Meaningful Youth Engagement: Students as Partners
Jenni Lefing & Tyler Breen
Association of Alaska School Boards
We are so glad to be here with you today!

Jenni Lefing  
School Climate & Conference Coordinator  
AASB

Tyler Breen  
Place-Based Learning Coordinator  
AASB
• 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
from 2020 School Climate & Connectedness Survey

QUESTION
Students are involved in helping to solve school problems.
46% responded favorably
from 2020 School Climate & Connectedness Survey

QUESTION
The principal asks students about their ideas.
67% responded favorably
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
80%

57% Student Involvement

62% 63% 58% 58% 61% 60%
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

60%

50% 51% 47% 46% 45% 45% 45%

Student Involvement
During the past year, how many days did you miss (skip) school without permission?

Is there a language other than English spoken in your home?

What grades do you usually get?

What grade are you in?

How do you identify yourself?

Which group describes you best? (Choose all that apply)

How are you attending school right now?

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)
Best Practices for Supporting Youth

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- 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.
Looking Forward:

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

Jenni Lefing jlefin@aasb.org, Association of Alaska School Boards

Tyler Breen tbreen@aasb.org, Association of Alaska School Boards