

# *How to Run for Local Office*

## **PREPARING TO RUN**



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## Recruiting New Board Members

By Timi Tullis, AASB Director of Membership Services  
(originally posted in AASB Commentary, August 2014)

This summer while helping a board develop a **board self improvement plan** one of the members asked me if we had anything in writing to encourage citizens to become interested and ultimately run for their board. Our website, [www.aasb.org](http://www.aasb.org), has some information for potential candidates, but I thought I could reach more members by writing about the process here.

The first step is to **let individuals know early** that there will be seats open in the fall election. It doesn't hurt to start sharing this information as early as May or June, if you know that soon. Looking for individuals that already are somewhat active in the work you do, individuals that support events at the schools, and people you know care about kids is a great place to start. It's a bonus if they are or have been active on other boards and know a bit about working on a team or board with others.

Make sure you remain open-minded and **don't discard anyone from consideration**. Younger candidates, who potentially graduated from the school recently, could bring a lot of first hand knowledge to the board. More mature candidates who may be active on other boards and have knowledge of how a board governs could also benefit your team. Parents or grandparents of students are not the only individuals who care about kids in your community; there are many 'non-parents' that make great board members.

To ensure that your board remains diverse, be sure to **encourage individuals from a variety of backgrounds**, experiences and occupations. We love that in Alaska we have grandmas, aunties, fishermen, whaling captains, doctors, lawyers, uncles and mushers serving as board members/ Regardless of the label, our school board members have one thing in common -- they care about ALL kids in their district and they are representative of our state.

Be sure to remember that **your excitement and enjoyment for your position on the board will be noticed by others**. As often as possible publically share your passion for that work as a board member. Speak

positively about being on the board rather than whine about how much “work” it is. No one will want the job if you are unable to highlight the positive aspects of being on the board and making a positive difference for the students in your district.

As current members it is great if you can **individually encourage others** to run for the board. However, you want to be careful not to publicly support or, on the flip side, bad mouth any particular candidate because depending on the outcome you may or may not be working with said individuals.

While encouraging individuals to run for open seats be sure that candidates understand what the work of the board involves and help them see that the most important aspects of good board members are to:

- Focus on improvement of ALL students,
- Care deeply about the work of the board and share it with different aspects of the community, other civic groups or simply in their circle of supporters,
- Work with the team including the administration to ensure the best educational programs for your district,
- Become an informed and professional board member, be willing to attend all meetings, trainings and board work retreats.

When encouraging community members to consider running for a seat **invite them to a board meeting** (if they have not been to one) and take time after the meeting to debrief with them about the work that the board accomplished. Honestly explain the time commitments as well as the rewards from being on the board.

So in the end, current board can play a role in encouraging potential candidates to run for open seats. Board members and superintendent might consider the following Ideas to help get the word out about open seats:

- Face to face discussions encouraging involvement
- Newspaper or newsletter ad or an informative article
- Radio interviews encouraging community members to consider running

- Give potential candidates information on the actual work of the board, possibly the yearly calendar and,
- Hold a work session to describe the work of the board.

## About AASB

The Association of Alaska School Boards is an organization representing local school boards in Alaska. Its membership consists of more than 330 individual board members, responsible for the students who attend Alaska's public schools.

Formed in 1954 by four districts, AASB has expanded over the years to include more than 50 school boards as members in cities, boroughs, and REAAs. Today the Association is a source of assistance, information, and liaison for these boards and the districts they represent. Services and Initiatives include:

- State and Federal Representation
- Information through Publications and websites
- Board Member Education Programs, Conferences, and In-district workshops
- Policy Development
- Superintendent Searches
- Strategic Planning
- Child Advocacy
- Community Engagement
- 1 to 1 Laptop Initiative for Schools

AASB is governed by a 15 member Board of Directors, consisting of 11 directors and four officers. Representation comes from all regions of the state. The Board is elected by the membership at the Annual Conference. The membership as a whole pass the resolutions which establish the positions taken by the Association before the legislature and other agencies throughout the year.

Member boards pay dues to the Association based on the size of the district to help support the functions of the organization.

## AASB & Child Advocacy

Alaska's education policy makers and educators struggle with the complex challenge of providing a quality education to all students across our vast state, particularly when there are so many other factors that impact children's lives and, therefore, their education. Because increasing numbers of children come to school with problems caused by poverty, drug use, teenage pregnancies, and child abuse, schools can no longer limit themselves to only academics. We also recognize that schools cannot act in isolation to overcome such obstacles to learning. Schools, families, and communities must share responsibility for children's development and learning. Since education is a continual process occurring both in and out of school, school is just one institution that can educate children. We ALL must shoulder the responsibility for public education.

The advocacy role of school board members is to promote parental, public, and social service commitment to the shared responsibility of educating all public school children.

AASB's Board of Directors has adopted a Child Advocacy Agenda which recognizes that "PARENTS are the child's first teachers - loving and nurturing; that SCHOOL opens the mind to the excitement of learning and sharing; that SOCIETY helps a child to appreciate the world and his/her place in it; and that FAITH gives a child a set of beliefs to live by."

Our advocacy agenda is supported by a detailed action plan, which addresses legislation, education, public relations and collaboration with other agencies.

## Association of Alaska School Boards

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2024 HtrRLO Toolkit (134)

# A guide for School Board Candidates in Alaska

*As a candidate for your local school board, you have taken a step towards becoming involved in strengthening the quality of life through good schools in your community. You have indicated an interest in serving and devoting the time necessary to meet the challenge of boardsmanship by seeking election to your local school board. This guide will provide you with some basic information about school boards.*



ASSOCIATION OF  
**ALASKA**  
SCHOOL BOARDS



## Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members

As you consider the prospect of running for your local school board, there are a few things you should know about the responsibilities that role involves.

If you are elected, you and your fellow board members' actions will have far-reaching results. The policies you set will shape the education of tomorrow's leaders. The guidelines you create will direct the superintendent in navigating the problems your school district faces daily. Your decisions will affect the families of hundreds of students and employees, now and in the future.

School board authority rests with the board as a whole, not each member individually. School board decisions can only be made by a majority of the members at a public meeting.

From the moment school board members begin service, they are accountable to the public, to the state government, and to the courts.

## Broad Functions of a School Board

**School Boards** *create a shared vision for the district, develop a structure to support that vision, establish accountability, and advocate for students and schools.*

**Vision** School board, on behalf of and with extensive participation by the community, creates a shared vision to enhance student achievement.

**Structure** To achieve its mission the board establishes a structure and creates an environment designed to ensure all students the opportunity to attain their maximum potential through a sound organizational framework.

**Accountability** Because the board is accountable to the local community, it causes the continuous assessment and reporting of all conditions affecting education.

**Advocacy** The board serves as education's advocate on behalf of students and their schools in order to advance the community's vision for its schools, pursue its goals, encourage progress, energize systemic change, and deal with children as whole persons in a diversified society.

## What Does a School Board Do?

*A board performs its functions through:*


**Policy Making** A school board sets school district policies. The board hires a superintendent and district staff to put that policy into practice. The superintendent is accountable to the school board for managing the district according to board policies.

The local school board must develop and adopt policy that governs the operation of the schools. This includes acting on the superintendent's recommendations in such areas as employment of personnel, administration of student services, adoption of educational programs, selection of instructional materials and allocation of funds.

**Planning** School boards must provide vital leadership in establishing current and long-range educational plans and programs for school districts. The school board is responsible for providing a financial plan to carry out the educational programs by adopting an annual budget. Working closely with the community and the school administration, the board sets goals and adopts policies on which instructional programs are based.

**Professional Performance** One of the critical responsibilities of a school board is to select a superintendent. The school board exercises authority primarily through its superintendent. The board must be kept informed by the superintendent of the needs, conditions, achievements and progress of the school system.

As public employers, the board establishes the policies that govern the recruiting, hiring, employment, supervision, evaluation and dismissal of employees. This is an especially vital role, for the school district is frequently one of the community's largest employers.



**Interpreting Needs** School board members serve as the citizens' link to the school district and must interpret the school district's needs, programs and accomplishments for the community and interpret the community's needs and aspirations to the superintendent and staff.

School boards serve a dual role of representing both the schools and the community. As a public trust, the local school board must look into the community, find out what citizens want and provide clear channels of communication between the community and its schools. Boards need to sense and influence public opinion about the direction and function of their schools.

Needed improvements cannot be made until people are aware of those needs. Problems will not be solved until people become aware of the problems. It is important to discuss openly the strengths and weaknesses of the schools. Since decisions made about the schools can have an impact on the whole community, it is important to involve local citizens.

## Board Service is Time and Commitment

School board service can be both rewarding and frustrating. At times board members feel the long hours they spend struggling with complex problems are all in vain. No matter what their decision, there will always be someone who complains.

These frustrations are offset, however, by reports of students going on to achieve further academic or other kinds of success. There is satisfaction in helping provide students with the education they need to live happy and productive lives.

Being a board member you are required to set aside 'single issues' and work with the other members of your board to set policies for your schools that are in the best interest of all students, all employees and the entire community.

22) Have you considered what an opponent could easily find out about you by

- a) completing a background check on yourself? Yes/No
- b) conducting internet searches on your name? Yes/No
- c) reviewing your social media sites for questionable content about yourself? Yes/No
- d) ensuring your financial affairs are above scrutiny? Yes/No

23) Do you have one or more confidants you trust unquestionably with whom you can share your feelings and concerns (that are not privileged)? Yes/No

## PERSONALITY COMPATIBILITY

24) Have you ever had an idea that took your sheer will and determination to build collaboration and support to implement? Yes/No

25) Can you work collaboratively with individuals with whom you don't agree? Yes/No

26) Are you at ease delegating tasks to others, allowing them to complete tasks within the parameters you've established? Yes/No

27) Do you generally listen to all sides of an issue or situation before making a decision? Yes/No

28) Would others describe you as making decisions within an appropriate time frame? Yes/No

29) Are you fairly self-confident? Yes/No

30) Are you comfortable

- a) walking into a room and introducing yourself to strangers? Yes/No
- b) speaking in public? Yes/No
- c) answering both confrontational and supportive questions in public? Yes/No

d) communicating with media (radio, TV, newspaper, etc.)? Yes/No

e) using a wide variety of social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, Periscope, Hootsuite, etc.) ?

31) Would you describe yourself as resilient? In other words,

- a) do you bounce back quickly from disappointment? Yes/No
- b) can you let unfair comments by others to "roll off your back"? Yes/No

32) Are you able to keep calm in stressful circumstances? Yes/No



Nine in 15 is a nonpartisan grassroots initiative that aims to improve the quality of life in Northeast Florida by encouraging qualified candidates, particularly women, to run for public office and providing information to help them campaign successfully. The initiative also promotes the appointment of more women to public policy boards and commissions. In general, Nine in 15 works to raise public awareness of the unique contributions women make to political discourse and action and to address women's underrepresentation in elected and appointed positions.

Nine in 15 is not a formal organization and does not endorse or fund candidates. For more information or to be added to our mailing list, write [info@Ninein15.com](mailto:info@Ninein15.com)

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## RUNNING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

*Step One:*

## Are You Ready?

**Find out by taking this quick self-assessment quiz.**



Nine in 15 offers this self-assessment tool to help you determine your readiness to run for public office. These questions will help you think deeply about your choice and, should you decide to run, the challenges you may face and your ability to fast-track to success.

Research shows that women typically wait to be “invited” to consider running for political office. Even when they are, studies reveal, they tend to assume--often wrongly--that they are not qualified or have not had the right training to launch a campaign. Other research demonstrates that most candidates, male or female, lack deep knowledge about how to run a campaign and raise money successfully or even what type of experience a candidate should possess before launching.

This self-assessment tool can help you decide if you are ready to run for political office. Although it is designed with women in mind, men, too, may find it useful. It's meant to reveal strengths and weaknesses that can lead to campaign pitfalls and peaks: important information to have before you announce your candidacy.

Reflect on each question, answering yes or no. You may want to tally your affirmative and negative responses as you consider your options.

## RELATIONSHIPS

1) Can you identify at least 50-100 people in your circles of influence in the following categories?

- a) close friends/family Yes/No
- b) business colleagues Yes/No
- c) casual acquaintances Yes/No

2) Can you list 50-100 people who may/will support your political race, financially or with volunteer time?

- a) financially Yes/No
- b) with volunteer time Yes/No

3) Have you identified someone who would be willing to chair your fundraising committee? Yes/No

4) Have you secured a campaign manager? Yes/No

## POLITICAL AWARENESS

5) Have you thought through why you want to run for this particular office? Yes/No

6) Do you have a general strategy for how you might win your race? Yes/No

7) Have you conducted research

a) about the specific political position you are seeking? Yes/No

b) by pulling the public records of the current public official whose office you may fill to study the donations and voting record? Yes/No

c) by learning about the demographics as they align to party affiliation of the district in which you would run? Yes/No

8) Have you had any training in how to run a political campaign? Yes/No

9) Have you been visible in your community by

a) serving on a non-profit board or in a similar position? Yes/No

b) having been appointed by a governmental official to an agency or commission? Yes/No

c) having been elected to a position in your community by friends and colleagues? Yes/No

10) Have you been involved in a controversial issue in your neighborhood or area of interest

a) that generated widespread public interest? Yes/No

b) were you able to influence the public with your judgment and effective communication on an issue? Yes/No

11) Have you ever participated in a zoning or other controversy where you appeared before an elected or appointed body? Yes/No

12) Are you deeply interested in changing broad issues in Jacksonville in addition to being committed to specific issues you want to see changed? Yes/No

13) Do you keep informed about political and controversial issues through various media daily? Yes/No

14) Have you observed a City Council (or other political entity) meeting in person or do you regularly watch meetings on TV (or follow through media outlets) if you cannot attend? Yes/No

15) Have you

a) volunteered on any political campaign(s)? Yes/No

b) enjoyed the campaign experience? Yes/No

16) Are you a regular voter? Yes/No

## PRIVATE CONSIDERATIONS

17) Is your company, boss and/or supervisor supportive of your desire to run for public office? Yes/No

18) Are your husband, children and other family members supportive of your desire to run for public office? Yes/No

19) Are you able to invest financially in your own candidacy? Yes/No

20) Have you thought about the impact running for and serving in public office will have

a) on your personal obligations? Yes/No

b) on your ability to maintain a balanced life while in office? Yes/No

21) ) Are you able

a) to be active and prepared for meetings covering a variety of complex materials without much difficulty? Yes/No

b) to integrate into your schedule the amount of reading and research necessary to be effective in office? Yes/No

## SELF ASSESSMENT<sup>1</sup>

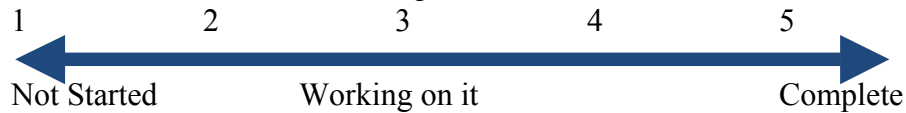
Conduct the self-assessment below to evaluate where you are now and to think through some of the work you will have to do to get the support you need to organize an electoral campaign. Below is a list of tasks you will have to complete in order to run for office. Rate your level of preparedness for each task on a scale of 1 (have not yet started task) to 5 (task is complete).

### Step 1: Quantitative Assessment

1. I know why I want to run for office.



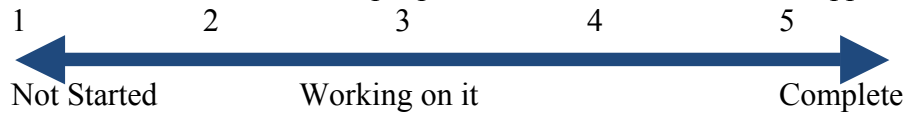
2. I know what I want to accomplish while in elected office.



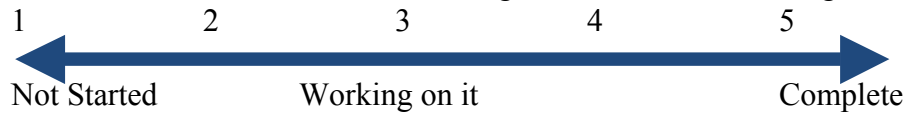
3. I can accurately describe the social, economic and demographic breakdown of the area I hope to represent.



4. I have a list of at least 10 people I can contact for financial support.



5. I have estimated the costs of running for office in a draft budget.



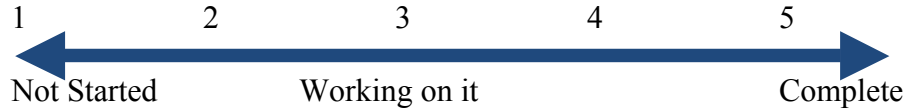
6. I have developed contacts with the relevant print, broadcast and social media.



<sup>1</sup> Adapted from NDI's Regional Campaign School Middle East and North Africa Module #11: Getting on a List

Not Started                      Working on it                      Complete

7. I have conducted an assessment of my likely opponent(s) in terms of their positions on key issues, how many votes they will get and their financial resources.



8. I have conducted a voter analysis of the area and have identified the priority issues and the positions that the majority of voters take on them.



9. I have conducted a vote count for the area and determined that there will be sufficient votes for me to be elected.



10. I have addressed all financial, personal or legal issues (problems) which would make it difficult for me to be a candidate.



11. I have written down my biography (description of personal and professional experience, and qualifications) and it is accurate.



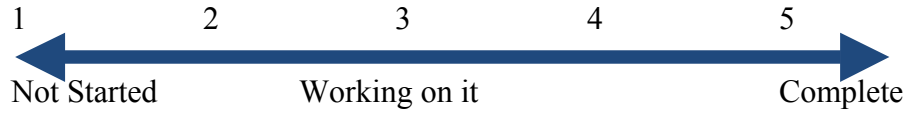
12. I have considered the potential impact of running for office on my personal and professional life and have a plan for how I will make the time to run a rigorous campaign.



13. I know the rules and regulations affecting this election and have determined that I am eligible to stand for office and understand the steps I need to take to become a candidate.



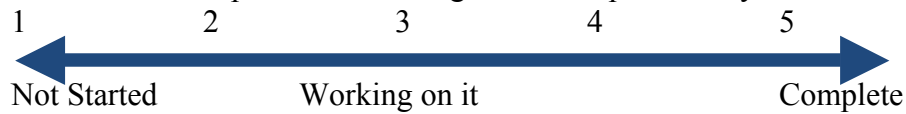
14. I have strong support in the area, and am well-known in and well-connected to the local community.



15. I have a message and positions on issues which are relevant and appealing to voters.



16. I have developed close working relationships with key decision-makers in my political party.



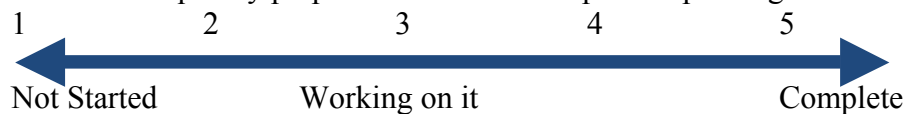
17. I have a constituency of grassroots party activists and leaders in my party who will support me by serving on my campaign team, providing resources, or using their influence to persuade others to support me.



18. I have had discussions with my family so that they understand the time commitment and incursions on privacy and family life that my running for office will require, and they are supportive of my running.



19. I am adequately prepared and trained on public speaking and voter contact.



20. I have a group of trusted advisors.



**Step 2: Qualitative Assessment**

Answer the following questions, in your own words:

1. Why do you want to run for office?

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2. What ideas or experience would you bring to elected office that is new, different or better?

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3. Can you name three things that you want to work on or accomplish while in elected office?

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**Step 3: Qualitative Analysis**

Review your answers to the questions above. Is the language you have chosen more about you, or more about the people you hope to serve while in office and/or the benefits you hope to bring to them?

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*If you had only 30 seconds or less:*

Could you use these words to make a case to a party leader why you should be selected as a candidate in a winnable position? If not, what changes would you make?

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Could you use these words to explain to a potential donor why they should contribute to your campaign? If not, what changes would you make?

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Could you use these words to explain to a voter why they should support you? If not, what changes would you make?

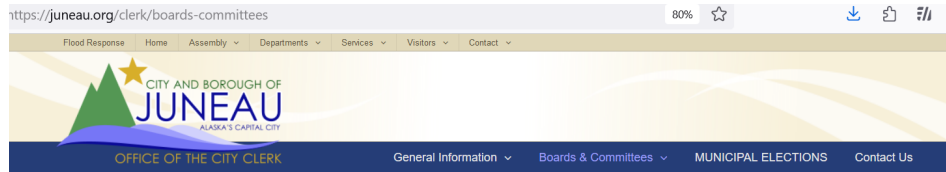
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## Join a CBJ Board or Committee!

CBJ has many boards and committees for people interested in a wide variety of local government topics.

To learn more, start at the Clerk's website <https://juneau.org/clerk/boards-committees>



### Boards, Committees, Commissions & Task Forces

- [Advisory Board Training PowerPoint](#)
- [CBJ Board/Committee Informational Pamphlet](#)
- [Rules of Procedure for Advisory Boards – Resolution 2986](#)
- [Assembly Rules of Procedure – Resolution 2976 \(NEW! Adopted 2/28/2022\)](#)
- [Board Archive Page](#) (for boards no longer in effect)
- [Planning Commission – Hearing procedures related to appeals](#) (Adopted 9/10/2013)

#### Interested in Serving On a CBJ Board, Committee or Commission?

You are welcome to apply for a seat on a board/committee that you are interested in *even if no vacancy on that board/committee is listed* – your application will be on file for a year from date of submission.

To apply go to: [CBJ Board Application](#) and fill out the online application.

Visit <https://juneau-ak.municodemeetings.com/bc> for CBJ Board Directory and links to the boards that have websites with more information on what they do as well as any vacancies they may have.

Visit: <https://juneau-ak.municodemeetings.com/> to view agendas and minutes for All CBJ Boards, Committees, Commissions, Assembly & Assembly Standing Committee meetings.

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And to apply to be on a board: go to: <https://juneau-ak.municodemeetings.com/bc/application>