

So You Want to Serve on the Anchorage School Board!

A primer for those who've never served on the Board nor run for public office

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Disclaimer: This is not an official Anchorage School District nor Anchorage School Board approved document. It is simply a guide to offer ideas and suggestions for those seeking a seat on the Anchorage School Board. Always check with the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC) and Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) to learn if candidate requirements have changed.

What is the role of the School Board?

- The Board is the policy-making body of the Anchorage School District (ASD). The powers granted to the Board are set forth in Titles 10, 14 and 29 of the Alaska Statutes. School Board policy governs District activities by outlining goals, standards, and principles that guide or prescribe actions and that encourage or constrain behavior by District employees, students and others in their interactions with the District.
- Board policies establish goals, standards, and principles that have policy-level significance for the governance of the District but should leave to the Superintendent the authority and responsibility to adopt administrative rules and regulations to implement Board policy. In other words, the Board GOVERNS and the Superintendent MANAGES.
- Board members have only two employees - the Superintendent and the Board Secretary. They do not have the direct responsibility to hire or fire other ASD employees, but they must approve all personnel changes and hires.
- Board members' most important constituents are the STUDENTS of the Anchorage School District. Everything a board member does and every vote she or he takes should consider what is in students' best interest and if it is in line with the ASD mission statement: *The ASD educates students for success in life.*

How often does the Board meet?

- The Board meets twice a month on Mondays for a work session, an executive session (if there are agenda items), and a regular session. The work session begins at 4 pm and ends at 6 pm (with a focus on students and staff occurring from 5:30 to 6). The executive session is held before or during a dinner break from 6 to 7 pm. (NOTE: All meals are paid for by individual board members, not by the ASD.) The regular meeting begins at 7 pm and generally ends around 9 pm (potentially later during budget times or when public testimony numbers are high). There are no board meetings in the month of July. If a holiday falls on a board meeting Monday, the meeting is usually moved to a Thursday. At times, a special meeting will be called in order to address items needing board attention.
- Board members serve on one or more of three committees of the Board which meet at least monthly: Governance (policy); Finance (budget and audit) and Communications

(legislative affairs and communications). The committee chair may choose to schedule a meeting before the work session on a board meeting date or on a separate date as proposed by the committee chair. Committee meetings normally last 1-2 hours. Occasionally, the Board President may designate an Ad-hoc Committee to address a specific need or issue and ask for Board members to chair and/or serve on it.

Are there trainings or opportunities for Board member's professional growth?

Yes! • Throughout the year, there are local trainings on requested topics (governance vs. management role, Robert's Rules of Order, Open Meetings Act (OMA), ethics, school finance, etc.) as well as conferences in which Board members are invited to participate. The Alaska Association of School Boards offers webinars and resources on their website entitled "Making the Most of your First Year: What New School Board Members Want to Know" at <http://aasb.org/first-year-members/> There are Board service guidebooks for check-out in the Board library housed in the Board secretary's office located in the Superintendent's office suite.

- September - Alaska Association of School Boards (AASB) Fall Boardmanship training, usually in Fairbanks; NOTE: The Board rep to AASB usually attends.
- October - Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) annual conference, location moves around the country (Thurs-Sun) NOTE: The Board rep to CGCS usually attends.
- November - Alaska Association of Schools Boards (AASB) annual conference, in Anchorage (Thurs-Sun) NOTE: The 'New Board Members Boot Camp' and the 'Experienced Board Members' Session on Thursday are both highly recommended.
- December - AASB Winter Boardmanship Academy, usually in Anchorage
- February - AASB Leadership/Legislative Fly-in, Juneau, (Sat-Tues) NOTE: The training offered on how to work with legislators is highly recommended. There is also a March AASB Spring Academy in Juneau that members may choose in lieu of the February event.
- March or April - National School Board Association (NSBA) annual conference, location moves around the country (Fri - Mon)

NOTE: Board members choose to attend either CGCS or NSBA, but not both unless they personally cover expenses.

- Once a year there is a 1 to 2-day Board Retreat, usually on a Friday/Saturday at the end of May or beginning of June. At the retreat, Board members and the Superintendent review their Board Norms and Code of Conduct, the ASD Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Plan. Board members also complete formative self-evaluations quarterly and an annual summative self-evaluation. Additionally, the Board completes annual evaluations of their two employees.

What are other Board responsibilities?

The ASD is divided into seven areas. Board members sign up to focus on the schools and programs as well as community councils in one area. These are rotated each year in order for board members to become familiar with a new area. An example of one area is:

Chugiak/Eagle River Area schools

Alpenglow Elementary School
Chugiak Elementary School
Chugiak High School
Eagle Academy Charter School
Eagle River Elementary School
Eagle River High School
Firelake Elementary School
Gruening Middle School
Homestead Elementary School
Mirror Lake Middle School
Ravenwood Elementary School
Ursa Major Elementary School
Ursa Minor Elementary School

Chugiak/Eagle River Community Council

Birchwood
Chugiak
Eagle River
Eagle River Valley
Eklutna Valley
South Fork (Eagle River)

Board members also sign up to represent the Board in different local, state and national organizations. Representation may or may not rotate on an annual basis.

ASD Student Advisory Board (SAB) - monthly meeting during school year
Anchorage School Business Partnerships (SBP) Board of Directors - monthly meeting during school year, September retreat
School Based Community Health Centers - quarterly meeting
Anchorage Chamber of Commerce - weekly meeting with attendance based on education topics
Chugiak/Eagle River Chamber of Commerce - monthly meeting
MOA Budget Advisory Commission - monthly meeting
Federation of Community Councils (FCC) - monthly meeting
Association of Alaska School Boards (elected position, serve a term) - quarterly meeting
Council of Great City Schools - annual conference
National Black Caucus NSBA - annual meeting at conference
National Native American/Alaska Native Caucus NSBA - annual meeting at conference
ARISE (CITC collective impact group - must be invited by the group)
90% by 2020 (United Way collective impact group - must be invited by the group)

What else?

There is a fair amount of reading and communication with the public.

- Each board member is expected to read all provided materials prior to each meeting. Each has access electronically to BoardDocs@ on which all agendas, documents and RFI (requests for information) responses are posted. (Printed copies may also be requested from the Board Secretary.)
- Each board member has an ASD email and “phone number.” (Calls are routed to a message system and show up in a member’s email box as an audio file.) Emails that are addressed only to one board member should be responded to in a timely manner, with a copy sent to the Board President and Board Secretary. Emails sent to the entire Board may be responded to as long as the Board member includes a statement that he/she is responding as an individual and not for the entire board, and a copy of the response is sent to the Board President and Board Secretary. (See Board Code of Conduct document for specifics.)
- Each board member has an ASD mail slot located the Board Secretary’s office located in the Superintendent’s office suite and is expected to check it periodically and respond to any letters addressed solely to the member.
- Board members are also invited to emcee musical concerts throughout the year as well as officiate at graduations. Sign-up lists are shared with the board to split these duties.

What salary can a Board member expect?

- Salaries are set by the Municipality of Anchorage’s Commission on Salaries and Emoluments. Currently, Board members earn \$21,476 plus benefits and the Board president earns \$25,310 plus benefits.
- Board members do not have offices in the ASD Education Center, but often use Room150 or other meeting spaces to conduct business in addition to the Board room used for work sessions and regular meetings.
- Registration fees, travel, hotel and per diem are paid for one out-of-state conference and one legislative trip to Juneau per year. Registration fees for the AASB conference in Anchorage are also covered by the ASD.
- Board members personally cover all of their other expenses, such as mileage and phone. A laptop will be provided during board meetings if needed.

OK, if you’re ready to take on the responsibilities of being an Anchorage School Board member, here are some ideas on how to get elected:

- File your intent to run for office with Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC). <https://myalaska.state.ak.us/apoc/form/Registration/LetterOfIntent/Filings.aspx>
- The Letter of Intent permits you to make campaign expenditures prior to declaring with the Division of Elections or filing for office with the municipal clerk. If it is less than 18 months before the election, the Letter of Intent also permits you to accept campaign contributions.
- Attend a training class offered by the APOC on required forms and reports to file. The APOC Anchorage Office is located at: 2221 E. Northern Lights, Suite 128, Anchorage, AK 99508, Phone: 276-4176
- Your name and address will appear on all public documents, any communication by the campaign – including emails, and in all campaign disclosure statements, e.g., Paid

for by (your name) for School Board, (plus full address). Determine if you will use your home address and phone number for your campaign or rent a mailbox and obtain a campaign phone number.

- Complete and file your Public Official/Legislative Official Financial Disclosure Form (POFD/LFD) <https://myalaska.state.ak.us/apoc/form/POFD/Filings.asp>

Disclaimer: Always check with the APOC and Municipality of Anchorage to learn if requirements have changed.

Suggestions on handling finances:

- Make a proposed budget and determine how much you will personally contribute. (Learn the rules for this at your APOC training!)
- Determine if you will hire a campaign manager or act as your own manager. Sign a contract if you hire one.
- Determine if you will hire a campaign treasurer or ask a financially savvy friend to do the job.
- Set up a campaign bank account and if appropriate, give your campaign treasurer access.
- Set up an on-line Paypal (or similar service) account to receive credit card donations.
- Get a credit card reader for accepting credit card donations on smart phone/iPad.
- Order fundraising envelopes or develop your own form, buy envelopes and get address labels.
- For all donations \$50 and over, you must collect the occupation and employer of the donor in addition to their full name and address. \$50 is cumulative for a calendar year. •
- Accept no cash donations over \$100 per year per individual, no corporate donations, and no anonymous donations
- There is a limit of \$500 per year cumulative for each person. However, if your campaign spans over two calendar years, donors may give up to \$500 in each calendar year.
- Learn the APOC rules concerning out of state donation limits, personal loan limits, and no loans within 30 days of the election.

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Filing information:

- File your Declaration of Candidacy with the Municipal Clerk at the City Hall during the two-week period at the end of January, beginning of February. Bring a printed and signed copy of your POFD/LFD previously filed with the APOC. Follow the MOA website to learn who your opponents are up to the 5 pm deadline.
- File a Candidate Registration with the APOC within 7 days (for municipal office) after filing a declaration of candidacy or a nominating petition.
<https://myalaska.state.ak.us/apoc/form/Registration/CandidateRegistration/Filings.aspx>
- The Candidate Registration provides your campaign contact information, designates your campaign committee, and your campaign depository.
- Until your registration that designates a Treasurer or Deputy Treasurers is filed, only

you, the candidate, may accept/expend campaign funds. Anyone who touches any donation, even a spouse, or someone at the door of a fundraiser, must be registered with APOC as a deputy treasurer.

- You may amend registrations as needed, and once registered, you must file campaign disclosure reports for the duration of your campaign.
- If you as a School Board candidate anticipate spending/receiving less than \$5,000, including any personal funds you may use, you may file a Municipal/Judicial Exemption Form. The Exemption Form exempts you from filing campaign disclosure reports for the duration of your campaign.
- However, if you as an exempt candidate exceed \$5,000 in financial activity you must immediately file a Candidate Registration and file each report due after the change in status, disclosing all activity from the beginning of the campaign on your first report.

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Other ideas for promoting your name and campaign ideas:

- Design a campaign logo, if desired.
- Design a campaign flyer, if desired.
- Design a campaign webpage, if desired.
- Design a Facebook page for your campaign, if desired. It is suggested that your campaign Facebook page and your personal Facebook pages are separate. Don't forget to add the campaign 'paid for' disclaimer to the Facebook page
- Order campaign buttons featuring logo, if desired.

NOTE: Check with APOC about 'paid for' disclaimer requirements before anything is printed or any Facebook page is launched.

Ideas for running a campaign:

- Gather a group of supporters who will assist you in your campaign. Organize a Google doc sign-up list with fields to host a 'meet and greet', host a fundraiser, post a yard sign, help construct large sign supports, put up/take down signs, wave campaign signs on Election Day, etc.
- Organize a fundraiser. Ask others to host a 'meet and greet', do one in your own home or in a supporter's home. Note: Save receipts for refreshments as those expenditures count as a host's campaign contribution unless your campaign reimburses the costs. If you use a donated business location, that counts as a campaign contribution.

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Tips for dealing with campaign funds:

- Set up a spreadsheet with donor's name, address, email, phone, check #, donation amount, profession and business name. (Know APOC requirements for all donations

over \$50 or for cash donations.)

- Photocopy each check before depositing. Photocopy cash donations and label with name and date. Download on-line donation receipts.
- Give all expenditures receipts/check copies to treasurer on a weekly basis.
- Ascertain your treasurer is filing necessary APOC reports throughout the campaign as you are ultimately responsible.
- Promptly send a thank you (letter or postcard) to each donor.
- Meet with groups wishing to consider supporting your campaign.
- Pick up checks!

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Ideas if you choose to use campaign signs:

- Determine if you will have large campaign signs, yard signs or bus signs printed according to your budget (and decide how many of each).
- Reserve People Mover sign placement well in advance.
- Determine design and order signs.
- Find places for large signs. Ask friends and property owners.

NOTE: Inform yourself of MOA/State of Alaska sign rules on the Muni website as there are many illegally placed signs during each campaign.

- Purchase wood and construct sign supports. Purchase sandbags to hold signs in place because wind is not your sign's friend.
- Find volunteers and a truck to pick up and set up signs.

Hint: Choose sign colors that are visible from afar and contrast with the snow and frozen ground. Secure permission before placing signs. Bring a hammer!

Information if you choose to purchase bus sign placement:

- Decide sign placement on left, right or backside of bus; number of buses and number of weeks which run Monday through Sunday. The price varies on the placement.
- You are not allowed to choose specific bus routes.
- Reserve space well in advance.
- Deliver signs to the MOA bus barn off Tudor.

Disclaimer: Check with the People Mover to learn if procedures have changed.

Tips if you choose to wish to make media buys:

- Determine if you will run 1-minute radio ads and/or 30-second TV ads according to your budget. NOTE: Some stations only allow 30 second radio spots.
- Hire a professional to produce the ads.
- Recruit supporters to record and/or appear in campaign ads and ask for signed media release forms. NOTE: You may not film on ASD property.
- Hire a professional to place media buys for you.
- If you are working with a professional, determine if you want robo-calls made and

flyers mailed out that use the professional's phone and mail lists.

- Determine if you will purchase newspaper ads or have a sticker placed on the front page. Reserve space far in advance.

Hints for public forums and use of email:

- Apprise yourself of ASD rules concerning restrictions or prohibition of campaigning in ASD schools and the use of ASD emails. The ASD Superintendent will send all declared candidates this information, or you may call the Superintendent's administrative assistant.
- Attend community council meetings and ask the president in advance for permission to introduce yourself.
- Attend all public forums for school board candidates to which you are invited. (AEA, ConocoPhillips CAP, HALO, Community Councils, Chamber of Commerce, Bartlett Club, etc.)
- Practice, in advance with your core support team, how to answer questions in 30 seconds to 1-minute.
- Prepare a short 1-minute introductory and closing statement.

On Election Day:

- Vote and remind your supporters to vote too!
- Get a group of sign wavers at major instructions to remind people of your name!
- Head to Election Central after the polls close with a group of your supporters. If it will occur, it is normally held at the Dena'ina Convention Center or the Egan Center.
- Be prepared for media interviews if you win.
- Thank your supporters and celebrate a good campaign!
- Get ready to roll up your sleeves and go to work!

What's next?

If you win your race, you will be sworn in to the Anchorage School Board at the first board meeting AFTER the Assembly meets and certifies the election results. (If the election is contested, prepare for a delay.)

- If you haven't already been attending board meetings, begin, even before you're officially seated and learn the current issues.
- Get in touch with School Board secretary (Katy Grant, grant_katy@asdk12.org) to obtain the new board member checklist.
- The Board president will contact you to set up your orientation.