

# COMMUNICATING OVER THE “GREAT DIVIDE”

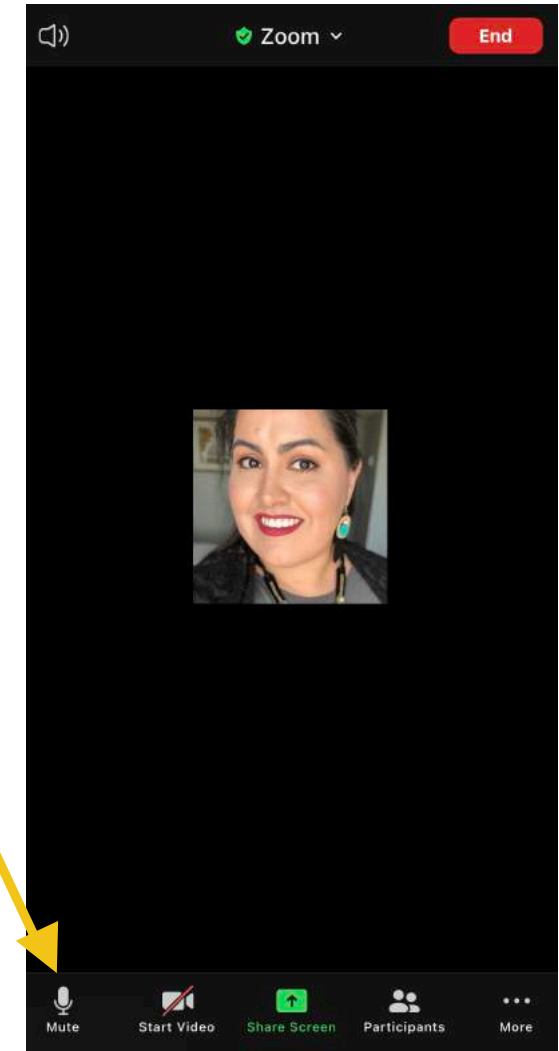
Tiffany Jackson, Director of Membership Services



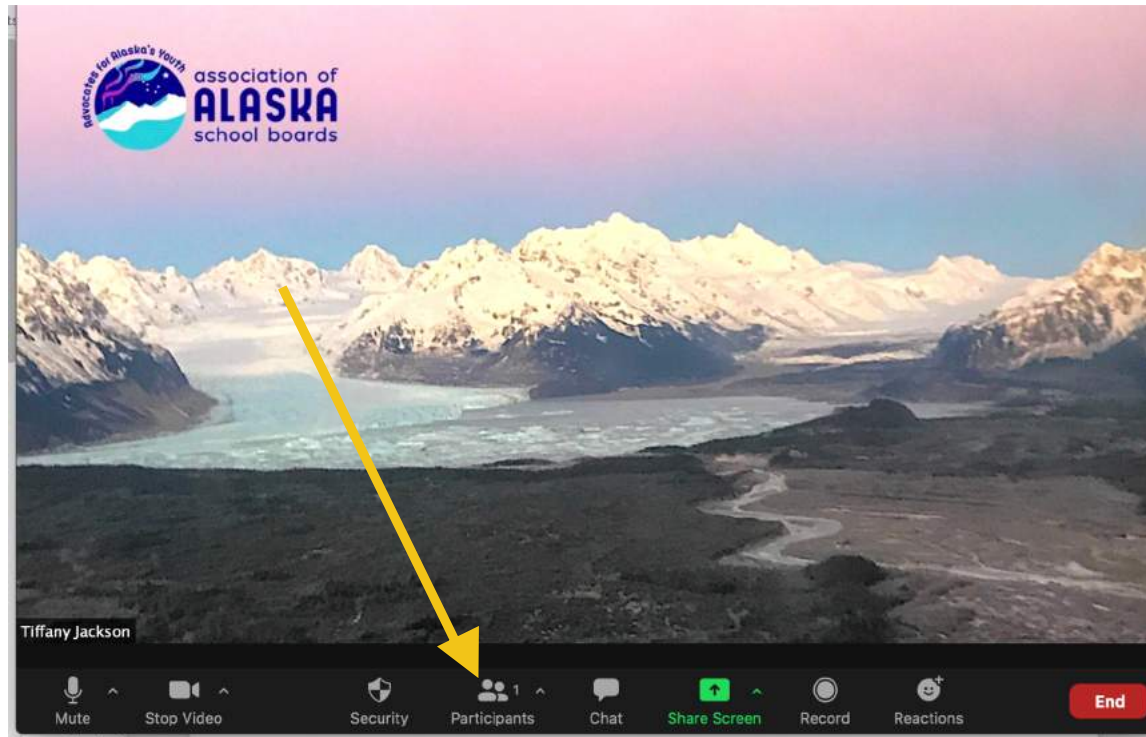
# Housekeeping ~ Muting



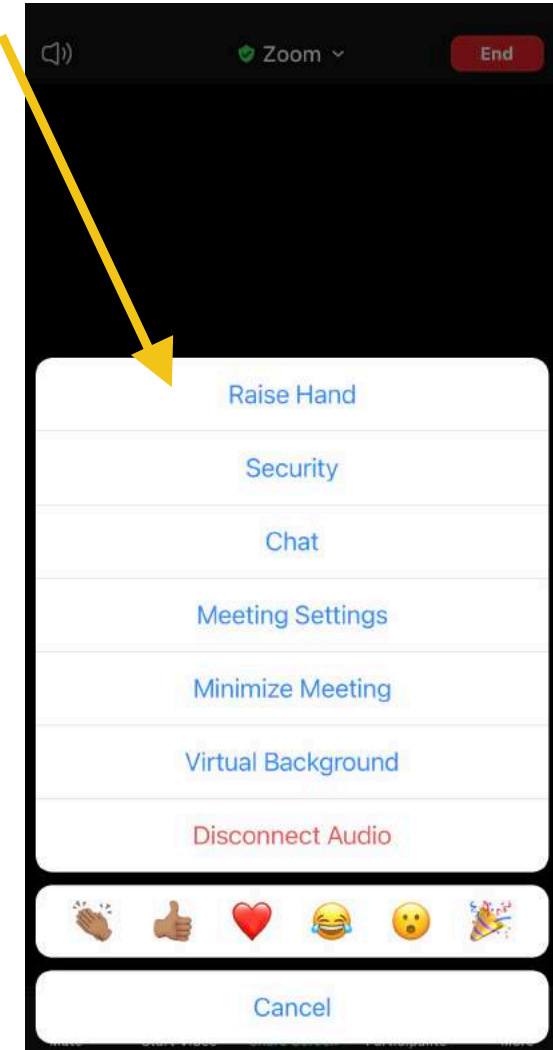
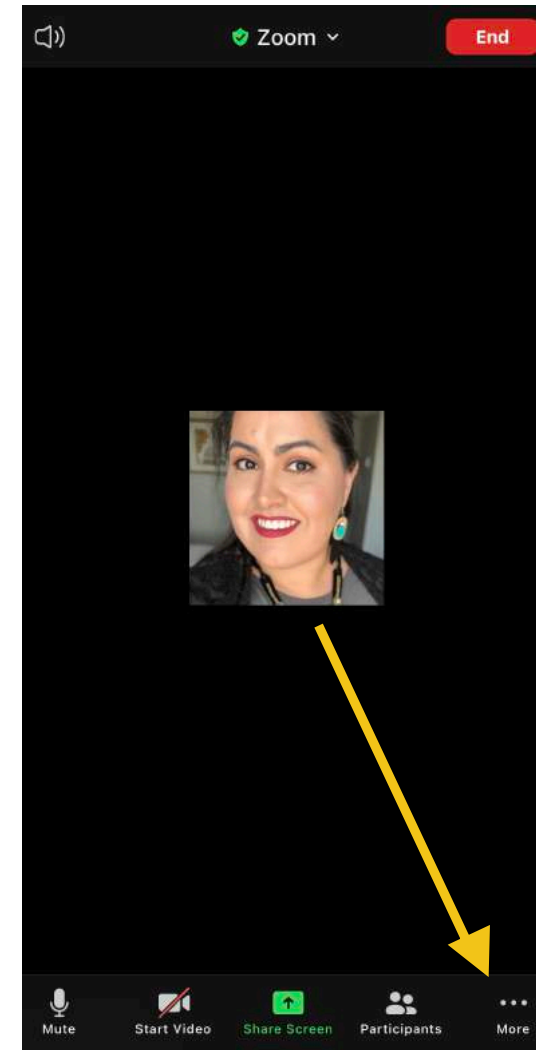
\*6 From phone



# Housekeeping ~ Raising Hand



\*9 From phone



# Housekeeping - Chat

Feel free to enter questions and comments into the chat box.

Chat box is being recorded and will be emailed to the host after the session ends.



# re·la·tion·ship

/rəˈlāSH(ə)n, SHɪp/

*noun*

the way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected, or the state of being connected.

"the study will assess the **relationship between** unemployment and political attitudes"

**Similar:**

connection

relation

association

link

correlation



- the state of being connected by blood or marriage.

"they can trace their relationship to a common ancestor"

**Similar:**

family ties

family connections

blood relationship

blood ties



- the way in which two or more people or groups regard and behave toward each other.  
"the landlord–tenant relationship"

Definitions from Oxford Languages

*Feedback*

# Relationships

- Always evolving
- Will grow together or grow apart based on the last written or spoken interaction

How many of you..... Have sent an email or text because you didn't want to have an actual conversation (even when you really thought you should?)





**How many of you..... Have delivered a message to a whole group for an issue that pertains only to one person?**



How many of you..... Have asked a leading question or 'beat around the bush' hoping someone else would raise the real issue?



what's the opposite of beat around the bush?



enlighten, explain, aid, assist, abet, face, meet, clarify, clear up, encourage



How many of you...  
have ever complained  
about another  
person's ideas or  
behavior, but didn't  
speak directly to that  
person about it?



# Why are some conversations so hard?

- They're difficult
- We're worried we might make things worse
- Fear



# What are the consequences of avoiding difficult conversations?

- We can't expect to be the governance example for our district staff and student that we should be.
- Resentment, grudges, and walking on eggshells become board blockers
- It becomes easier to marginalize one board member or another

# What is the cost if we don't fix things?

- We lose the good faith and trust of our community
- We lose time
- We lose focus on what's important
- We lose the boards potential to be great



# Before you begin the conversation...

Consider the different ways the conversation may play out

Consider what reactions you may receive, and how you might respond in each case.  
Practice if it helps

Work to untangle your emotions  
from the subject matter

# Non-Verbal Communication

- Just as important as verbal communication
- Types of non-verbal communication:
  - *Posture*
  - *Gestures & Eye behavior*



# Posture

- Can determine degree of interest or attention
- Can determine status of communicator
- Can determine the relationship





# Gestures

- Positive gestures

- *Smiling, leaning in, showing palms*

- Negative gestures

- *crossing arms, having palms down*



- Eye contact varies by on culture

# Define the outcome before hand

Clarify the purpose of the conversation

We need to have this conversation because the strained relationship has deteriorated our ability to function as a board

What are you hoping to accomplish by having the conversation?

The board treats each other with respect, and becomes a high functioning team

# Move towards the conflict

Acknowledge personal responsibility

‘I responded poorly when I reacted...’  
‘I’ve allowed this to be ignored for too long, which contributed to the problem.’

Define the outcome for the other party

“Where I hope we’ll end up, is the board becomes a well functioning team”

# Listen, and Validate



- Ask questions
- Be comfortable with pauses in the conversation
- Validate the other parties experience

SHOW THE CHANGE

# Benefits of having these conversations

- They communicate value
- Reveal blind spots
- Increased trust and respect
- Clarify the future, opportunity for growth

Higher functioning Board  
is Better For the District  
and Students

Communication is  
all about building  
relationships





# Questions and Answers

# THANKS FOR ATTENDING!

Have more questions, email  
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