
BOARD STANDARDS

A person cannot teach what he does not know or lead where he does not go.

A Framework for Alaska School Boards

LOOKING BACK Since statehood, public education in Alaska has experienced dynamic and dramatic changes. Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools, city and borough systems, and state-operated systems that served Alaska since territorial days were merged together in the mid 1970's to form today's state controlled and locally governed school system.



Major issues of the last two decades for public education in Alaska include: rapid system expansion required by the Molly Hootch Consent Decree and fueled by a decade of wealth from North Slope oil followed by twelve years of restricted state funding; increasing challenges of race, culture, equality, and equity; national and state-level education reforms; the development of performance standards for students and teachers; increasing public and legislative demands for improved quality and accountability; labor management issues that sparked intense legislative debates; and a growing demand for diversified school programs tailored to individual preferences.

face the challenge of increasing the public confidence in our system of school governance by improving the performance of boards and board members.

Many citizens believe the public school system is so tied up in bureaucracy that board members are stymied in their efforts to improve it, or worse, have become part of the problem. Unfortunately, we live in a time of headlines and soundbites, and there is a tendency for the public to judge all by the inappropriate behavior of a few. The reality is that there are hundreds of dedicated school board members who regularly struggle with tough decisions and limited resources to provide the best possible education for students.

“Your standards are a welcome complement to those instituted by the Legislature for teachers and students.”

– Speaker of the House Gail Phillips

THE GOVERNANCE CHALLENGE

The Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) and local school boards

Board Standards: A Framework for Alaska School Boards provides you, the school board member, with a guide to better boardsmanship and excellence in education.

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A FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL BOARD STANDARDS

AASB is committed to meeting the governance challenge by creating a new reality where every public school board in Alaska meets high standards of performance.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

AASB has fashioned a straightforward response to public and legislative concerns about school board quality, accountability, and trust. Rather than appointing a task force to spend years studying the problem, AASB has stepped forward with the development of standards by which we invite the public to judge school boards and evaluate their actions.

These standards set forth exactly what AASB believes school boards should be committed to and held accountable for. We believe these standards reflect widely held public values and will move public education forward and rebuild public confidence.

EFFORTS TO DATE

In April 1998, AASB brought together 25 individuals representing parents, local government leaders, teachers, school administrators, business, diverse cultural interests, and local school boards to develop draft standards and performance indicators for school boards and board members. In July of 1998, the AASB Board of Directors approved the School Board Standards and Performance Indicators that follow

THE FUTURE OF BOARD STANDARDS

The Association of Alaska School Boards intends to utilize the board standards framework in a variety of ways. AASB is prepared to assist boards and their communities in developing the most locally appropriate form of these standards. We will be ready to assist boards in developing related assessment tools that will provide them and their



local constituents with an objective means of measuring the board's performance against their own standards. AASB board development programs are being redesigned to address practical application of standards in local districts and better prepare school board members to carry out their governance role.

Increasing the public trust and confidence in school governance is a significant challenge. However, AASB believes it is also the best opportunity for school boards to demonstrate high standards of performance and accountability and to be responsive to the public they serve.

All of these efforts will be developed with an awareness of the need for the public to recognize and appreciate the deliberate efforts of Alaska school board standards as a means of reconnecting with the public in a meaningful way, inviting greater participation and informed evaluation.

AASB is pleased to provide school boards, policy makers, professional organizations, business and interest groups, and others interested in improving public education with a tool that will accurately measure school board performance. We invite your input and participation in helping improve school governance, school board actions, and school board member performance.

*Leadership
is action,
not position.*

DEFINITIONS

The difference between politics and statesmanship is philosophy.

SCHOOL BOARD

A school board is a democratically elected body that represents public ownership of schools through governance while serving as a bridge between public values and professional expertise.

PURPOSE OF SCHOOL BOARDS

School boards provide local leadership, governance, and accountability for public education by ensuring that schools reflect community expectations and needs, make the best use of available resources, and advocate for the needs of children.

BELIEFS ABOUT SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Actions of school boards should:

- Be directed toward growth in achievement for all children.
- Engage the public in a planning process that identifies the board’s vision and priorities, supports query by board members and the public, and provides accurate interpretation of appropriate information.
- Provide a safe and orderly school environment.
- Establish policies and resources for effective instruction and student learning.
- Develop sound operational policies based on complete information and apply them consistently.
- Hire a superintendent who is best qualified to accomplish the board’s vision.
- Generate community support to provide adequate resources for the educational program.
- Allocate resources effectively.
- Create and monitor systems of student achievement, professional performance, financial management, and a safe school environment.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Student achievement is the acquisition and application of skills and knowledge of subject matter content that result in a sense of belonging, purpose, usefulness, self sufficiency, and responsibility.

STANDARDS FRAMEWORK HEADINGS

<u>VISION</u>	<u>STRUCTURE</u>	<u>ACCOUNTABILITY</u>	<u>ADVOCACY</u>	<u>CONDUCT & ETHICS</u>
The board creates a shared vision to enhance student achievement.	The board provides a structure that supports the vision.	The board measures district performance toward accomplishing the vision and reports the results to the public.	The board champions the vision.	The board and its individual members conduct the business of the district in a fair, respectful, and responsible manner.

BOARD STANDARDS

VISION

The Board Creates A Shared Vision To Enhance Student Achievement



1.1 Board develops a dynamic shared vision for education that reflects student needs and community priorities.

Indicators

- Educational stakeholders are invited to participate in development and revision of school district vision.
- Stakeholders have regular opportunity to provide input throughout development of plan.

1.2 Board keeps the district and community focused on educating students.

Indicators

- The “IS IT GOOD FOR KIDS“ question guides all board deliberations and actions.
- The board refers to vision when communicating with staff, groups, and organizations.

1.3 Board demonstrates its strong commitment to vision by using the shared vision to guide decision making.

Indicators

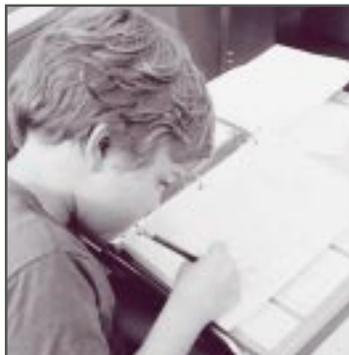
- The board uses the vision as a guide in planning, decision making, and evaluating district operations.
- The board communicates its rationale for decisions to the community as a way to reinforce its commitment to the vision.

Leaders create energy in others by instilling purpose.

BOARD STANDARDS

STRUCTURE

The Board Provides A Structure That Supports The Vision



A leader's job is to make it easy to do the right thing and difficult to do the wrong thing.

2.1 Board establishes a management system that results in effective decision making processes and enables all people to help the district achieve its vision and make the best use of its resources.

Indicators

- The board develops policies that require and support strong leadership by the superintendent.
- The board develops policy that enables the staff and the public to participate in board deliberations, school programs, and activities in a meaningful way.
- The board ensures that financial and human resource decisions directly support the district vision.

2.2 Board ensures that long and short term plans are developed and annually revised through a process involving extensive participation, information gathering, research, and reflection.

Indicators

- Board invites input from individuals, school staff, community, and other organizations about improving school program.
- Board engages in annual planning and review.
- Board directs use of appropriate committees for action planning.

2.3 Board sets high instructional standards based on the best available information about the knowledge and skills students will need in the future.

Indicators

- Board establishes appropriate committees to offer advice on the establishment and revision of district standards.
- Board makes instructional resource decisions based on emerging instructional needs and redirects existing resources as appropriate to meet them.

2.4 Board acts to ensure vision and structure comply with legal requirements

Indicators

- The board establishes policy requiring internal and /or external evaluations of district operations.
- The board reviews the results of all assessments as part of their deliberations.

2.5 Board encourages and supports innovative approaches to teaching, learning, and the continuous renewal of education.

Indicators

- Board invests in staff development tied to the district vision of skills students will need in the future.
- Board commits resources annually to renewal activities.
- Board oversees continual review of curriculum and the development of instructional techniques that enhance student achievement.
- Board communicates new developments in instruction to community and provides rationale for them.

BOARD STANDARDS

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Board Measures District Performance Toward Accomplishing The Vision And Reports The Results To The Public

3.1 Board receives regular reports on student progress and needs based on a variety of assessments to evaluate the quality and equity of the educational program.

Indicators

- Board ensures assessments are locally appropriate, accurate, relevant, and use a feasible process.
- Reports on student progress are linked directly to district vision for student achievement.



3.2 Board evaluates the superintendent and board performance annually and reports the results to the public.

Indicators

- Board will establish policies and procedures for routine evaluation of superintendent.
- Written performance expectations for the superintendent and the board are developed and communicated to the community.
- Board solicits public input regarding its performance toward achieving performance expectations.
- Board routinely carries out these evaluations and sets goals for improvement.

3.3 Board ensures long and short term plans are evaluated and revised with the needs of students in mind.

Indicators

- Board seeks input on evaluation of plans progress and effectiveness.
- Board ensures a variety of indicators are used for evaluations.
- Board establishes review framework that supports reasoned decision making.
- Board schedules time annually for appropriate review.

3.4 Board uses an understandable format to periodically report district performance to the public.

Indicators

- Board insists that all reports are written and presented in a way that is understandable and useful to the public.
- Board hosts informal opportunities for public to discuss all district performance issues.

We must measure our progress not only in terms of quantity, but also in terms of quality.

BOARD STANDARDS

ADVOCACY

The Board Champions The Vision

No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.

4.1 Board leads in celebrating the achievements of students and accomplishments of others who contribute to education.

Indicators

- Board establishes policy to ensure individuals and groups are recognized for accomplishments.
- Board recognizes students and others for accomplishments as part of their regularly scheduled meeting activities.
- Board members attend and/or participate in recognition ceremonies when appropriate.

4.2 Board advocates for children and families and establishes strong relationships with parents and other mentors to help support students.

Indicators

- Board adopts policy to encourage parent involvement.
- Board promotes “asset” framework with school staff, community, and students.

4.3 Board establishes partnerships with individuals, groups, and organizations to promote educational opportunities for all students.

Indicators

- Board initiates opportunities to involve educational stakeholders in meaningful activities that meet student needs.
- Board identifies community resources that can help provide both basic academic and enrichment activities that will extend learning opportunities for students.



4.4 Board promotes school board service as a meaningful way to make long term contributions to the local community and society.

Indicators

- Board provides information to school staff and public about school board service to promote understanding and increase interest.
- Board actively informs community regarding role and purpose of school boards.
- Board involves interested community members to participate in groups and activities.

4.5 The board is proactive in identifying and addressing issues that affect the education of students.

Indicators

- Board members influence all recommendations brought before them against the “IS IT GOOD FOR KIDS” criteria.
- Board members weigh actions of individuals and groups that have the potential to impact the school system and act in the best interest of students.
- Board takes leadership role in representing student educational interests to other organizations, agencies, local and state government.

BOARD STANDARDS

CONDUCT & ETHICS

The Board And Its Individual Members Conduct District Business In A Fair, Respectful, And Responsible Manner

5.1 Board and its individual members perform in a manner that reflects service to the community on behalf of students.

Indicators

- Board members understand the significance of their role as models for students and representatives of the community and act accordingly.
- Board members support decisions of majority after honoring each member's individual right to express opposing views and state their convictions, and to disagree without being disagreeable.
- Board makes decisions as a group, only at properly called meetings and recognizes that individual members have no authority to take individual action.

5.2 Board demonstrates a commitment to continually improving teamwork, problem solving, and decision making skills through a conscious program of board development.

Indicators

- Board participates in annual board development activities to develop their governance skills.
- Individual board members report the results of those activities to other board members and community during board meetings.
- Board members attend and fully participate in all board development functions paid for by district funds.
- Board takes responsibility for orientation of all new members.



We are all alike—we have eyes, ears, arms, legs, and a head. The difference is in the heart.

5.3 Expenditures for board activities are clearly identified in the budget, related to the district vision, and open to public scrutiny.

Indicators

- Budget for all board expenditures is easily identifiable.
- All board expenditures are compared against the "IS IT GOOD FOR KIDS" criteria.
- Board invites public to review and comment on expenditures for all board activities and functions.