

# Meaningful Youth Engagement: Students as Partners

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Association of Alaska School Boards



# We are so glad to be here with you today!



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School Climate & Conference Coordinator  
AASB



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Place-Based Learning Coordinator  
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- Welcome
- Opening conversation
- What is Youth Engagement?
- Youth Engagement & Equity
- Engaging Youth in Alaska (AASB resources/support)
- Best Practices for Engaging Youth



# Youth Engagement

“Youth engagement is about empowering all young people as valuable partners in addressing and making decisions about issues that affect them personally and/or that they believe to be important.”

—The New Mentality



# Benefits

## Positive Youth Development:

- Decision Making
- Motivation to Learn
- Academic achievement
- Decreased risk behaviors
- Leadership skills

## Adult Benefits:

- Commitment &
- Energy
- More effective decision-making
- **Insights into what is happening in your district**





“You can’t have conversations about student experiences without students at the table [Educators need to be] thoughtful about that student experience and student engagement.”

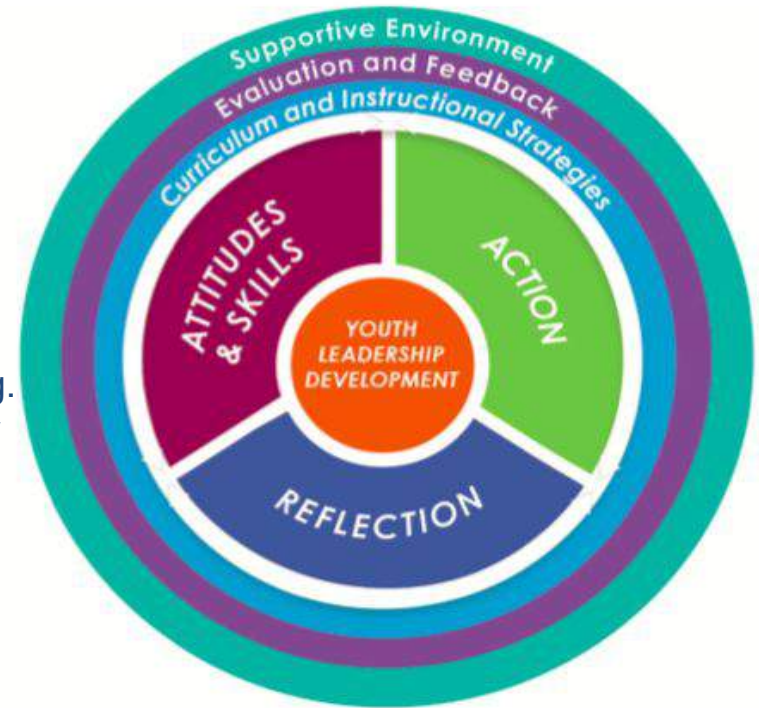
-Joshua Dantzler, Director of social media at Student Voice



# Meaningful Involvement

## Association of Alaska School Boards Adaptations

- Relationships are key.
- Creating safe spaces. Trauma Engaged, Cultural Responsiveness, Family Partnerships, Caring Adults assessed yearly at the district level.
- Opportunities to practice leadership skills.
- Youth voice and experience at center of programming.
- Long term investment in student leadership: Capacity increased over time.
- Focus on youth needs.
- Grow support structures for youth leadership that go beyond youth.



# Equity

- How do we know how well we're engaging with students and uplifting their voices?
- How do we know if we're engaging with students equitably?
- Whose voices are being heard?
- Where are they being heard?
- Why those voices and which students are harder to reach?

**Warning - data on the next slide.**



## How did teachers & staff respond to each question?

Sorted by Survey order ▾ First to last ▾



### QUESTION

In this school, students are given a chance to help make decisions.

**58%**

responded favorably

▼ **4**

from 2020 School Climate & Connectedness Survey



### QUESTION

Students are involved in helping to solve school problems.

**46%**

responded favorably

▼ **3**

from 2020 School Climate & Connectedness Survey



### QUESTION

The principal asks students about their ideas.

**67%**

responded favorably

▼ **1**

from 2020 School Climate & Connectedness Survey



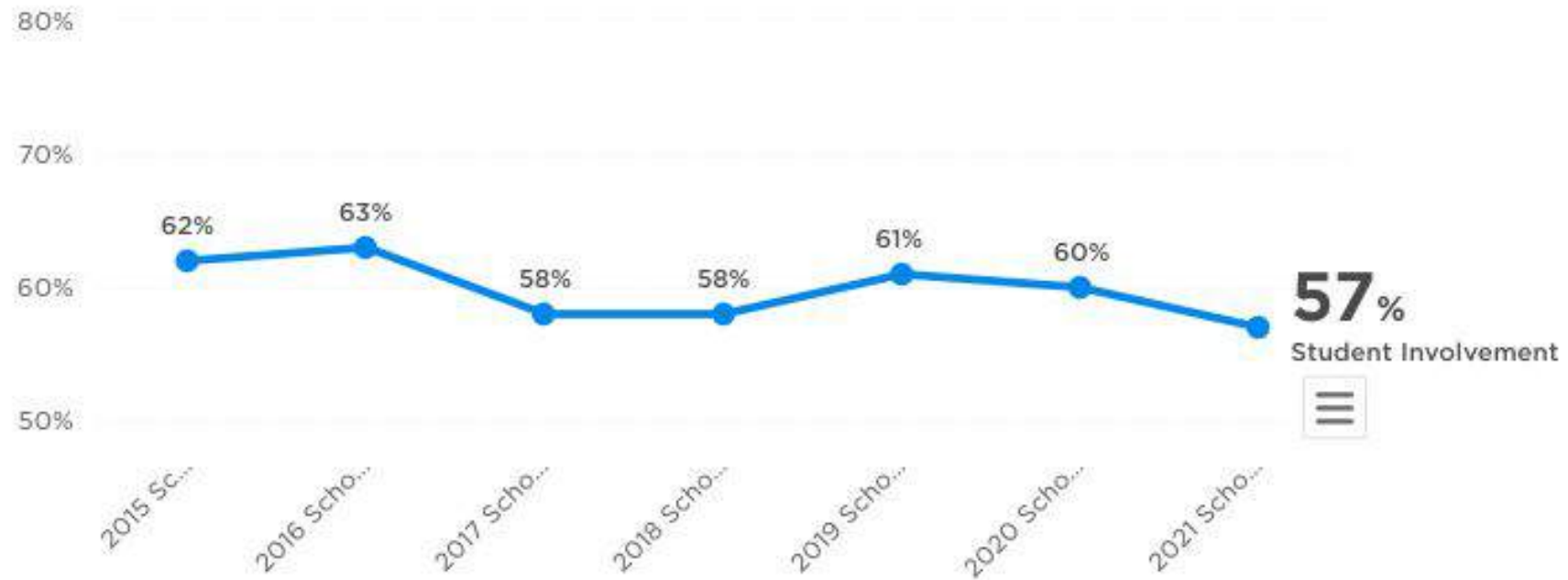
# Student Involvement

Based on **4,918** responses

Student and staff perceptions of student participation in school governance. Higher scores are better because they reflect more favorable perceptions of student involvement.

### How have results changed over time?

Percent Favorable



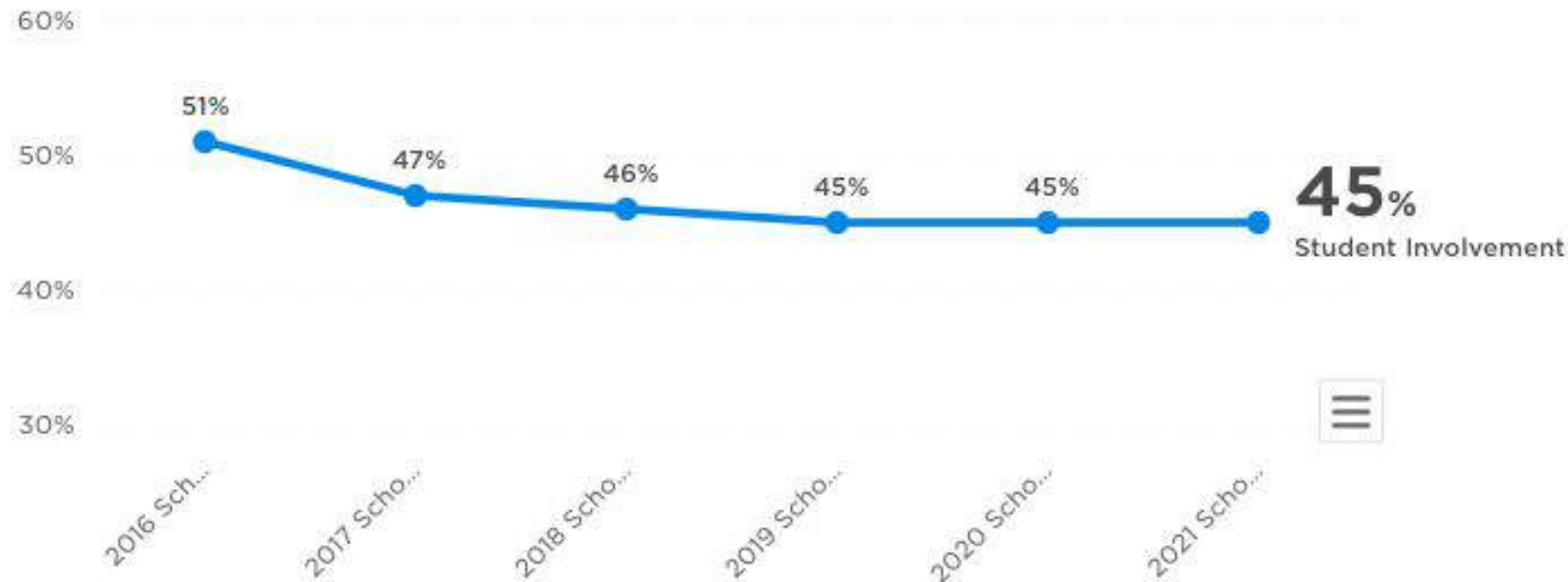
# Student Involvement

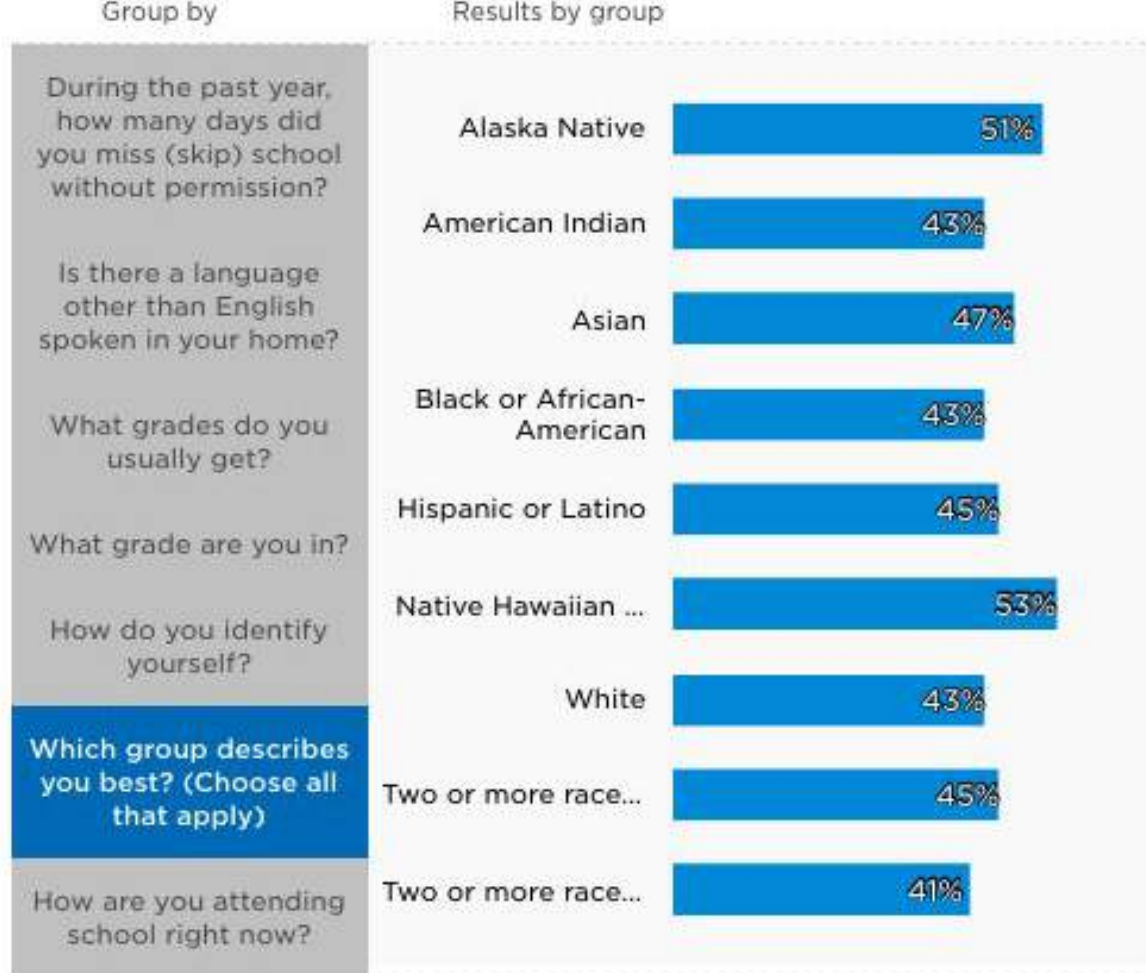
Based on **15,387** responses

Student and staff perceptions of student participation in school governance.  
Higher scores are better because they reflect more favorable perceptions of student involvement.

How have results changed over time?

Percent Favorable





Total of **15,387** responses

*At your table:*

**How do you (as a school board member) engage students your district?**





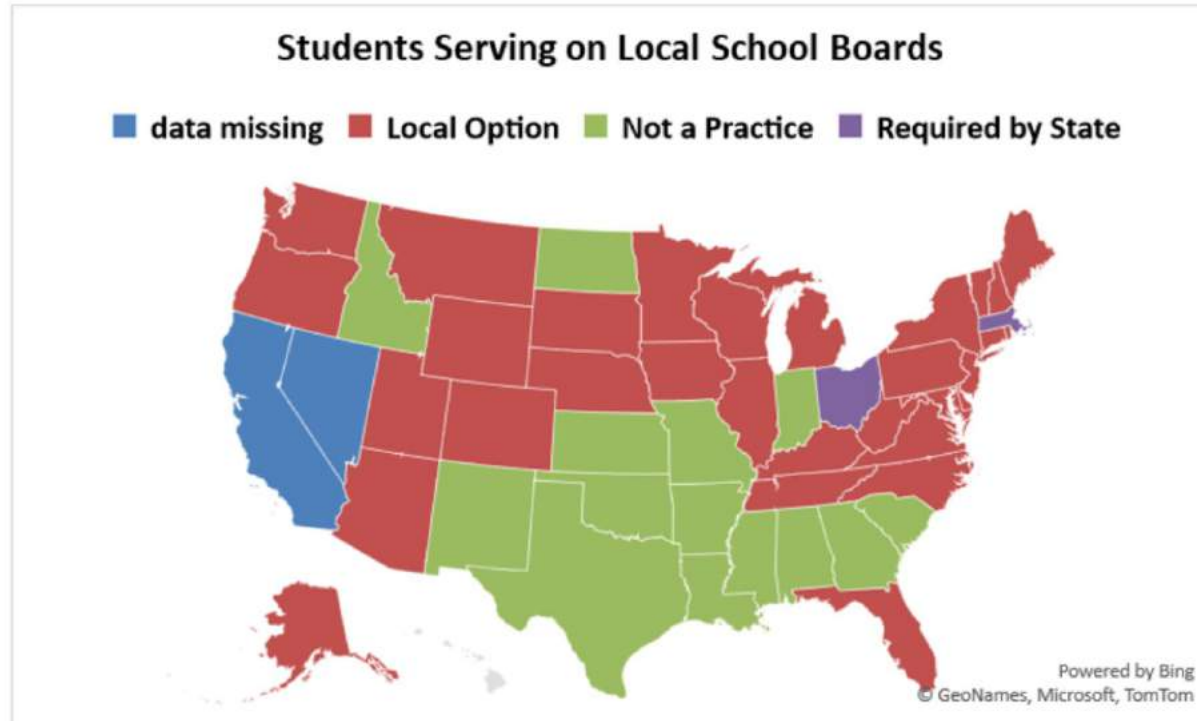


# AASB Engagement and Work with Youth

1. Students on School Boards
2. Statewide (YAI & YLI)
3. Regional & School Climate Youth Leadership

# 1. Students on School Board

Figure 1. How States Practice Student Representation on Local School Boards



Source: NSBA School Governance Survey (2020)

# Students on School Boards In Alaska

30 out of 53 districts

- Board Bylaw BB9110: School Board Membership
  - Student School Board Members:
    - Importance of student representatives
    - Rights of student representatives
    - Preferential voting
- How appointed varies by district
- Can attend any AASB event with local board approval

# Meaningful Involvement on School Board

Welcome students through:

- Orientation
- Understanding of position
- Mentors
- Role at meetings
- Training opportunities
- Logistics help



# At School Board Meetings

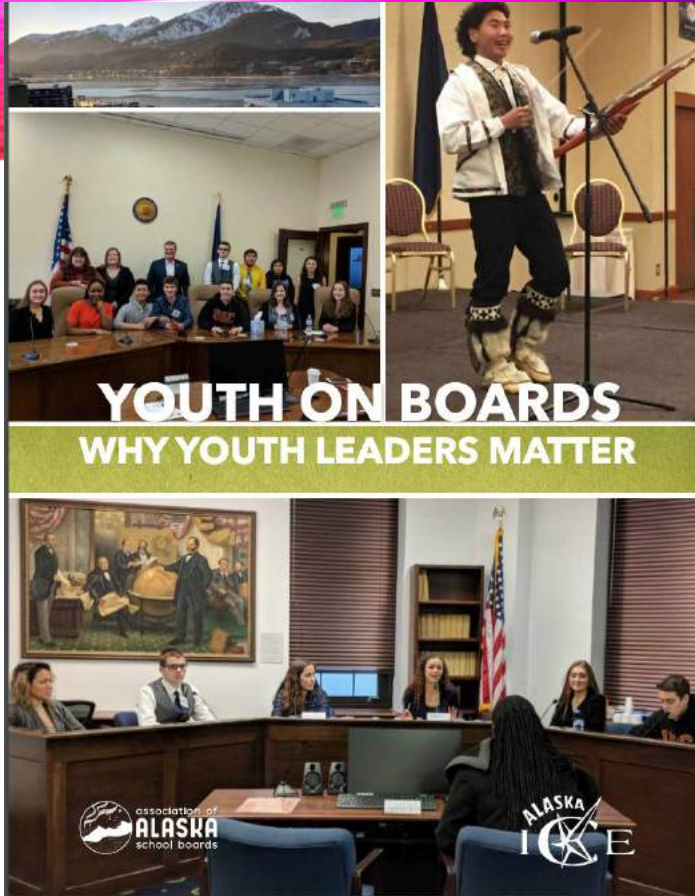
- Have a role for student(s) at each meeting.  
Put students on agenda
- Look at student data (ex. School climate data)
- Invite representatives from different groups to present

To think about:

How do you engage students at your meetings?



# Youth on Boards



- Readiness Assessments for Boards
- New Youth Board Member Check-Lists
- Strategies for Youth Board Members
- Logistics for Supporting Youth
- Connecting to Alaska organizations that can help.

**To access:**

<https://aasb.org/youth-on-boards/>

## 2. Statewide Youth Leadership Programming

- **Statewide Training:**
  - Youth Leadership Institute
  - Youth Advocacy Institute
- **Annual Conference:**
  - Roundtables
- **Legislative Fly-Ins:**
  - District Forums & Developing priorities



# 3. District Programming

- Support youth leadership groups
- Exploring school climate data with students
- Working with school districts- encouraging boards to bring in st
- Online spaces- support (ext JNU)

## Adult Allyship and Facilitating Peer Education

Cora Dow, Darby Osborne, Esther Burdick & Fiona Raasch



# Best Practices for Supporting Youth

- Relationships are key.
- Creating safe spaces. Trauma Engaged, Cultural Responsiveness, Family Partnerships, Caring Adults assessed yearly at the district level.
- Opportunities to practice leadership skills.
- Youth voice and experience at center of programming.
- Long term investment in student leadership: Capacity increased over time.
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## Looking Forward:

**What's one action you (or your school board) will do to increase student voice this coming year?**





# Gunatchéesh!



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