

ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS



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Academy Focuses on Equity, 2017 Session

The Winter Boardsmanship Academy offers education leaders an opportunity to consider innovations that can bring equity to classrooms and students across the state through the first AASB Equity in Education Summit. The event on December 9 at the Sheraton Anchorage Hotel will be followed on Dec. 10 by presentations and a strategy session offering insights into communicating with the Legislature and overall preparation for the 2017 session.

Mary Fertakis, a veteran school board member from Tukwila, WA., will speak on framing the conversation on equity in education. As a Peace Corps worker in Senegal, she helped a small village secure grant funding to build a school, dig a well, and bring basic services and the start of a cash economy to its people. More recently, Fertakis joined other community members and organizations to persuade voters in her district to pass a bond



AASB Winter Boardsmanship Academy

**Sheraton Anchorage Hotel
December 9-10, 2016**



measure that included a Birth to 5 center.

Other presentations on the agenda included Bridging the Cultural Divide and creating Culturally Responsive Schools from the Alaska Humanities Forum, First Alaskans Institute and AASB staff and board members. The Friday equity presentations are open to anyone. For more information, please contact Timi Tullis at ttullis@aasb.org

Attorney John Sedor will kick off activities on Saturday, the 10th, with an overview of board responsibilities in personnel issues. Dr. Bob Crumley, superintendent

of the Chugach School District, will outline hiring practices that worked in his district, while Carleen Mitchell of Alaska Public Entities Insurance will focus on liability issues board members should consider in personnel decisions.

Saturday afternoon will be devoted to the 2017 Legislature and tips on best practices for your own advocacy, including an overview of successful school efficiency efforts in Alaska schools.

Registration is available online at <https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=1891581>

A Super's Journey: To Be Competitive We Must Be Collaborative

By Stewart McDonald, Superintendent of Schools, Kodiak Island Borough School District

I am a believer in standing with all 54 local education authorities that make up the school systems of Alaska. I like to call them the Super 54. I have had a chance to reflect on many innovations my colleagues and I have implemented. Political winds have driven Alaska's school agendas in

conflicting directions. There has been a tendency to encourage competition for resources. The current winds are asking us to consider innovations that create inter-district collaborative efforts. Some think that this means larger districts can simply supply digital content to smaller districts

and problems are solved. This is a woefully incomplete view. Our partner superintendents and their district teams welcomed this message as we have been forging a path of leveraging each other's resources and strengths to meet our students' needs for years.

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KIBSD is one of the four Digital Teaching Initiative districts leveraging technology and capacity sharing efforts to bring more quality choice to students in the most remote schools of Alaska. To date, KIBSD has partnered with 59 schools in 26 districts to deliver courses and professional development through sharing staff and students. We did this without stealing each other's funding-formula driven student enrollment. As a result we have created a system able to sustain productive collaboration without increasing budgets. This effort was not designed to provide digital content on a computer and call it done. This collaboration is about building relationships, localizing and operationalizing instructional needs while preserving local control in each partner district. KIBSD is not alone in this work. It is important to state that the partner districts are sharing their strengths with us in return. We are building collaborative learning communities. Many of the Super 54 are doing similar work without much recognition from state leadership.

The point of this collaboration is to close performance gaps and drive cost-effective solutions to educating our students. Zaretta Hammond's book on Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain emphasizes that closing the performance gap for the diverse student groups in

our schools requires creating systems that teach students to be independent learners. This book is a must read. Creating independent learners requires creating a faculty and support system that challenges all Alaska's students in locally relevant, globally competitive, and engaged curricula. These curricula must be more than content. The curricula must be hands-on, locally relevant, process-learning curriculum. The Super 54 must play to our strengths and leverage the super capacity of each of our staff, communities, and students to build powerful individualized independent learning systems that are based on process learning and socially collaborative structures. And this must be controlled at the local level.

World Bridge is one of those efforts. KIBSD completed two years of this cutting edge process learning pedagogy and has been recognized internationally as a highly successful approach. KIBSD is partnering with Yu'piit School District to transform their schools into the local Career Technology Education Centers, which will train students to be technicians and highly skilled professionals to serve their community needs and grow their community work force capacity. We are embarking in the earliest stages of the work this year. We will have successes and failures. Our endeavor is to learn how to create the independent learners who

can meet the challenges of their lives and communities.

Our partnerships go beyond shared capacity between school districts. We are learning to partner with highly collaborative research organizations, and businesses to drive the expertise and professional capacity of leading industries. Alaska's Super 54 can find the right solutions to meet today's education and budget challenges. What Alaska's schools need more than ever are state leaders who will recognize the best of our work and celebrate the success. We need a strength-based model built on collaboration and innovations. I challenge Alaska leaders to begin every education conversation by acknowledging the success stories and identifying which of these innovations are the right direction for Alaska. Our business partnerships tell us to be competitive we must be collaborative. Collaboration requires a disciplined strength-based effort.

Stewart McDonald is serving his ninth year as superintendent of schools for the KIBSD. He is in his twenty-fifth year serving Alaska's students in many educational roles from special education teacher, grants, and assessment to senior administration. He serves as the superintendent representative on the State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, Alaska Association Executive Board representing Mid-Sized Districts, ASA Legislative Committee, and ASA State Assessment Committee, Advisory Board Member for the Southeast Regional Resource Center. He was selected as Alaska's 2017 Superintendent of the Year.

Annual Conference a Success



**NORM
WOOTEN**

FROM the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The 2016 AASB Annual Conference has been completed and everyone has returned home. This was the 63rd conference and from preliminary reports was a hit with attendees. The theme, "Every Student – Every Story" was showcased from the pre-conference sessions, to the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI), to the sectionals. Story telling is an honored tradition and practiced by all of Alaska's First People. It is a tradition that is effective in advocating for our children and we are proud to carry it on even as we honor it.

We opened the conference with a new tradition this year as Chief Lee Stephan Dena'ina of Eklutna welcomed us to his traditional grounds. What an awesome conference beginning to honor a respected elder with a reminder of Alaska's history. It perfectly set the mood and emphasized the AASB Board of Director's Goal #1:

"Empower our boards to increase the academic success of Alaska Native Students and increase graduation rates of Alaska Native Students who are grounded in their cultural identity with the ability to successfully pursue their goals."

The presentation of colors and an amazing rendition of the Star Spangled Banner by Sand Point student Melrose Ceballos also punctuated the opening ceremonies.

Gov. Bill Walker shared that in his vision for Alaska is forward funding for education

so that the path for this generation's visionaries is clear. He put forward education as a financial and philosophical priority this year and that he wants to give teachers and students every tool for success, including a fiscal plan looking out five years.

Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott challenged educators at Friday's General Session to elevate education to a standard that improves the lives of all Alaska students and makes school boards an example of the best that democracy offers.

Commissioner of Education and Early Development Michael Johnson attended most of the conference and introduced his new deputy, Sana Efird, who is moving into EED from the Department of Health and Social Services, where she was an assistant commissioner for Finance and Management Services. She succeeds Les Morse, who retired.

James Fields, President of the State Board of Education, committed to the school boards that all students get a great education so that every student succeeds in every community. It is up to each district to create how that education looks. Fields suggested that there may be things and ideas out there that don't exist yet that will help education innovate.

Tam Agosti-Gisler, President of the Anchorage School Board, touched on the new three "Rs" – relationships, relevance and rigor. Until students know that teachers and other adults care, they will not be able to engage in learning. Agosti-Gisler called on school boards to walk the talk, modeling positive relationships, relevance, rigor and being active life long learners.

Both preconference presentations had overflow crowds who hung in the entire day. The Academy for Experienced Board Members offered ideas to take home on personalized learning. Board Room Boot Camp got newly elected board members off on the right foot.

Several important committees met on Thursday prior to the conference:

The Nominations Committee interviewed board candidates all day. Making their job difficult was the high caliber of candidates forwarded by their districts. This is a good problem to have and makes the AASB board even stronger. During the election on Sunday all incumbents were reelected and were joined by new board members Barbara Amarok of Nome city Schools and Penny Vadla of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District.

The Awards Committee also had more nominations for the Carl Rose Governance

Award and School Board of the Year than ever before. After agonizing over so many good nominees their selections were announced on Saturday evening. Pete Hoepfner of Cordova was the recipient of the Carl Rose Governance Award and the Fairbanks North Star Borough Board of Education the School Board of the Year.

The Budget Committee reviewed the AASB budget in detail prior to the conference and came prepared with questions. This is a very technical committee and committee members are selected from those board members with an expertise in budgets or with a financial background. They asked tough questions of the staff and after discussion directed that the budget be presented to the membership and forwarded to the Board of Directors with a recommendation for approval. The Board of Directors then considered it at their post-conference meeting and approved the budget as presented.

The Resolutions Committee divided into five teams and reviewed all existing resolutions as well as proposed resolutions forwarded by districts. This committee has the important job of recommending to the delegate assembly ideas and beliefs that will set the legislative agenda of the Association for the coming year. These were serious people who worked through the entire day. They did such a thorough job that the delegates approved the recommendations with only one resolution being pulled for discussion with the remainder being accepted as approved.

The June Nelson Memorial Scholarship fundraiser is always a lively and fun event. The auction was shortened to two hours giving boards members a free evening to socialize with each other and their students and seemed to be appreciated. It was fast paced and the bidding was lively. Board members and Superintendents are incredibly generous in their contribution of auction items and in bidding. Once again AASB will be able to assist students in their postsecondary studies.



Peter Hoepfner (at left) is joined by fellow Cordova educators, students and parents at the AASB Annual Conference, where he was named the recipient of the Carl Rose Governance Award. Hoepfner was also elected as President of the AASB Board for 2017.

In talking to conference attendees the complaints around sectionals were which ones to attend. Folks wanted to attend them all but had to select. Nice problem! Presenters were excited and pleased with the crowds. Most sessions were standing room only.

The conference app was a popular feature and allowed attendees to build a digital schedule. There were minimal handouts this year with all presentations and handouts entered on the app and available for downloading. There were many positive comments about the ability to have all materials available – even if one wasn't able to attend a session due to a conflict with another session.

Both general session speakers seemed to resonate with board members. Gene Tagaban started us off with an inspiring message of hope. Didn't you feel "awesome" as the entire room whispered? Back by popular demand was Dr. Thomas Alsbury who presented us with good governance tips as we serve on local school boards.

The Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) continues to be popular with our young people and provides them with leadership skills to take home. Watching these students and interacting with them gives all of us great hope and confidence in the future. There is no doubt but that we're building future school members, legislators, tribal leaders, and municipal officials. Their energy is infectious and makes us all better by their presence at our conference.

The Conference seemed to meet the expectations of attendees. Thanks you all for participating in this professional development.



The AASB Board of Directors include (front row from left) Charlene Arneson of Chugach School Board; Andi Story of Juneau; Tiffany Jackson of Aleutians East; Peter Hoepfner of Cordova, President; Mike Swain of Bristol Bay, President-Elect; Angie Washington of Northwest Arctic, Secretary-Treasurer; Tammy Fowler Pound of Unalaska; (back row from left) Sarah Welton of Mat-Su; Cass Pook of Sitka; Clarence Daniel of Lower Kuskokwim; Kathleen Plunkett of Anchorage; Dana Mock of Delta Greely; Ignatius Chayalkun of Kashunamit; Barb Amarok of Nome; and Penny Vadla of Kenai Peninsula.

Every Student, Every Story

Presentations from the 63rd Conference

Thursday, Nov. 10
Board Room Boot Camp 2016

Experienced AASB board members and veteran Board Room Boot Camp hosts, Tiffany Jackson (AASB president 2016, Aleutians East SD), Michael Swain (Secretary/treasurer 2016, Bristol Bay SD) and Angela Washington (NWASD) presided over the full day workshop designed for both new board members and those wanting to refresh their knowledge and skills. Approximately 40 participants attended the workshop including several superintendents! This year, Tiffany, Mike and Angie began the day with a new presentation aimed at introducing new board members to the idea that now they belong to a governance team and they should expect to be in the “public eye”. The presentation reflected on what this means and how AASB and board standards can help guide them to becoming effective board members.

John Sedor, founding partner of Sedor, Wendlandt, Evans, & Filippi, LLC provided a very engaging, interactive and entertaining session on the legal rights and responsibilities of school boards. This primer for school board members and superintendents was a great review of legal issues board members and boards as a whole often face. Issues presented and discussed included dealing with personnel, Alaska’s Open Meetings Act, and the board’s fiduciary responsibility. Provocative questions paired with the use of digital polling using the participants smart phones made it a fun and engaging session. It could easily have taken up the day!

Tiffany, Angie and Mike presented an introduction for new members regarding AASB and what it can do for boards and board members wishing to improve their governance skills. Superintendent Jim Nygaard and his board chair, Joe Prax from Valdez City Schools made an excellent presentation on the board and superintendent relationship and its importance. Both gentlemen’s experience, respect and pragmatism highlighted their presentation. Lori Grassgreen, Director of the Initiative for Community Engagement at AASB finished off the day with a discussion of the need for active community engagement and support for development of social emotional learning and cultural relevancy.

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Academy for Experienced Board Members

Presenters: Dr. Bob Whicker, Director, AASB Consortium for Digital Learning; Fred Bramante, National Center for Competency-Based Learning; Sue Hull, Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development; Curtis Thayer, Alaska State Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Michael Johnson, Department of Education and Early Development, Digital Teaching Initiative Grant recipient districts Copper River, Kenai, Ketchikan, and Kodiak; and Heather Coulehan, AASB/ICE.

Hands-On Vendor Demonstrations: Apple, Instructure, Accelerate Education, Waterford

This year’s Academy for Experienced Board Members centered on defining and demonstrating how a Competency-Based Learning model, enabled through community support and technology and personalized for every student, can work in Alaska school districts. presenters and 5 vendors provided approximately 75 attendees with a broad range of detailed information and insights on the topic.

The day began with State Board of Education Modernization Committee member Sue Hull outlining the board’s criteria for personalized learning: 1) Real-world learning; 2) Anytime, anywhere instruction; 3) Real-time information; and 4) Students advance when ready. She emphasized the need to increase and incentivize options and flexibility to personalize the educational experience for each student. By promoting the innovative use of technology to increase access to high quality coursework, improved efficiencies and amplified learning can be realized. The state board, she said, encourages and supports innovative approaches to expand opportunities to overcome Alaska’s educational challenges.

Next, Alaska State Chamber of Commerce President Curtis Thayer stressed the need for education and business to collaborate more closely on developing workforce-ready youth. He encouraged schools to utilize local resources and form partnerships within their communities. Matching student interests with workforce needs can provide real-world learning opportunities that augment and expand classroom learning.

Dr. Bob Whicker began his talk by asking the audience whether they could agree on some assumptions about our current education system:

- 1) *Student engagement and ownership of learning is good*
- 2) *Accountability is important;*

- 3) *Students what they know is a good assessment;*
- 4) *Student learning and demonstrating knowledge can be done in different ways; and*
- 5) *Mastery of learning should be more meaningful, beyond getting an A or a B.*

Most all attendees agreed.

Based on these assumptions, he offered a definition of personalized learning: Tailoring learning for each student’s strengths, needs and interests—including enabling student voice and choice in what, how, when and where they learn—to provide flexibility and supports to ensure mastery of the highest standards possible.

To successfully implement personalized learning, he said, these seven concepts must be embraced:

- 1) *Anytime, anywhere instruction*
- 2) *Competency-based learning*
- 3) *Pacing to Mastery*
- 4) *Real-time information*
- 5) *Real-world learning*
- 6) *Intentional Work/Life/Social Skills*
- 7) *Community/Business Partnerships.*

Fred Bramante provided a comprehensive approach to implementing a statewide competency-based reform initiative. He began by pointing out that Alaska and his home state of New Hampshire have similar numbers of public schools (497 vs. 477) and public school students (135,000 vs. 182,000). In 2012, Mr. Bramante was appointed Chairman of the State Board of Education by governor Craig Benson and tasked with redesigning the state’s education system. He was given two directives: “start with a clean sheet of paper” and “challenge everything.”

Bramante and the board began by examining the 180-day school calendar, which was originally developed in 1906 by the Carnegie Foundation, as a way to standardize formulas for student graduation and teacher pay. The foundation determined that if a student attended school for 180 days and received 120-150 hours of classroom instruction during that time, they would receive a “Carnegie Unit” of credit. When enough units were accumulated, the student could graduate from high school. The Carnegie Unit effectively established time as the constant, and learning as the variable for the United States education system

Under current rules, if a student learns the desired lessons and skills inside the school, they

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Board Room Boot Camp 2016, continued

On Friday, two final presentations were made. Dr. Lisa Skiles Parady, Executive Director of ACSA gave an introduction to school finance, primarily how schools are funded by the state foundation formula. Bob Whicker, Director of the Consortium for Digital Learning at AASB presented on the topic of policy as the foundation of school board governance.

Hot Topics

Presenters: Brian Holst, Juneau Economic Development Council; Patricia Owen and Susan McCauley, Dept. of Education & Early Development

This well-attended session focused on current developments in early childhood programs, health and sexuality education, and the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Brian Holst, executive director of JEDC and president of the Juneau School Board, outlined research studies showing an investment in early childhood development pays dividends in less remedial education, higher adult incomes and lower social costs. Currently, Alaska spends about \$36 million in state and federal money to operate Head Start programs for 4,500 children, but Holst said a broader program is needed to reach the estimated 70 percent of students who the state believes are not prepared academically or socially to enter public schools as kindergartners.

Holst said many people do not support high-quality early learning programs in Alaska because they do not recognize the return on investment and believe it is the job of parents, not schools or the government, to prepare kids to enter K-12 classrooms. He said key components of an early learning system include prenatal and infant wellness, Parents as Teachers home visiting, Imagination Library and literacy supports, high-quality child care for working parents and high-quality pre-K.

Patricia Owen, a health education specialist at EED, traced the mandates for schools included in the Safe Children's Act of 2015 and House Bill 156 adopted in 2016 related to health and sexuality instruction. While Alaska requires just one credit of physical education or health to graduate from high school, the Safe Children's Act has added additional instruction for all students in age-appropriate classes dealing with prevention of sexual abuse and dating violence.

The new state requirements on human

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Academy for Experienced Board Members, continued

count toward graduation. Yet if the same skills are learned outside the school, they don't count. Bramante asked his fellow board members, "Do we care more that the school is the deliverer of the learning experience, or do we care that our kids learn, regardless of the source of the learning?" They unanimously agreed that it was more important for kids to learn.

This epiphany led the New Hampshire board to remove the Carnegie Unit as a requirement, implementing learning mastery as the constant, and making time/place the variable. New Hampshire is committed to holding their students to higher standards than ever before, he said, while allowing students to "do education their way" and "own their learning."

Through New Hampshire's Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) network, a wide variety of experiential learning opportunities are available to help students earn credit toward graduation. Schools are partnering with local businesses and professionals to offer students access to internships, apprenticeships, independent study, team sports, performing groups, online courses, work study and more. Examples include receiving physical education credit for a karate class, playing in a rock band for music credit, taking a world history course online, doing automotive shop at a car dealership, and space science at a planetarium.

Bramante encouraged attendees not to view their resources as being scarce, but instead to harness the abundance that is beyond school walls, including local businesses, non-profits, talented individuals and natural resources. The competency-based approach to learning is explained in Bramante's book, *Off the Clock: Moving Education From Time to Competency*.

Attendees then participated in series of 20-minute Snapshot-style sessions. Four vendors of personalized learning system components presented hands-on demonstrations. Apple showed the "Classroom" app, a classroom management system (CMS) designed for teacher use. Instructure demonstrated "Canvas" software, a learning management system (LMS) used to organize and deliver instructional content. Accelerate education showed its K-12 curriculum blended learning solutions, and Waterford demonstrated its personalized early learning K-2 curriculum designed for 3rd grade remediation.

DEED Commissioner Michael Johnson began the afternoon session by stating a mission for Alaska educators: An excellent education for every student every day. He expressed the department's support for personalized learning as a way to modernize Alaska's education system, amplify student learning, and inspire community ownership of educational excellence. Commissioner Johnson praised the work of the four districts that received Digital Teaching Initiative (DTI) grants, and introduced their panel of presenters from Copper River,

Kenai, Ketchikan, and Kodiak.

These four districts are working collaboratively to realize DTI goals, which include providing Alaska students better access to quality teachers, delivering high quality online, blended learning and dual-credit courses, overcoming barriers of geography and district boundaries to increase student opportunity, providing choice and access to high quality content, and strengthening current technology-based instructional programs.

Teams from each of the four DTI districts discussed the challenges and successes they've had in designing and implementing a system that balances digital and online instructional opportunities with hands-on, face-to-face learning experiences for students in rural Alaska. DTI district course offerings are expanding. Student enrollment in some courses have doubled and tripled over the past three years, with course completion rates steadily improving.

DTI district courses provide students and teachers with rolling enrollment, flexible pacing based on individual needs, competency framework, standards-based curriculum, Alaska teacher designed courses, online dashboards showing real-time course progress, teacher professional development, and low bandwidth solutions. In addition, financial models are in place for handling course delivery, teacher payment, and leveraging software licensing.

The DTI grants have provided recipients with the time and resources to refine their distance delivery systems and procedures. DTI districts are now teaming up to learn from each other's strengths, share ideas, and provide support. This spirit of collaboration is leading toward the creation of a comprehensive, sustainable system capable of delivering distance course opportunities statewide.

In support of this goal, DTI districts are calling for the creation of a network of service providers to develop teacher credentialing for digital delivery; focus on student-centered personalized learning; provide on-site and virtual professional support; develop best practices for using digital tools in the classroom and online; training, supporting, and communicating with local on-site supervisors/progress monitor mentors; a vetted collective course catalog, a cross district student management system; and scalable service packages (e.g. innovative blended learning, online learning, STEAM, CTE) to support districts needs, while retaining local control.

Heather Coulehan from Alaska ICE closed the afternoon by facilitating attendees in reflecting on how personalized learning can build skills students need to be successful in school and life, foster relationships, show care and concern, cultivate community, and are socially and culturally responsive.

Participants were surveyed at every stage of the day. This data was analyzed and presented at CDL's Sunday sectional, Personalized Learning: Next Steps, to gain district input and direction.

Hot Topics, continued

sexuality education in HB 156 took effect in late October in a state with a high incidence of sexually active teens. Curriculum and materials must be approved by school boards, under the law, and parents must give permission for their children to attend such classes. Any presenters must also be pre-approved by school boards and they must be supervised by certificated staff.

Susan McCauley, education policy coordinator at EED, said Alaska is partially in compliance with the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) but will have to revise and adopt new standards and grade level expectations for science education, adopt new accountability indicators and identifying schools that require more support. She noted that any high school with a graduation rate of less than 67 percent falls under the needs-support definition of federal law.

School Law

Presenters: Susan Sonneborn, Jermain Dunnagan & Owens; Allen Clandaniel, Sedor, Wedlandt, Evans & Fillipi; Lael Harrison, Faulkner Banfield

Susan Sonneborn began by discussing how Alaska's statutes relate to student disciplinary hearings. In general, Alaska Statutes govern student discipline, as well as their right to attend school.

AS 14.03.080(f) provides that a child of school age is entitled to attend public school without payment of tuition in the school district in which the child is a resident. However, it does not require a school district to admit a child or person currently under suspension or expulsion under AS 14.03.160 in that or another school district.

According to AS 14.30.045 a school age child may be suspended or denied admission to public school for continued willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance, behavior that is harmful to the welfare or safety of other pupils or a person employed or volunteering at the school (i.e. physical or aggressive behavior), a physical or mental condition that in the opinion of a competent medical authority will render the child unable to reasonably benefit from the programs available or will cause the attendance of the child to be harmful to the welfare of other pupils, or conviction of a felony (not just charged) that the district determines will cause the attendance to be harmful to the welfare or education of other pupils.

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Fred Bramante, President of the National Center for Competency-Based Learning, presents at the Experienced Board Members Academy. He advocated removing the Carnegie Unit as a requirement, and focus on learning mastery instead of seat time.

Friday, Nov. 11 ~ 1st General Session ~ GENE TAGABAN

Learning how to introduce yourself is one of the most important things you can learn in life, shared keynote speaker Gene Tagaban as he introduced himself with drum in hand. We are always introducing ourselves by the way we are in the world, representing our family, our people, our clan. And we are all tribal people, coming from a place of tribes on this land we call earth.

When we learn about where and how our ancestors made their footprints on the earth, this models for children to learn who they are and where they come from, he said. We are the warriors, protectors, peacemakers and healers of today and we need to step up and be those roles for our children. When we look into the eyes of our children, we cross into the realm of spirit and relationship. We can't lose this. We need to work together, hold each other up, love each other. This will bring global transformation and it is the children who will make it happen.

Mr. Tagaban closed with the story of Rabbit singing and drumming. Like Rabbit in the story, honor the integrity of who you are, allow this to guide you. Give ourselves a whispered awesome with magic fingers!

"The animals were all gathered for a meeting.



Gene Tagaban

Just as the meeting was being called to order, the animals heard Rabbit outside the door singing and drumming loudly (Gene drumming and chanting). Bear went out to quiet Rabbit, but Rabbit just sang and drummed even louder (Gene drumming and chanting).

"Bear pulled off one of his arms, saying that Rabbit would get it back after the meeting. The animals expected that Rabbit would not be able to play with only one arm, but soon the animals heard Rabbit drumming with one hand, still singing (Gene drumming and chanting). Wolf slipped outside, pulled off Rabbit's other arm, and said now he will not be able to drum at all.

"Just as the meeting was starting, Rabbit could be heard stomping his feet and singing (Gene drumming and chanting). Coyote rushed outside, pulled off one of Rabbit's legs, certain that this would stop Rabbit. When the animals heard hopping and singing (Gene drumming and chanting), Eagle flew out, reached over and pulled off Rabbit's head, saying again that Rabbit would get it back after the meeting.

"With no head, no arms, and only one leg, the animals were sure the meeting could happen in peace. But as they started the meeting, they could still hear Rabbit singing (Gene chanting)! The animals realized that Rabbit was singing from his heart and there is nothing that can quiet a song from the heart. Bear, Wolf, Coyote, and Eagle put back Rabbit's arms, leg and head and he taught the animals the song and how to drum" (Gene drumming and chanting).

– Told by Gene Tagaban in his keynote address

School Law, continued

As per AS 14.03.160, a student can also be suspended or expelled for possessing weapons, such as a firearm or any weapon that can harm by explosion. Weapons used for sporting purposes, such as cultural activities or a shooting club, may be excluded. A firearm, as defined by state statute, may result in a student being suspended for at least 30 days, and in some cases, expelled for up to a year. An administrator may modify the expulsion or suspension on a case-by-case basis.

A student may return from expulsion or long-term suspension when cause no longer exists, such as a drug or alcohol-related offense, or when it reasonably appears that the cause has been remedied. A school may also impose conditions on a student's return to school.

Sonneborn cited two cases that illustrate student rights under the Alaska Constitution. The first was *Breese v. Smith*, a 1972 Alaska case involving a violation of a school's hair length regulation, which prohibited male students having hair past their eyes, ear, and neck. A new student with long hair was suspended for "willful disobedience." The student went to court to seek a preliminary injunction. The court held that Article 1, section 1 of the Alaska Constitution's means students attending public educational institutions in Alaska possess a constitutional right to wear their hair in accordance with their personal tastes. As a result, the school was unable to make a compelling argument for the student's suspension. The court found no connection between long hair and academic progress or disruption.

The next case involved procedural due process rights and student disciplinary hearings.

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President Tiffany Jackson displays a pair of stylized boots presented to her from fellow AASB Board members.

Board President's Workshop

Presenter: *Tiffany Jackson, president, Aleutians East Borough School Board; Timi Tullis, AASB*

Board of Director President Tiffany Jackson laid out her steps to successful meetings. The following steps if followed before, during and after the meeting will help all meetings become more effective:

SETTING THE AGENDA

Be sure that all members are aware of how the agenda is developed and how they go about adding items to the agenda. Agendas should be clear and understandable to all without acronyms that the public might not understand. Clearly list where and when the meeting will be held and align agenda items to board standards or your board goals.

SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Every board member should be expected to read the meeting packet prior to a meeting and ask questions of the superintendent in advance. It is best to let the Superintendent know if there are any issues you're aware the public may bring up.

DURING THE MEETING

Be sure you have a printed agenda next to you, even if you do everything else via digital documents. Have a pen and paper for notes beside you so to jot down order of others to talk and notes that you want to remember. Be sure to have a visible clock in the room so that you can time public comment. If you have folks on the phone or televised be sure they can see or hear you, the chair.

MAKE PUBLIC COMMENT STRUCTURE CLEAR

When the meeting begins highlight the times that the board will accept public comment. Remind all board members that the meeting must be held in public, but it is NOT a public meeting. There are appropriate times for comment and times that are not appropriate.

Agenda? What Agenda?

Vern Carlson, board chair from Denali School District and Lon Garrison, AASB staff member, presented on the topic of the importance of the board meeting agenda. The focus of the presentation was two fold: 1) the agenda is a means of communicating to all stakeholders the business the board intends to take up and 2) how construction of your meeting agenda has a big impact on how your meeting is run and its effectiveness. The agenda was tied to the AASB board standard of "Structure" as it

Be sure to explain how long each comment can be, typically 3 minutes but be sure to check your by-laws. Chairs must be ready to stop public comment if it breaches open meetings act.

REPORTS

Staff should make reports in writing and during the meeting not read them to the board. If there are any updates to the written material, they can be done orally; if not staff can simply ask if there are any questions.

FACILITATING DISCUSSION

As the chair it is important that you make sure everyone gets a chance to talk, this takes effort all the time but especially when members are attending via phone or teleconference. Another great tip is to keep track (on your handy notepad) who is up to speak next, remembering that you want to hear from everyone BEFORE you allow someone who has spoken to speak again.

Another important role of the chair is to recognize conversations that heading down "the bunny trail" and help focus them back. Some suggested comments are: "I understand this is important, but the issue at hand right now is...", "We have a lot of important work to get through today, lets work to stay on topic, and get through this." Remember, it is up to you to make sure all opinions are heard, not just repeated

FUTURE BUSINESS

Keep a list of questions that need answered before a future decision can be made. Note the business that wasn't concluded during the meeting (if any) and include it on future agendas. Check to see if there are any policies that need updates. Refer to your yearly board calendar to determine what future business may lie ahead and follow up with the Superintendent to see what else might need to be addressed.

is a structural component of board work to support the district's vision. Examples were provided to show how various elements of the agenda work and how they can be assembled to facilitate efficient and effective meetings. Of particular interest was how an agenda provides opportunity for public participation. Public comment is critical and how it can be facilitated to engage the public and yet keep the board's work for the meeting on track. Finally, the topic of agenda creation and how to get something on the agenda was addressed. Learn to use your agenda wisely!

School Law, continued

Goss v. Lopez, 1975, determined that a student is guaranteed notice and a hearing prior to suspension or expulsion from public school.

The U.S. Supreme Court requires students facing temporary suspension be given oral or written notice of the charges against them, or an explanation of the evidence the authorities have, and an opportunity for the student to present their side of the story.

In the 1972 *Linwood v. Board of Education* case, a student was expelled for striking another student. The expelled student argued that his expulsion hearing did not provide him with an adequate opportunity to present his case.

An expulsion procedure must offer a student an opportunity to be heard in a "meaningful manner." This includes timely and adequate notice of the charges, a reasonable opportunity to prepare for and meet them; an orderly hearing in keeping with the nature of the subject matter involved; the right to be represented by counsel, to call and examine witnesses, to cross-examine the opposing witnesses; and consideration of the evidence by an impartial tribunal with action based thereon. The court held that the amount of process due depends on the severity of the discipline imposed.

Sonneborn advised boards to be aware of student constitutional issues. At a minimum, students must be given notice and an opportunity to be heard. Hearings are confidential, and a school board should only consider evidence that is presented at the hearing.

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Gov. Bill Walker addresses AASB members on Friday.



Attorney Susan Sonneborn addresses an AASB sectional audience on school law.

Identifying Gender

Presenter: Bill Evans, Sedor, Wedlandt, Evans and Fillippi

Attorney Bill Evans presented an interesting and well-attended session on Identifying Gender. He provided a thorough review of definitions of terms within the issue, the history of the US Department of Education (USDOE) Office of Civil Rights (OCR) determination of Title IX regulations, and explained the crux of the current debate.

According to Evans, the Title IX regulations provides that no person "...shall on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation, in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Title IX permits the provision of sex-segregated restrooms, locker rooms and shower facilities, housing, athletic teams, and single-sex classes under certain conditions.

In addition, "separate toilet, locker room, and shower facilities on the basis of sex, but such facilities provided for students of one sex shall be comparable to such facilities provided for students of the other sex."

The Office of Civil Rights expanded that definition in a letter to say that, if a school elects to separate or treat students differently on the basis of sex in those situations, a school generally must treat transgender students

consistent with their gender identity."

Court cases in the US Court of Appeals, 4th Circuit have held that a school district must permit a transgender boy to use facilities consistent with his gender identity (not just use gender neutral facilities). The US Supreme Court issued a stay of the 4th Circuit's decision pending on taking up the case. That case has been taken on and will be heard.

The decision has ramifications in Alaska, and much of the discussion during the session centered upon those ramifications.

The Alaska State Activities Association has taken the position that a district's transgender policies will be honored concerning participation in ASAA activities. If the district has no policy, that student may participate based upon the gender assigned at birth.

AASB has issued a model policy to include gender identity as a protected class and with accompanying administrative regulations based upon the Anchorage School District, one of the districts that is dealing the most with this issue, and is very close to the ruling by the USDOE OCR.

Some districts are currently addressing this issue, and some have decided to wait. With court cases in process at high levels, the parting thought from both the participants and presenter was, whatever your district's present course may be, we are all going to have to pay attention to the outcome of those rulings. You can anticipate clarification that could result in the need to establish or change policy. AASB will keep you informed.



Dena'ina traditional Chief Lee Stephan of Eklutna welcomes AASB members to Anchorage.

School Law, continued

Allen Clandaniel discussed the role of the school board in teacher contracts and retentions. The decision to offer a teacher tenure is one of the biggest decisions an administrator can make. Teachers have tremendous protections from getting fired. The average cost of dismissing a tenured teacher is approximately \$15-60,000, plus staff time, he said.

Alaska Statutes say that after January 1 an employer may offer teachers contracts for the following school year. Non-tenured teachers are subject to non-retention for any reason the employer and school board finds.

A teacher must be given notice before the end of the school year. If notice is not given, the teacher has a contract and will remain employed. Clandaniel advised boards to have a good understanding of what their policy is for non-retention, and whether the school board gets involved in the beginning, or whether the superintendent gives teachers notice.

If the board goes into executive session to decide if a contract will be offered, the person has to know you're talking about them. You can allow the teacher into executive session, or the teacher can request that their case be discussed in a public hearing. Public notice must be given if the board is discussing a specific teacher's retention in executive session.

If a non-tenured teacher is not given proper notice, they are entitled to a hearing. Clandaniel again advised members to be familiar with their board policies on informal hearings. He said Southwest Region's district policy is a good model to follow.

In single site districts, teacher retention discussions can be awkward. Townsfolk can be rallied and split into two sides. Some

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The State Boards Education Priorities: A Vision of Education in Alaska

Presenters: James Field, and Sue Hull, State Board of Education

James Field, Chair of the State Board of Education, and Sue Hull, first vice-chair, opened the session by explaining the board decision to develop a new Alaska Education Plan in the summer of 2015 to replace one created in 2008.

In September, they finalized the vision, mission and strategic objectives for the plan, which are:

The **new mission** for public education in Alaska is "excellent education for every student every day," and the **new vision statement** is

Students will:

- Succeed in their education and work.
- Shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves.
- Exemplify the best values of society, and
- Be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them.

The five **new strategic objectives** are:

- Amplify student achievement
- Inspire community ownership and educational excellence

- Modernize the education system
- Ensure excellent educators
- Promote safety and well-being

The next steps are to engage education stakeholders in looking at public education in Alaska and providing input on each of the objectives. The rest of the session was spent gathering input from participants on just this, to help move the plan forward.

Participants were first asked (in small groups) to do a SWOT analysis (identifying strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats) on education in Alaska.

This was followed by participants looking at each strategic objective and thinking about what each means. The questions were:

- "What does achievement mean in today's world?"
- "How can we support and strengthen community ownership & expectations?"
- "What does it mean to 'modernize' the education system?"
- "What should we do to prepare, recruit, and retain excellent teachers and administrators?"
- "How can we promote safety & well-being?"

Turning Around Conflict on Your Board

Presenters: Chris Napoli, president, Dillingham School Board; Timi Tullis, AASB

Conflict is inevitable but does not have to be destructive. Sometimes the best decisions arise out of constructive conflict, heart-felt debate and a less than unanimous decision. But a rogue board member can waste a lot of board time and energy and leave the public confused.

Once elected and seated, a rogue board member is legally entitled to stay as long as he or she is performing the duties of the office. Although a board may have to tolerate the rogue member, a passive approach seldom improves the position. Appealing to their sense of fairness is seldom effective. The rogue will use the boards' reluctance to his or her advantage in furthering a personal agenda. To resolve board conflict it takes the board chair to take the lead, though the chair may turn to the superintendent for guidance and suggestions. So follow these steps to resolve the situation:

ASSESS THE SITUATION

Are you dealing with a difficult person or a situation that is temporarily bringing out the worst in a usually non-difficult person? Stop wishing the difficult person were different. We often expect it is up to them to change. In reality, they probably won't, so give up on the magical wish that they will change.

GET SOME DISTANCE

Don't get so off track, or allow yourself to get caught up in the unpleasant routine. This off track behavior often helps you forget to work towards a more effective response. Attempt to understand where the person is coming from, try to learn why they are the way they are.

FORMULATE A COPING PLAN

The basic tenet that underlies successful coping is a simple but often overlooked fact: the behavior of human beings is highly interactional. The primary leverage you have for coping with a difficult person is your ability to change the nature of the interaction that you are caught in.

IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN

Timing of the plan is important. Pick a time when the difficult person is not overloaded with other problems. Make sure you have the time and energy yourself, to carry out the coping plan. Preparation of how you will confront the difficult person is also important. Practice what you will say in front of a mirror or another person. Be sure to say the words out loud. Be ready for the abrasive encounter by imagining that the difficult person in front of you, swearing and shouting.

MONITOR AND MODIFY YOUR COPING STRATEGY

Once you have put an action plan in place, monitor and modify if necessary. What if you misjudged a super-agreeable board member as a bulldozer? You might need to change a bit.

School Law, continued

teachers like to rally support for their case at a public hearing, so it is important to follow the rules. The board's job is to look at the tenure dispassionately and not get wrapped up in personal aspects.

Informal hearings are usually in closed executive session, so friends, students, etc. aren't present. It is best if the situation doesn't get to the point of a hearing, such as a resignation. This generally works out better for everyone involved if situation is resolved

Once the board decides in executive session who is retained or non-retained, this action must be voted on by full board. The board can offer contracts, and then the superintendent gives non-retained teachers notice. If the board is voting on a student expulsion, it's best to err on the side of protecting student confidentiality.

Lael Harrison's talk focused on civil discourse and how board members can avoid unnecessary liability issues. She said the general

rule is, boards should avoid anything that may be true, but is private and highly offensive to someone else. The legal line includes comments that are not criminal (unless they include a threat of violence); opinions that are wildly outrageous or include obscenity, threats or calls for violence; and untrue, negligent or reckless "fact" statements.

Harrison offered some common sense tips to boards for avoiding liability issues:

- *Be polite when people are giving public comments during board meetings. The board does not have responsibility for public comments. As a board, enforce the rules, but once public comments are opened up, people have freedom of speech. The board can make "viewpoint neutral" rules, such as don't interrupt, etc. If you have boundaries in place in policy, then you can enforce them, but not if you don't.*
- *Convene an executive session when discussion might affect a person's reputation. Avoid public accusations or negativity.*
- *Avoid social media with anonymous comments.*



Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott addresses AASB members on Saturday.

- *Don't repeat unlikely or questionable "factual" rumors that you may hear. However, if you have reason to believe something is true, or have honestly held opinions, don't be afraid to say them (i.e. this person was not a good employee, etc.). People sometimes worry unduly about these things.*
- *Regarding student bullying issues, the school has a lot more control over students than boards do. It may be more appropriate to allow school officials to handle these incidents.*

Saturday, Nov. 12

~ 2nd General Session ~

Balanced Governance through Self-Assessment

Keynote Presenter: Thomas Alsbury, Consultant/Trainer

Thomas Alsbury is Professor Educational Leadership at Seattle Pacific University and former teacher, principal, and district administrator. He co-directs the national University Council for Educational Administration Center for Research on the Superintendency and District Governance, and is the founder and president of Balance Governance Solutions, an educational consulting group focused on researching and improving school governance.

He started his session by asking audience members if they have ever "dealt with a feeling of disconnect with board members?" He noted that these disconnects affect students. The rest of his session was focused on three solutions to address disconnects between board members:

1. Use a process of self-assessment to assist in reconnecting and rebalancing your board
2. Help you to understand what balance and connected board participation look like.
3. Help you think through and understand some techniques you can use as a board when you run into disconnected board members/ rogue board members.



Thomas Alsbury

SELF-ASSESSMENT

At tables, participants answered, "Why should I as a board member engage in self-assessment?" Responses included balance, growth, bring unity, realize you're wrong, realize you are right, and catch yourself before being a "rogue board member."

Research shows that school district boards that are high achieving "believe in a constant quest for improvement," and that having local governance is critical.

BALANCED GOVERNANCE

Alsbury then asked participants to think about what causes a board to be dysfunctional? Responses included: lack of trust, single issue agendas, not thinking of students first, not doing homework, lack of good information, not willing to consider other viewpoints, talking more than listening, and personal agendas. All of these areas were areas that do create conflict even on high-performing boards.

Boards are connected to student performance. Boards that perform well have well-balanced governance. They are board that are not disengaged or micromanaging, but in the middle. Boards that are disconnected or out of balance have higher turnover of seats, lack stability, district leadership turn-over, and ultimately student achievement goes down.

TECHNIQUES FOR DEALING WITH DISCONNECTED/ROGUE BOARD MEMBERS

Prof. Alsbury noted that being a board member is a team activity, something that very few elected officials deal with.

He gave the following suggestions for dealing with disconnected board members: annual evaluation, personal contact with board



Carley Dunn displays a donated auction item she purchased during the June Nelson Memorial Scholarship event on Friday. The auction raised more than \$15,000 to fund student scholarships.

members, policy solutions. For rogue board members, he suggested the "3C's;" compact- write clear and specific operating procedures; containment- address what to do when comments are made contrary to the board in public; censure- censure the member through structured board meetings, make statements to the press if the member issues statements opposite of what the board says.

More information on these approaches can be found in Thomas Alsbury's latest book, *Improved School Board Effectiveness: A Balanced Approach*.

Follow Up with Keynote Gene Tagaban

Gene Tagaban welcomed our ancestors to warm their hands around the fire with a gathering song and drumming, each of us visualizing where we came from, the land of our ancestors.

We are all storytellers, he said. Our life is the story. What is the story you are telling or will tell? We are all here because we love our children. It takes courage to speak about love. What do you know to the core of your being that helps you carry on?

How do we encourage children in the world we live in today? Technology promotes intelligence, but not wisdom. Wisdom is learned by being together in relationships. So how do we encourage children in the world we live in today?

Tagaban asked the young people in the

room, what do you need from adults? Youth answered trust; support; someone who listens; open mindedness; open to possibilities; ability to make our own decisions; hear our feelings and please don't discount them; healthy, positive relationships; acceptance; unconditional empathy.

Then Tagaban asked the same question of the adults, what do you need from the young people? Adults in the room answered communication; open honesty; trust; collaboration; listen to understand; positive relationship; respect; forgiveness (we don't know it all either!); understanding because this digital world is different than the one we grew up in; patience; to be appreciated.

We are all the answer to our ancestors' prayers. These young people are our prayers. What is one thing you can start doing now, the little change you are willing to commit to for youth? We can heal the world.

RAHI: 35 Years of Successfully Educating Future Leaders of Alaska

Presenters: Denise Wartes, Program Manager, RAHI; Konrad Frank, AASB

The Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI) is a statewide, six-week, summer college preparatory program for Alaska Native and rural high school juniors and seniors at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

The sectional gave an overview of college lifestyle, college credits and the opportunity to socially interact with other rural students across the state. The college readiness program presentation had photos, moments for alumni to offer their experience, as well as logistics for those who have attended and where they are now.

At the end of the presentation was a breakdown of who was eligible and how to apply.

From Decolonization to Conscientization: Implementing the Alaska Inuit Education Improvement Strategy

Presenters: Pauline F. Harvey, ICC-Alaska Education Project Director; ICC Steering Committee members Jana Harcharek, Bernadette Alvanna-Stimpfle, Nellie Ballot, Janet Johnson, Maddy Alanna-Stimpfle

Presenters shared information about an Alaska Native Education Program grant that brought together Inuit education knowledge. The project has a steering committee that represents broad representation from Northern and Northwestern Alaska. The group focused on creating positive change specifically establishing educational practices that established a strong sense of identity, language, and ways of living on the land.

This project focuses on developing indigenous education frameworks building off the premise that communities have been teaching kids for years. This group focuses on advocating and influencing policies and

research that promotes the development, implementation and sharing of culture, including the development and sharing of curriculum. Another layer of this work is to focus on revitalizing and reclaiming traditional Inuit parenting skills and sharing of traditions.

Prior to the AASB conference this group brought together a group to determine what is best for students, regardless of mandates and prioritizing. Some of the ideas generated were inspired by speakers involved in the Maori educational movement, Navajo trauma work, and Hawaiian teacher education program. Some of the priorities and consensus built from this discussion include language immersion schools, growing local teachers, develop culturally relevant curriculum, creating indigenous credentialing, supporting a regionally appropriate seasonal calendar, instituting systemic and policy changes, and building community ownership in the process.

What are Districts Offering for Choice?

Presenters: Mike Hanley, Assistant Superintendent, Chugach School District; Stephanie Burgoon, Chugach School District; Tammy Van Whye, Superintendent, Copper River School District; Cheryl Edenshaw, Director, Alaska Technical Center; Paul Bartos, Principal, Star of the North Charter School, Northwest Arctic Borough School District

Three school districts shared some out-of-the-box thinking to offer choice in school offerings, flexibility of the use of time, and experiential competency based programs.

Chugach School District was represented by Assistant Superintendent Mike Hanley and Stephanie Burgoon. Together they shared a compelling story of the 20-year journey of the Chugach School Voyage to Excellence and performance-based learning. The award-winning Chugach story includes a systemic process of continual improvement centered on student need and empowerment, individual learning plans, and flexible pacing to mastery of learning objectives.

Stephanie spoke passionately of the work of the Anchorage House, a short term residential program where students

complete intensive offerings (called phases) in many areas, including work/life skills. Phases are offered to students in-district, as well as to students from other districts on a fee basis. Trading of instruction and programming is a viable option to be considered with other districts.

One of those districts, Copper River School District represented by Superintendent Tammy Van Whye, has revamped the way education is delivered by instituting an flexible schedule of two week intensives (Trekks) and four week Basecamps. Online classes are used as the basis for curriculum that needs the standard semester approach. An innovation of having a full time English teacher in Anchorage teaching regular students in Glennallen, Slana, and Kenny Lake is very well received.

The two week intensive frees students and teachers to learn and teach one subject all day for a period of two full weeks. This greatly increases the offerings available for students and enables the district to utilize in and out of district teachers and expertise in specialty and CTE offerings. Because of this use of time and schedules, Copper

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River and Chugach have worked together to share programs and students within them. This idea was well received by the participants of the session.

The session concluded with a presentation from Cheryl Edenshaw, director of the Alaska Technical Center, and Paul Bartos, Principal of the Star of the North Charter School of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District. These two schools work cooperatively to deliver specialist education and training in Alaska work force development for student career paths and supporting industry. A short-term residential program is offered to Northwest Arctic

students as well as students from outside of the district. College and career path training and education are offered in culinary arts, construction trades, education, healthcare, and process technology. Heavy emphasis is also placed on “soft skills,” as does Chugach.

Participants saw opportunities for partnering and tweaking their district programs so that students could better participate in such programs. It was apparent that these type programs could encompass many districts and programming for better student choice and opportunity.

Plunkett encouraged school board members to send congratulatory messages to their legislators for winning the November election and establish a line of communication with them and their staff prior to the session starting. She also suggested invitations should be issued for school visits by legislators.

Some key dates were also shared:

AASB Leadership and Legislative
Fly-in: Feb 6-9
AASB Spring Academy and
Legislative Fly-in:
March 19-22
ASA Fly-in: early April
Legislature Adjourns (90th day):
April 18

Presenters: Kathleen Plunkett, Anchorage SD; Dr. Lisa Skiles Parady, ASA; Norm Wooten, AASB

With new House and Senate majority organizations freshly in place, this sectional engaged attendees in brief overviews setting the stage for the 2017 session starting on January 17. Audience members shared what they know of the presiding officers and key committee leaders in each chamber and then moved onto to the major issues, most of them lingering from the gridlock of 2016.

Dr. Thomas Alsbury gave a follow-up sectional to continuing the keynote address of focusing on balanced governance as a practice for effective school boards. His follow-up sectional to a standing room only crowd focused on board member evaluation and balance. This included both self-evaluation and anonymous evaluation by fellow board members. The session showed how a self-assessment might not align to what your fellow board members perceive as your performance

and characteristics. This technique was explored as a way for board members to help each other become better balanced in a constructive manner. In addition, Dr. Alsbury then went on to present proposed board policies that deal with “rogue” or inappropriate board member behavior. Scenarios and proposed policies were handed out to 6 workgroups and discussions followed. Interestingly, many members present felt the policies were overly prescriptive but nonetheless the provocative nature of the material created a great deal of conversation and reflection.

Presenters: Jennie Lefing and Lori Grassgreen, AASB

Lefing and Grassgreen covered the data collected and trends emerging from the School Climate and Connectedness Surveys. The presenters shared how schools and districts were able to use this data to inform their decision making. Students, school staff, community members, and school boards examples were provided.

Dr. Susan McCauley provided an update on where the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development is with determining

the states measurement tool to meet the quality schools measure for the Every Students Succeeds Act. EED is looking into a measure that can be uniform across districts by grade, can provide unique identifiers to track student and staff responses, and to find a measurement tool that will be easy for districts to use for school improvement. School Climate and Connectedness type surveys, chronic absenteeism, attendance, AP class participation, and other measures could be under consideration. A work group will be put together to determine the best approach for Alaska.

Presenters: Dr. Bob Whicker, Director, AASB Consortium for Digital Learning; Bill Whicker, Alaska Digital Academy, Ketchikan

Over 30 board members and superintendents representing 20 districts attended this follow-up sectional to Thursday's Experienced Board Member Academy on personalized learning. During the Thursday session, participants were surveyed at every stage of the day. This data was collected, analyzed and presented at the Sunday sectional to gain district input and direction.

Bob Whicker began the session by reiterating seven key concepts that must be embraced for a successful personalized learning implementation:

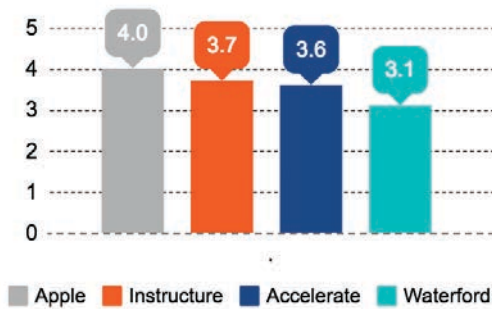
- 1) Anytime, anywhere instruction
- 2) Competency-based learning

- 3) Pacing to Mastery
- 4) Real-time information
- 5) Real-world learning
- 6) Intentional Work/Life/Social Skills
- 7) Community/Business Partnerships.

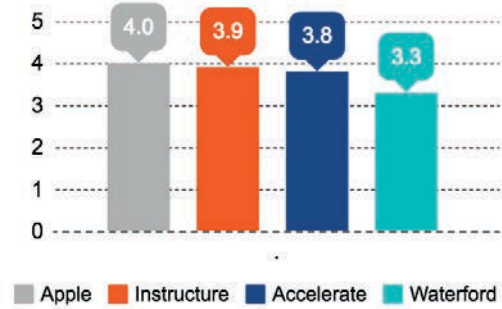
Following Thursday's presentation by Fred Bramante, attendees were surveyed on their top two ideas for moving a Competency-Based learning model forward in Alaska. A summary of their answers were shared, which included: getting rid of the



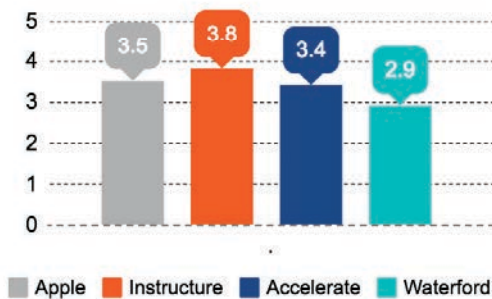
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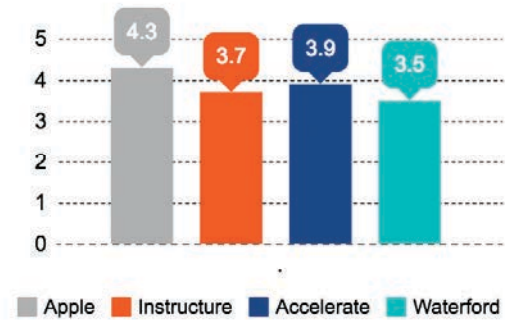
Vendor understands the needs of Alaska schools, offers responsive personalized support, and is willing to adapt to meet the unique requirements of each implementation site.



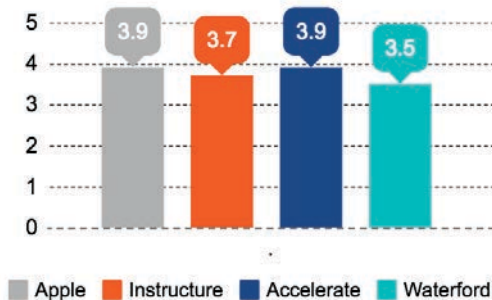
Resource allows localization to school needs: aligned to standards, customizable to individual student learning requirements, incorporate local resources, culture and language.



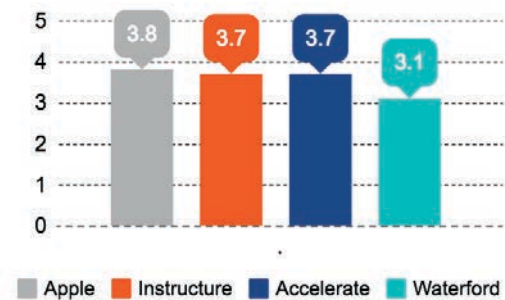
Resource has the capability or possibility to work in a low bandwidth school/home environment.



Resource seems user-friendly, intuitive and engaging.



Resource includes integrated professional learning, ongoing coaching and support for teachers.



Our existing school resources (equipment, network, bandwidth, etc.) can be integrated with the resource.

Carnegie Unit to make learning mastery the constant and time/space the variables; throwing out time requirements; embracing anytime, anyplace learning; moving learning outside of the classroom walls; utilizing local resources and mentors; using the community and the world as our classroom; utilizing and giving credit for real-world experiences; opportunities for localized curriculum; providing teacher professional development and student certifications; and giving students ownership of their learning.

Following the presentation of these ideas, a lively group discussion ensued. Comments centered around several primary themes: hopes for using technology for student learning, how districts are currently using technology, how technology is falling short of what districts wish it to be, and who the districts' current technology partners and/or vendors are.

The next data set shown were attendee impressions of hands-on demonstrations presented by four vendors of personalized learning system components during Thursday's Experienced Board Member Academy. Apple showed the "Classroom" app, a classroom management system (CMS) designed for teacher use. Instructure demonstrated "Canvas" software, a learning management system (LMS) used to organize and deliver instructional content. Accelerate education showed its K-12 curriculum blended learning solutions, and Waterford demonstrated its personalized early learning K-2 curriculum designed for 3rd grade remediation.

Following each of Thursday's 20-minute "speed dating" vendor presentations, attendees were asked to complete a six question survey to determine how feasible each of the personalized learning systems would be to implement in their districts. Overall, responses indicated a moderately high likelihood of success for all components, with none of the digital learning platforms & resources receiving less than a 3 out of 5 rating, as seen in the chart on page 13.

The districts of Copper River, Kenai, Ketchikan and Kodiak received Digital Teaching Initiative (DTI) grants and are working collaboratively to provide Alaska students better access to quality teachers, and to deliver high quality online, blended learning and dual-credit courses across district boundaries.

The final data set presented was gathered from a five question survey conducted after a Thursday presentation by the four DTI districts. The survey responses below indicate a high level of interest from districts across Alaska in accessing distance courses, highly qualified teachers, support services, collaborative opportunities and professional development.

1. Would your students benefit from increased course offerings via distance education?
Yes: 100% No: 0%
2. Does your district need increased access to highly qualified teachers?
Yes: 86% No: 14%
3. Could your district benefit from assistance with the organizational aspects of students taking distance education courses (enrollment, support, monitoring and reporting of data)?
Yes: 89% No: 11%



Bill Whicker of the Alaska Digital Academy in Ketchikan answers questions about distance delivery course offerings during Sunday's *Personalized Learning: Next Steps* sectional.

4. Could your district benefit from collaborative, cross-district STEAM, project-based opportunities?
Yes: 96% No: 4%

5. Could your district benefit from on-site and distance professional development opportunities?
Yes: 96% No: 4%

Bill Whicker and members of his team from the Alaska Digital Academy in Ketchikan answered questions regarding specific course opportunities; distance course enrollment, delivery and administration; support systems for students, parents and teaching staff; real-time reporting and accountability; and solutions for schools with low bandwidth.

SEE PDF [Photo Caption: Bill Whicker of the Alaska Digital Academy in Ketchikan answers questions about distance delivery course offerings during Sunday's *Personalized Learning: Next Steps* sectional.]

A final discussion was facilitated by Bob Whicker that centered on obstacles to adoption, and what districts may need to achieve their vision for student learning. While challenges were acknowledged, the discussion concluded with a sense of excitement and optimism about the benefits of a personalized, competency-based education system. "We can do this!" said one participant, while heads nodded in agreement.





Youth Leadership Institute Draws 65

Sixty-five high school students from 23 school districts attended the 2016 Youth Leadership Institute, held in conjunction with AASB's annual conference in Anchorage. Students and workshop presenters wove this year's conference theme Every Student, Every Story, throughout the Institute.

Along with Alaska ICE/AASB staff presenters, guest presenters included: Lt. Governor Byron Mallott; AASB President Tiffany Jackson; Ati Nasiah, violence prevention advocate from Juneau; Gene Tagaban, storyteller and mentor; Alaska Teen Media Institute and digital storytelling mentor, Cari Zawodny; Alaska Association of Student Governments; Diff3r3nt by D3sign, spoken word mentors; and Doris Atchak, master kuspuk maker from Chevak.

Alaska ICE staff member Konrad Frank, and Ati Nasiah were lead facilitators. Both worked with students over four days to cultivate an open and creative environment. Students participated in workshops

where they explored their own identities and what qualities they have and need to create positive social change. Nasiah led workshops on healthy relationships and violence prevention, and using art to create positive social change. Frank led storytelling and action planning workshops.

Lt. Governor Byron Mallott spent time with YLI participants and shared successes and challenges Alaskans are facing in the current economic climate. While answering questions from YLI participants, Mallott noted that he and Governor Walker are continually finding ways of putting "common sense approaches" into practice while avoiding the pitfalls of partisan politics.

AASB's past-president, Tiffany Jackson, shared her path to success culminating in the many leadership roles she now holds.

Alaska Teen Media Institute led a multi-day digital storytelling workshop that culminated in an YLI student-produced digital story. Participants learned best practices of

filmmaking: interviewing techniques, editing, b-roll, and pre/post production.

For the first time in YLI's history, Alaska Association of Student Governments (AASG) presented a number of workshops to help tie together statewide youth leadership initiatives, local student governments, and AASG. Participants learned how to use the AASG resolution process to effect school, district, and statewide change.

AASB's Jenni Lefing led a student school board representative workshop to create connections and build relationships. Over 10 representatives attended and left with solid steps on how to share information and create a broader learning community.

YLI 2016 participants noted that this year's conference was successful at building deeper connections and providing diverse content that appealed to all students. Participants left the conference with solid tools with which they can create positive change.

ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS



Calendar

JANUARY

17	Legislative Session Begins
27-28	Charter School APC Training – Anchorage, AK
27	NSBA Executive Directors' Leadership Development – Washington, D.C.
29	NSBA Executive Directors' Winter Institute – Washington, D.C.
29-31	NSBA Advocacy Institute – Washington, D.C.

FEBRUARY

10	ICE Partner Meeting
11-14	AASB Leadership/Legislative Fly-in – Baranof, Juneau, AK

MARCH

2-4	AASA National Conference – Houston, TX
17-18	Teacher Job Fair – Capt. Cook Hotel, Anchorage, AK
23	NSBA Exec. Directors' Leadership Development, Denver, CO
25-27	NSBA Annual Conference – Denver, CO
31	June Nelson Memorial Scholarship Committee, Juneau, AK
31	AASB Board of Directors, Baranof Hotel, Juneau, AK

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