

# ADVOCACY



***IN THE  
MIDST OF  
A PANDEMIC!***



association of  
**ALASKA**  
school boards

# 6 DAYS & COUNTING



- Legislative Council is already making contingency plans.
- Capitol is currently closed to the public.
- Legislators, staff, & press must be masked.
- Legislators & staff are asked to not travel outside of Juneau during the session.
- Public access will be revisited closer to the session convening.

# The Importance of School Board Participation



- Grassroots advocacy will take on a new urgency
- School Boards are strongly encouraged to set up Zoom meetings and/or telephone calls with their legislators prior to session.
- This is even more critical if you have a new legislator.



# The Importance of School Board Participation



- Prompt responses to email “**Calls-To-Action**” will provide meaningful input for legislators at critical points during the session.
- “**Testify-by-Text**” provides an alternative for testimony. **To join: text AASB to 474747**
- **The Session newsletter** will provide you with weekly information on upcoming committee hearings and updates on moving legislation.



# What can we expect from the 32<sup>nd</sup> legislature?



- It's obvious that politically the legislature is moving to the right.
- The R's made big gains in both bodies – BUT it is not quite as simple as it might appear.



# What can we expect from the 32<sup>nd</sup> legislature?



- The Senate is composed of 13 R's & 7 D's
- It may not be as it seems!
- The “tipping point” may be the moderate “R's” – Stevens, Stedman, Bishop, & von Imhoff.
- And Senator Hoffman is also a “wild card.”
- A coalition or a majority of “R's”???



# What can we expect from the 32<sup>nd</sup> legislature?



- The House is composed of 21 R's, 16 D's, & 3 I's.
- District 10 (Rep. Eastman) is always a “wild card”.
- And – what will happen to those R's who caucused with the coalition – LeBon, Thompson, Stutes?
- Then there is always the I's (Non-Affiliated)  
Schrage, Ortiz, Patkotak



# What can we expect from the 32<sup>nd</sup> legislature?



- Depending on the organization we may see new leadership in House Ed Committee should the “R’s” gain the majority.
- Sen Stevens (R-Kodiak) may retain the Senate Ed Committee chair, depending on how the caucus decides to handle the moderate “R’s” from the 31<sup>st</sup> legislature.
- Certainly no one in the 32<sup>nd</sup> legislature can match the education experience of Sen. Stevens.





# As if that wasn't enough!



- A number of legislators ran on a platform of a “full” PFD.
- A \$1000 PFD would cause a \$900 million deficit.
- A statutory “full” PFD would create a \$2.4 billion deficit.

# The Budget Conundrum



- The CBR (cash reserve) has been drained beyond what is needed to meet state expenses.
- Will there be an attempt to “raid” the PF beyond the 5% POMV draw?
- The PF provides 2/3 of state expenditures.
- WTI Crude Oil futures were \$52.98 per barrel as of Jan. 12 - 1 yr ago \$60 – 2 yrs ago \$73



# What does this mean for education?



- Education is 2<sup>nd</sup> largest budget consumer at \$1.2 billion.
- This makes education a “target”!
- This could be accomplished in one of two ways:
  1. Outright reductions to the foundation;
  2. “Cost shifting” (i.e. bond debt reimbursement, pupil transportation, etc.)



# Governor's Proposed Budget



- Education budget decreased due to drop in ADM.
- No allowance for drop in ADM due to pandemic.
- Bond Debt Reimbursement at 2020 level (50%)
- Statutory PFD + "make-up" for 2019/2020



# Federal Election Results



- This election was the most acrimonious ever seen – in both parties!
- A majority of Alaskans supported President Trump in his bid for reelection.
- Senator Sullivan retained his seat over challenger Dr. Al Gross.
- Congressman Young prevailed over challenger Alyse Galvin.

# Federal Election Results



- Sen. Alexander's (R-TN) retirement will bring new leadership to the Sen HELP Committee.
- With the Georgia runoff complete the D's seem to have regained control of the Senate.
- With the "D's" control of the Senate, Sen. Murray (D-WA) is the presumed chair of HELP.



# Federal Election Results



- “D’s” will remain the majority in the House although they lost some seats.
- It is expected that Rep. Scott (D-VA) will retain the chair of the House Education & Labor Committee and Rep. Foxx (R-NC) will continue as the ranking member.

# You can make a difference



- Contact your legislator
- Respond to Calls-to-Action, Testify-by-Text alerts
- Develop a relationship with your legislator
- Advocate for your students
- Tell your story
- Remember – If you don't, who will? You were elected to provide a education for the children of your school district.