

# Politics: The Art of Compromise

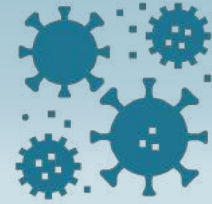
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association of  
**ALASKA**  
school boards

2020/2021

# The “COVID” Advocacy Model



- No access to the Capitol
- Meetings with ZOOM or Microsoft Teams
- Virtual Resolutions Meeting
  - Good representation from school boards
- AASB Virtual Fly-In
  - All presentations via ZOOM
  - A new model for legislative meetings
  - Good representation from school boards & legislators
  - Alignment with AASB resolutions never before seen!
  - Positive feedback from legislators

# What is the New Normal?



- How long will the Pandemic last?
- Will there be additional health mandates?
- Are board members going to feel comfortable traveling?
- What actions will the legislature take to minimize risks to lawmakers, staff, and Capitol visitors?
- How will the increased “political agenda” over the pandemic affect AASB and other entities in their interactions with the legislature?

# What is the New Normal?



- Will we ever return to our past practices? That seems to be unlikely at this point - at least in the near future.
- It seems likely that a “hybrid model” will be necessary to both allow for legislative access for all boards as well as concerns for the health of our communities.
- AASB, and school boards, must be willing to adapt to the “hybrid model” for effective advocacy.



# How Will Adaption to a “Hybrid Model” Look?



- A willingness from school board members to become even more “technically adept” with virtual meetings. This will undoubtedly involve training for board members.
- A commitment from school board members to actively participate, no matter the venue – on-site and/or virtual.
- School districts committing, as much as possible, to continual upgrades and refreshing of connectivity and hardware/software packages.
- A commitment from school districts for technical support to school board members as well as students and teachers.

# Legislative Testimony: Letter or Email



- Do your research - Know the bill you are writing about – brevity (1 page) – Cite the bill by number (HB 1, SB 1)
- Use appropriate address – The Honorable John Doe or Senator (Representative) John Doe.
- Legislative email addresses:
  - [Senator.John.Doe@akleg.gov](mailto:Senator.John.Doe@akleg.gov)
  - [Representative.Jane.Doe@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative.Jane.Doe@akleg.gov)
  - Handy tip - “Alaska State Legislature” web page; Click on either Senate or House; click on “Current Members” in the drop-down menu; underneath the photo of the legislator click on “Email Me” and the address will appear in a blank email.
  - You may send the same email to multiple legislators on the same email by inserting a semicolon between each address.



# Legislative Testimony: Letter or Email



- Legislative Committee Correspondence:
  - [SenateFinance@akleg.gov](mailto:SenateFinance@akleg.gov)
  - [HouseFinance@akleg.gov](mailto:HouseFinance@akleg.gov)
  - [SenateEducation@akleg.gov](mailto:SenateEducation@akleg.gov)
  - [HouseEducation@akleg.gov](mailto:HouseEducation@akleg.gov)
- Ensure clarity. Begin your correspondence with the “ask.”
- Do you support or oppose the bill? Is it for the entire bill or a specific item within the bill?
- The use of bullet points is very effective for busy legislators. Three bullet points are good but never more than five.
- End your correspondence with the “ask.”



# Legislative Testimony: Letter or Email



- **Personalize your message.** How will this legislation affect students in your district?
- **Practice civility.** Present a logical, civil, and reasonable tone in your correspondence. Never rail or make it a diatribe.
- **Identify yourself and who you represent.** “I am Mary Jones, and I serve on the Fairbanks North Star Borough Board of Education



# Legislative Testimony: Virtual



- Set your screen up – pay attention to the background – no distractions!
- Position yourself directly in front of your camera.
- As with any testimony, be prepared with notes in front of you.
- Eliminate any background noise or distractions.
- Mute your audio until you begin to speak – and remember to unmute yourself as you begin your testimony.
- If you have a presentation, provide it to the moderator in advance – or become adept at screen sharing.

# Legislative Testimony: Testify by Text



## How It Works:

- House or Senate schedules a hearing to gather public testimony on a key education-related bill.
- AASB sends a text ALERT to your mobile phone with a link to a brief online survey about the bill to fill out. Time: 1-2 minutes.
- Comments are optional, but welcomed. Limit: 200 characters.
- AASB compiles all participant responses and provides them to the legislature as official testimony on the bill.
- To add your mobile number to AASB's TEXT ALERT list, send this text:
  - Type this number in the "To" area: 236-301-1959
  - Type these characters in the "Message" area: AASB

# What Can We Expect Next Session?



- Continued gridlock with majority/minority unable to garner votes to pass substantive legislation.
- Unless a fiscal plan is enacted, expect the bulk of the session to be more concerned with the PFD rather than public policy.
- Redistricting for the 2020 census has the potential to alter the makeup of a future legislature.
- Lack of civility among members will likely continue to be a challenge.
- The outcome of the 2022 gubernatorial election could have a profound impact on state policy issues no matter the winner.