

Meaningful Youth Engagement: Students as Partners

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We are so glad to be here with you today!



Jenni Lefing, AASB



Claudia Plesa, 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.”

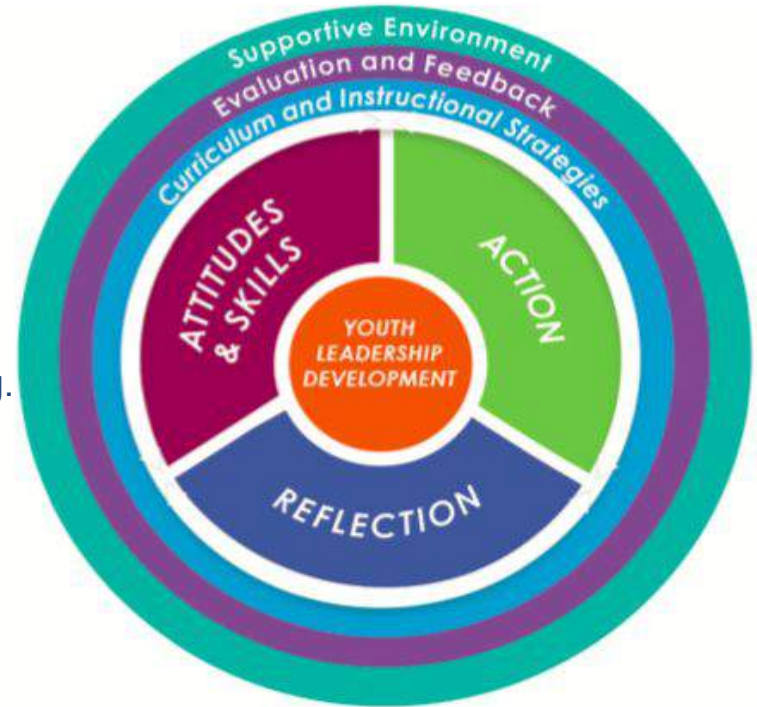
-Joshua Dantzler, Director of social media at Student Voice



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 students respond to each question?

Sorted by Survey order ▾ First to last ▾

QUESTION
➤ In my school, students are given a chance to help make decisions.

55% ⓘ
responded favorably

▼ **2**
from 2021
School Climate &
Connectedness
Survey

QUESTION
➤ Students are involved in helping to solve school problems.

38% ⓘ
responded favorably

0
from 2021
School Climate &
Connectedness
Survey

QUESTION
➤ In my school, students are provided with meaningful opportunities to develop leadership skills.

61% ⓘ
responded favorably

QUESTION
➤ Students at my school have opportunities to talk to staff about their ideas for school improvements.

52% ⓘ
responded favorably

At your table:

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

**How do you get invited into decision making
spaces? (as a student leader)**



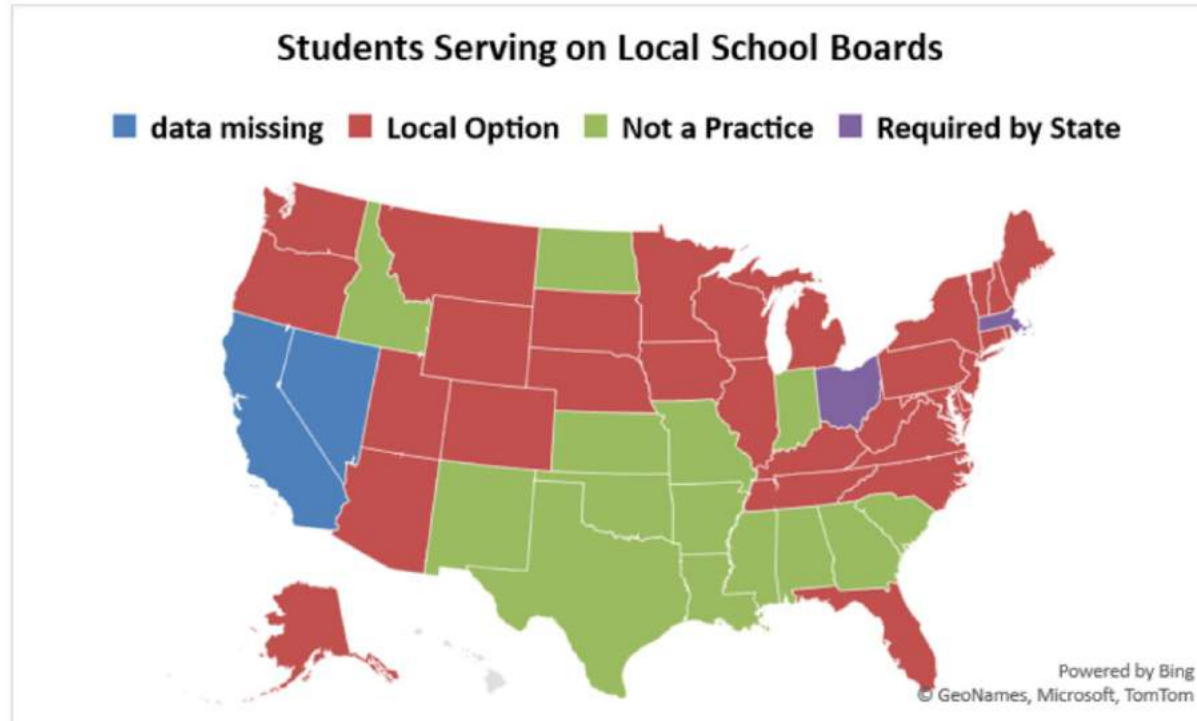


AASB Engagement and Work with Youth

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



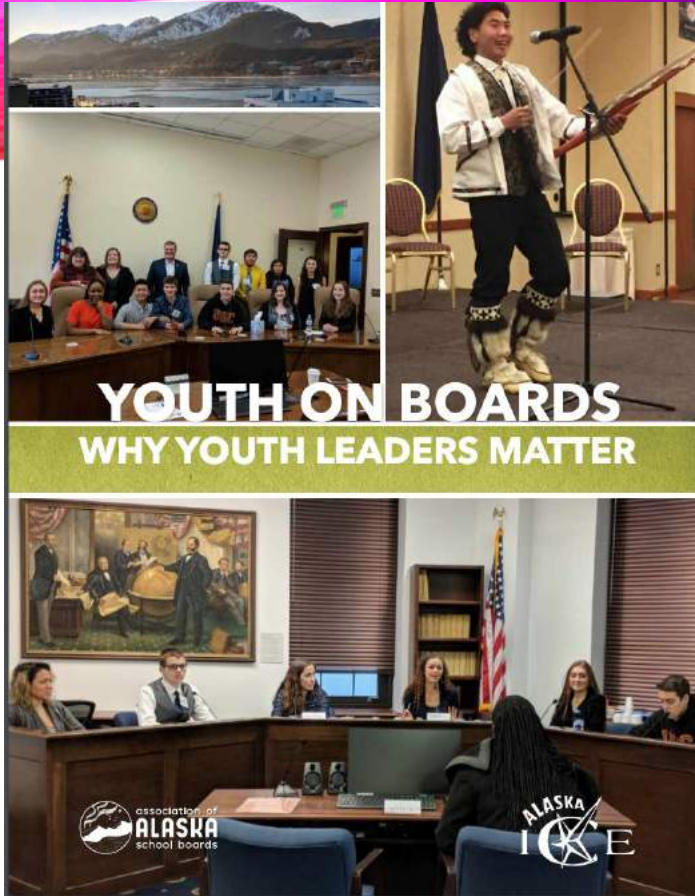
At School Board Meetings

- 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

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PLAY VIDEO



Warm Up Conversation

1. What are the strengths of our youth?
2. How can we partner better (students and school board members) ?

Readiness Assessment

Fill out Readiness Assessment from Youth on Boards.

At your tables:

- Did you have any “aha” moments when filling this out?
 - What are they?
- What strengths did you notice for your board?
- What gaps might you have noticed?

What do school boards do?

1. Hire and evaluate the **superintendent** – your only employee!
2. Set and approve the **district budget**
3. Review and adopt **curriculum**
4. Develop and adopt **policies** that govern the district



Now What?

How can we partner together (students & school board members) in each of the boards' key roles:

- SUPERINTENDENT
- BUDGET
- CURRICULUM
- POLICY

Public Comment



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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