



## **School Board Training**

# **REPORT**

Provided by the Association of Alaska School Boards

Jenni Lefing, Membership Services Manager

## School Board Self-Assessment & Goal Setting

Friday August 22: 3 pm- 7 pm & Saturday August 23: 9 am- 1:30 pm

In Attendance:

- Henk Kruithof, Vice Chair
- Emma Merritt, Clerk
- Pete Hoepfner
- Kate Trudeau
- Alex Russin, Superintendent

*School board members in attendance earn 10 Boardsmanship Points for the Self-Assessment Workshop and 5 points for the Superintendent Search Meeting # 1, which are applied toward their Boardsmanship level in AASB's Carl Rose Boardsmanship Award Program.*

Facilitator: Jenni Lefing, Membership Services Manager, AASB

The Board met on Friday, August 22, and Saturday, August 23, for their annual board self-assessment workshop. From there, the board participated in the first meeting of the Superintendent Search process.

Superintendent Search Meeting # 1: The Board reviewed the search process and their role in it, identified information for the job posting, including Priorities for the New Superintendent, and discussed contract parameters and confirmed the search timeline. A separate report will be sent concerning this meeting.

### Self-Assessment Workshop Report Out

The Board began by reviewing key roles of a school board, board/superintendent roles and the District's vision and mission.

The group then did a "*Dimensions of Effective Leadership*" activity to become more familiar with each other's leadership and communication styles. In turn, they selected cards that most resonated with them and guided how they are as a leader, and had conversations:

**High Expectations-** Emma, Henk, Pete

- Data, goal, and accountability-focused

**Relationships-** Kate, Alex

- Relationship builders- environment of caring & respect

### Self-Assessment Reflections

All board members took the self-evaluation. The facilitator took the individual responses to the evaluations and compiled the results. Facilitated conversation around the self-assessment included, but was not limited to, the following:

#### Board Member Orientation & Continuing Development

- Kept AASB trainings in the budget for this year.
- Onboarding new board members: Revisit this process. Discussed having multiple board members be part of the orientation process, and sharing a “fact sheet,” such as the one provided by AASB.
- Reporting key takeaways from conferences or trainings- discussed providing a written summary for the Board Packet, which would help in accountability.

#### Board/Superintendent Relations

- Board and Superintendent work together and maintain mutual trust and respect.
- Take time to get to know the next superintendent on a personal level.
- Need to defend and back up Alex, and keep within our parameters.

#### Budget/Finance

- Discussed wanting simpler financial reports to look at.
- Long-term planning for the budget.

#### Curriculum & Instructional Materials

- There is confusion about the role of the board in curriculum.

# Thinking of Your District

## 1. What are you celebrating in our district? (What is the district doing well?)

- **Community Partnerships** and keeping the whole community involved.
- **School Meals:** t delicious (homemade, salad bar, free) -
  - Creative approach to breakfast this summer- can take home for all week.
  - Sandy- Chef
- **Ranked #1 Alaska High School for the second year in a row!** (Top 5 % in America)
- **Strong Extracurriculars-** diverse offerings and achievement in many extracurriculars- state placings, international music.
- **K-3 Reading Initiative** is going very well.-
- **Long-term achievement** - after high school-
- **Elementary and High School Principals**
- **Staff Retention** is really high
- **Hiring from within the community.** Have hired 7 or 8 teachers who were paraprofessionals who did teaching programs here.Helping with teacher certification
- **Great administrative office** - Kristy
- **Experienced high-quality superintendent-** longevity
- **Amazing staff** that cares about the students

## 2. What are the strengths of our board? What are we doing well to support students?

- **Diversity on the board-** not all one-minded
- All passionate
- **New and engaged board members** who want to learn and ask good questions
- **Dave as board chair-** (including allowing everyone to speak). Follows up on
- **Board preparedness** at meetings and work sessions.
- **Community Connections:** Attending school events and trying to make connections with students
- **We make decisions based on what is best for students**
- **Advocating for funding** at the state and community level.
- **Policy Manual** up to date

## 2025 Cordova School Board Training

### 3. How could your board improve the way it works?

- Clarity/Focus on what goals are, so on the same page (and in turn public). (not doing a good job of informing our board on this)
- Continued training, including learning roles and responsibilities, being engaged in the process, being committed, and in the room, is essential.
- Have to be comfortable to look at options. Creative improvement. TTWWADI. That's the way we've always done it.
- Taking an active role in what the board identifies as its own goals. - following through with it

**To be more effective, what aspect of board governance work should we focus on this year?**

## Board Improvement Goals for the Year Ahead

What?	Who will champion?
<b>1. Increase engagement with the public.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stream board meetings</li><li>• Increase awareness in the community on how they can communicate with the board, including non-agenda items.</li><li>• Fireside chats</li></ul>	
<b>2. Dedication to training and personal improvement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support each other in going to trainings and hold each other accountable</li><li>• Attend the AASB Annual Conference in November</li><li>• Better preparation for board meetings, including asking questions before the meeting via email to Alex.</li><li>• Meet with the finance staff to better understand the budget.</li></ul>	All
<b>3. Advocate for the school district at the local and state level.</b>	
<b>4. Goal-Setting: Visiting long-term and short-term goals for the district</b>	

### 4. What are some opportunities for change you think would benefit the district moving forward?

- Bolster our reading goal
  - Supporting the possibility of early childhood education
- Addressing future space issues (ex. New high school, etc.)
- Continued, increased dedication to collaborating with community partners to fill gaps (such as enrichment times)- to foster relationships
- Educational opportunities through technology (AI)- how to prepare students for future (and know limitations)
- Early Childhood Education - role of preschool, all-day kindergarten, board has in-depth conversation on this topic.

### 5. What will be the most important tasks for the new superintendent?

- Building working relationships with staff, board, community, and students for trust and credibility.
- Financial landscape - finding new and creative ways to fund the district.
- Learning about the district- what's working now,
- Student Achievement
- Bring their expertise and their ideas
- Support staff development .
- New high school

## Facilitator Recommendations

- **Superintendent Search** - Stay committed and engaged throughout the superintendent search.
  - Search Open: Sept 15 to Dec 19
  - Meeting 2- Selection of Finalists-: Jan 7, and
  - Meeting 3- Onsite Interviews and Final Selection: Jan 18-20
- **Plan to review, discuss, and report on the board improvement goals** at upcoming board meetings quarterly.
- **Keep up the great work** - you are a highly committed and student-focused team!



# Thank you!

**Jenni Lefing**  
jlefin@aasb.org

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