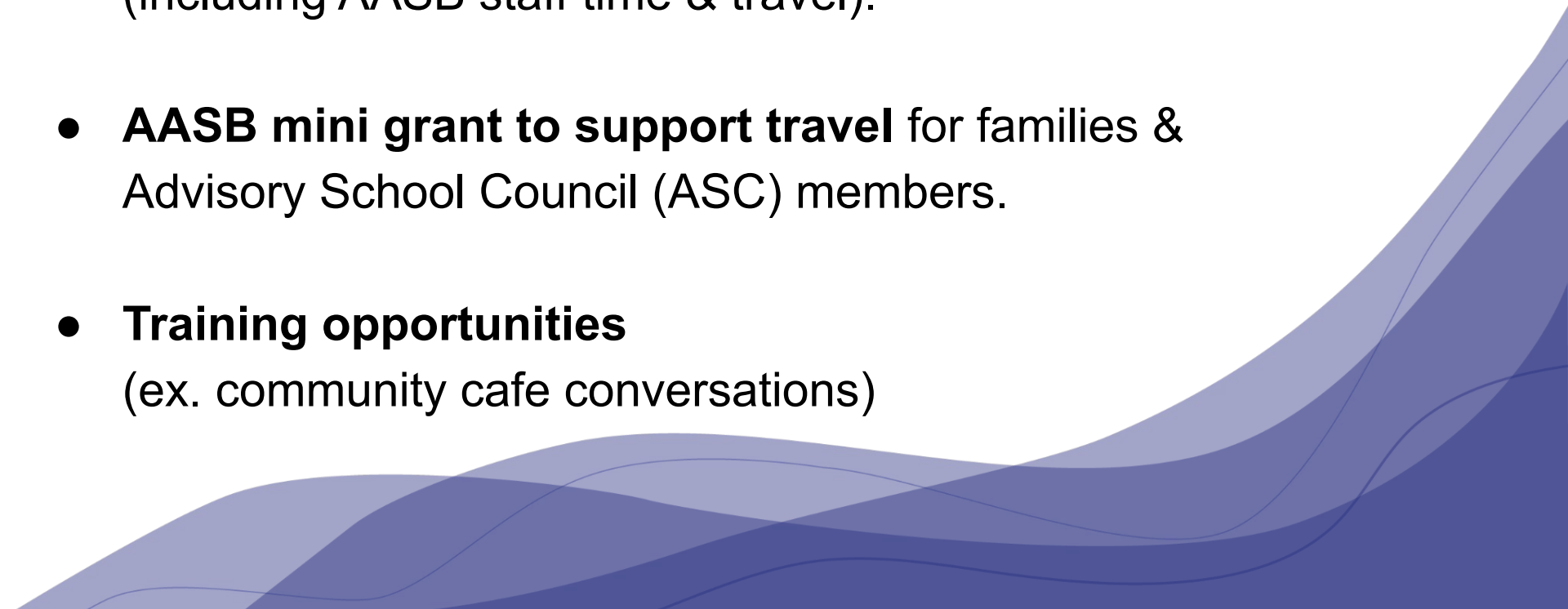
Where do
we want
to be?
*Vision &
Mission*

How do we
get there?
*Focus
areas/Goals*

How to?
*Objectives,
Outcomes,
Strategies,
Actions*

Superintendent &
Leadership Team

AFEC Partnership & Strategic Planning

- Cover the **majority of strategic planning costs** (including AASB staff time & travel).
 - **AASB mini grant to support travel** for families & Advisory School Council (ASC) members.
 - **Training opportunities** (ex. community cafe conversations)
- 

Strategic Planning Should Be:

A **collaborative process** that **brings together** school board members, staff, students, families, business leaders, and community members to build a **shared vision for the future.**



AASB Strategic Planning Overview

PHASE 1

Pre-Planning & Data Gathering

Collaborate with district leadership to design the process, clarify roles, and collect key data. Includes a community survey and stakeholder outreach.

PHASE 2

Strategic Planning Retreat

Review data and current realities; identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities; and establish priority focus areas.

PHASE 3

Strategic Framework Development

Synthesize input into a clear strategic framework, including mission, vision, core beliefs, and goals, with guidance for implementation and next steps.





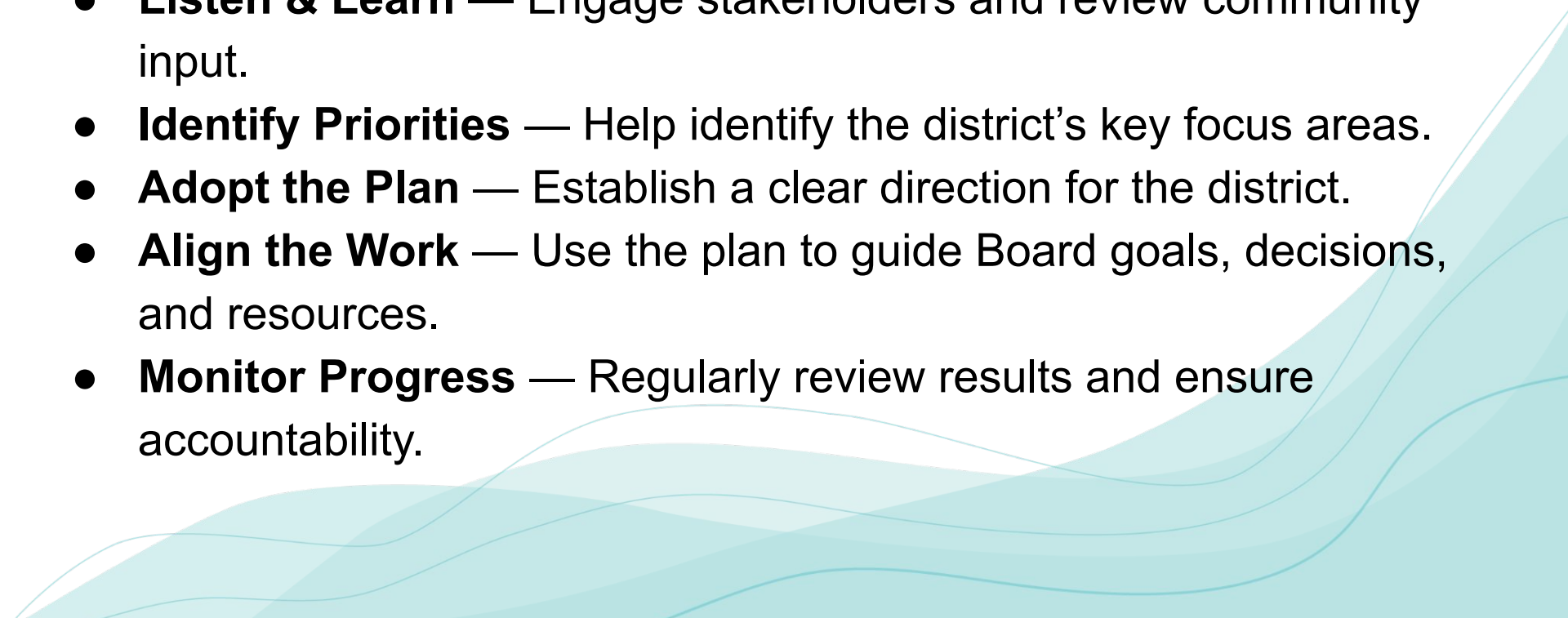
Strategic Planning Checklist

1. Beginning the Conversation:

- ☐ Confirm the Board of Education's support for and commitment to the strategic planning process.
- ☐ Identify dates (1.5-2 days) to hold in-person 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.).

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. <i>Empowering every student to take ownership of their learning, choices and future.</i> (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. <i>As a community, we create supportive learning environments where all students thrive.</i>(Fairbanks)
How do we get there?	FOCUS AREAS: An overarching principle that guides decision-making, long-term aims. (ex. <i>Community partnerships, staff retention, supporting access & choice</i>)
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

School Board's Role in Strategic Planning

- **Commit to the Process** — Provide time, resources, and support.
 - **Listen & Learn** — Engage stakeholders and review community input.
 - **Identify Priorities** — Help identify the district's key focus areas.
 - **Adopt the Plan** — Establish a clear direction for the district.
 - **Align the Work** — Use the plan to guide Board goals, decisions, and resources.
 - **Monitor Progress** — Regularly review results and ensure accountability.
- 

Your Strategic Plan Will.....

Thank you for your time and commitment to this process!

- 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 school communities.

**WE FINALLY
FINISHED THE SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT PLAN!**

**347 GOALS EACH WITH
ITS OWN STRATEGIES,
ACTION STEPS, AND EVERYTHING!**

Before I/You Go....

What has been your biggest “aha”
or **key takeaway** from today?



Resources

First-Term Board Member Webinar Series

- Begins October: Welcome to the Board & Board Standards
- Free, One Tuesday a month from 12 - 1pm

AASB's Annual Conference

- November 5-8 in Anchorage at the Egan Convention Center
- Pre-Conference Days: Ready Set Govern + Experienced Board Member Academy + Resolutions Committee



Quyanaq!

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aasb.org