

ALASBO News Link...



May 2017

A newsletter publication of Alaska Association of School Business Officials

ALASBO News Link
is published for the members of the Alaska
Association of School Business Officials
and its affiliate members.

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rather than e-mail? Send a message to Amy Lujan at
the above address.*

President's Message

Holly Holman, Unalaska City School District



We all look forward to springtime in Alaska, but it can be a stressful time in school business with budgets that aren't balanced and the fiscal crisis that is leaving all of us wringing our hands with worry about next school year. However, I was encouraged by the positive attitudes and passion for education that I observed with our fellow members of ACSA attending the Legislative Fly-In, April 8-11.

I attended the **Legislative Fly-In** this year for the first time. I was so thankful to be attending with ALASBO pros that know the ropes of the legislative session in Juneau.

(Continued on page 2)

Contents

1-2	President's Message
3	Executive Director's Message
3	Board Opening
4	Reflections on Software Transition
5	Awards Update
5	SFO Certification Congrats!
5	ASBO International Conference
6	Member Spotlight
6	Call for Presentations
7	Alaska Education Challenge
7-9	Liaisons & Mentors
9	Upcoming Events

(Continued from page 1)



The ALASBO members attending the Fly-In represented these districts: Anchorage, Annette Island, Bering Strait, Copper River, Fairbanks, Haines, Hoonah, Juneau, Kenai, Kodiak, Matsu, Sitka, Tanana, Unalaska and Yupiit.

The Legislative Fly-In was held jointly with ACSA, but our respective organizations also met separately for planning meetings and lobbying efforts. We were part of a group that was a combination of superintendents, secondary school principals, and elementary principals, totaling over one hundred people. We were able to bring a strong message to legislators about our common goals and our Joint Position Statements (JPS), which are posted on the ALASBO website. We reminded legislators that we have been asking them to develop a fiscal plan for over ten years. We testified about the extreme hardship it places on districts when funding is cut at the last minute and there is no time to plan.

Our ALASBO group met on Sunday morning to create our Talking Points. The Talking Points emphasized that ALASBO is a resource to help legislators understand the financial situation that K-12 school districts face:

- We all need to understand how any cut to K-12 funding will be implemented, and the resulting effects on local contribution and the Reductions in Force statute (14.20.177).
- Due to rising costs, including worker's comp, health insurance, wages and transportation, FY18 will be the fourth year of cuts in most K-12 school districts.
- After years of cuts, the next round of funding reductions WILL affect the classroom; 80-90% of district budgets pay for personnel-related costs.

Our group presented to the Joint Education Committee on Monday, April 10. The presentations highlighted exciting ways that districts are innovating for our students, and also showed ways that efficiencies were being realized. We emphasized to legislators, though, that when changes to education funding are unknown until the end of the session, there is a devastating impact on districts. Efficiencies in purchasing, planning for student travel, and contracting are greatly impaired with such a small window before the start of the school year. Hiring is negatively impacted, with a scramble to find positions at the last minute if they have been held until legislative action has been taken, or layoff notices are sent out.

How can districts realize cost savings and efficiencies in this environment? How can the best teachers and staff for our children be hired? How can we retain our staff with these unknowns looming? As our Joint Position Statement states, "adequate funding for public education is our number one priority" that provides "timely reliable, and predictable revenue for schools."

Our ALASBO theme for this year is "**Pulling Together for Alaska's Youth**" and that was what I saw at the fly-in – caring educators from around the state who are passionately pulling together for the future of our children!

The next event on the ALASBO calendar is our **Summer Leadership**, held in Sitka this year. This event starts on Friday, July 21, with our board meeting and vendor presentations in the late afternoon and evening, and continues on Saturday and Sunday morning with a planning session for our December conference. The planning sessions will focus on ALASBO planning to move our organization forward, which includes a chance to re-think our annual conference agenda. Sunday we'll have a group activity where we visit the Alaska Raptor Center and the Fortress of the Bear!

Remember that lodging and meals for Summer Leadership are provided by our generous sponsors and there is no fee to register. Transportation is the only cost for this conference, and there are Swarner grants available for first-time attendees to help with the cost. Use the application on our website to apply by June 3! Please check your summer schedule and consider attending this great conference – we need your input!

The annual **ASBO International Conference** is scheduled for September 22 – 25 in Denver Colorado. The ASBO International conference is a great opportunity to learn and network with school business officials from around the world. More information and links to ASBO International are on the ALASBO website.

I look forward to seeing you at upcoming events!

2017
ANNUAL MEETING

& EXPO
 September 22-25 | Denver, Colorado



Fly-In Group

Executive Director's Message

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

Will this session never end?? The suspended animation is truly gut wrenching. I remember what it's like to be in a school district business office, unable to provide answers that affect people's jobs and our districts' ability to plan quality programs for students.



Advice from Dave during Fly-In

Please continue to contact your legislators to let them know how the uncertainty and the proposed cuts affect your district! They need to hear from you with specific facts, figures and also anecdotes that demonstrate the human dimension of what's happening in their own home districts.



With all the changes at the state and federal level, it's important to keep informed! If you're not yet receiving regular updates through our **social media platforms**, Ed Connector and ASBO's GSBN, sign up today! On the ALASBO website, click on the Social Media link on the left sidebar menu.

Recent examples include my response to the Mark Foster presentation of the Commonwealth North K-12 recommendations, posted on Ed Connector. This write-up has already been quoted by Senator Begich on the Senate floor, and debate on these issues will surely continue into next session as well. On GSBN, it's critical to keep up with the new administration's approach to ESSA, vouchers and Medicaid, among other issues that have been discussed. You can also use both systems to ask your colleagues how to handle issues that are of concern to you and get help and resources fast!

I am excited about this year's **Summer Leadership**, when we'll have the chance to truly re-think our annual conference agenda. Responding to vendor feedback, we'll be moving to a **one-day trade show**, which opens up opportunities to re-tool the professional development schedule for our members. We need your input! Please consider joining us in beautiful Sitka, July 21-23!

At this time of year, I always think about the incredible energy in the air during break-up on the rivers, graduation season, and with the anticipation of fishing! I hope you get out to enjoy this beautiful time in Alaska.

If you have questions about any ALASBO program, please do not hesitate to contact me at alasbo@gci.net, or 907-723-7415. You'll also find useful information at: www.alasbo.org.

ALASBO Board Opening

Unfortunately, one of our Board members, Judy Hankla of Hoonah has resigned due to health reasons. If you're interested in filling the remainder of this term through December 2017, please contact President Holly Holman or Executive Director Amy Lujan.



Commissioner, Governor and Mrs. Walker

Reflections on Software Transition

Lila Krosschell, North Slope Borough School District

Happy Spring!! FY17 is coming to an end and this year has flown by. My name is Lila L. Krosschell (Peterson) and I am originally from Mountain Village.

I have worked for Lower Yukon School District, Northwest Arctic Borough School District and now North Slope Borough School District. I am currently working as the Coordinator of Financial Services in the business office.

The North Slope Borough School District has transitioned to a new accounting system, moving from CIMS AS400 to Tyler Integrated System. This process was a great learning experience for all of us in the business department. Here are some suggestions for a smooth transition to a new system.



- Identify teams of employees to work on different parts of the set-up. It is especially important that the IT department staff is trained in how to set up the computers before the software users are trained. This will ensure that the computers can properly access the software program for a smooth start to the training less wasted time.
- It is important to have a trainer on site for the initial training and follow up, to respond to issues that arise. Having an expert in the software working on site saves time and reduces frustration.
- It is much better to use "live data" from your district, rather than "training data" to practice with. You may want to copy your "live data" and create "provisional data" that can be used for the training.
- Budget extra time to set up all the employees in the new system. It is important that this is done correctly (and double checked) before starting, to avoid problems along the way.
- For at least two payroll cycles, run both the new and the old systems to compare the payroll in the two systems. The earlier you can run these comparison payrolls, the less clean up you have to do.

- Budget at least a full day of training for the site staff, as a group, to introduce them to the new system. Follow up the group training with one-on-one training with the trainer as soon as possible after that. This will allow you to adjust the training based on the abilities of each person and to walk them through the steps to get started with the new software.
- I recommend transitioning just one business software at a time and not two. We are also
- in the process of transitioning from a Kronos time clock system to the Time Clock Plus system. It is a lot of new information for everyone to process.

This has been a learning experience for me and for our team. Overall, we are very happy with the updated system. Data is easier to pull from the new system and users can access a lot of information without sending requests to the business office (such as W2's, paycheck copies, direct deposit changes, etc.). The streamlined process saves the user and the business office staff a lot of time.



Rep. Paul Seaton explains House fiscal plan

Awards Update



Congratulations to Sarah Jahn of Juneau School District, the recipient of this year's **Freeman Professional Development Grant** to attend the September 2017 ASBO conference in Denver! This award is generously sponsored by CORE, Inc.

The Awards Committee has also been busy selecting the high school seniors who will receive the **Max Easton Scholarships** this year, from a strong pool of applicants:

- Brian Dusek, Soldotna High School
- Taylor Holman, Unalaska High School

Thanks to this year's Easton sponsors: GCI Education, GovDeals, Inc. and Total Management Solutions. Thanks also to the Awards Committee for their work on these selections!

Finally, there's still time to apply for these professional development grants:

- Swarner Leadership Grant – short application for first-time attendees to receive \$750 in funding to attend this year's ALASBO Summer Leadership in Sitka (July 21-23); deadline is June 2; application on our our website: www.alasbo.org/grants-scholarships - sponsored by the Swarner family and National CooperativeRX
- Emerging School Business Leadership – for those in school business five years or less, up to \$2,000 to attend the ASBO International conference in September in Denver; deadline June 1; application on ASBO website: www.asbointl.org

SFO Certification – Congrats!

Congratulations to ALASBO's newest recipient of ASBO SFO Certification, Cordova's Business Manager Kristy Andrew! Kristy joins a cohort of eleven current ALASBO members who have earned the certification.

To learn more about ASBO Certification, including fee reimbursement, visit our site page: www.alasbo.org/certification.

Send us your pictures – anytime you're traveling around the district, take a photo for the ALASBO annual meeting slideshow!

Send them to:
yodean.armour@klawockschool.com



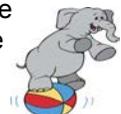
ASBO International Conference

Liz Hayes, Kenai School District

Wow - where has this school year gone?? Since attending ASBO International's Annual Meeting & Expo in Phoenix last September a lot of things have changed on the Kenai. As most of you know, Laurie Olson retired from KPBSD on December 31, 2016. At that time, I was promoted into the position of Director of Finance. I have not slowed down since.

ASBO International's conference truly exemplifies how valuable school business officials are to the students we serve. The breakout sessions offer many topics and sometimes it is hard to pick one! Picking the ones that have the most impact on your district, learning about solutions others have found helpful, and hearing about innovative ideas is what ASBO is all about.

Health care costs are one of the biggest cost drivers we face in education. Several sessions focused on ways to minimize costs, such as implementing services like Teledoc, or opening an onsite clinic. While not all of the ideas fit in our vast state, some do. We have implemented Teledoc services, and we are beginning to see the benefits of this service to our staff.



I look forward to attending ASBO International in the future and am very thankful to ALASBO and CORE for the opportunity to attend this past September.

ALASBO



Member Spotlight

Antonia Moses, Kashunamiut School District

Tell us about your school district

Kashunamiut School District is located in Chevak, in western Alaska off the Bering Sea. Our school is K-12 with about 368 kids. We are a single site district. Home of the Comets!

How long have you been in school business?

Since 2004.

How did you get into this business?

Chevak is my home where I grew up. I graduated from the University of Alaska Anchorage about the same time Mr. Luke Fulp was leaving our district. Our school was looking for a replacement. I guess great timing in finishing my college degree is how I landed in this business.

What do you like best about your job?

No day is the same. The challenge. It is challenging even to this day. I love interacting with many people - the community, colleagues, teachers and not to forget the most important ones, the kids.

What advice do you have for those new to school business?

Time management is a big one. Be aware of dates. Deadlines, training's, and year-end fun. I always loved one of messages I picked up from one of earliest ASBO Presidents, "Regardless of how much we have accomplished, there will always remain opportunity for further improvement." Learning never ends.

How have you benefited from membership in ALASBO?

Being a member you are able to attend the annual training held in December. It is a good time to be involved in various sessions and to see what other districts are doing. Also you get to meet your state workers, vendors and learn

about current issues. You are surrounded by people with a vast amount of knowledge and wisdom in school business.

What do you like to do for fun?

Spending time with family and traveling. I've traveled to Thailand, Costa Rica, and Australia.

If you could visit any place in the world, where would you go and why?

My son Ajey, who is a freshman is interested in Rick Riordan books which are about Greek Gods. One day I would like to take him to experience seeing the temples in person. Greece?

Tell us something about yourself that most people don't know?

I have six boys and two of them are twins. I have a girl arriving in July!

What is your proudest accomplishment?

After years of accounts payable and purchasing, I am now processing payroll. I think payroll is one of those hardest but most valuable roles in school business. I processed my first payroll last Friday!

Call for Presentations

What do your colleagues need to learn about at the annual conference in December? What can you contribute?

ALASBO is currently seeking presentation proposals for the December 3-6, 2017 Annual Conference. The networking and information sharing among our members and associates is what makes the ALASBO conference so valuable to Alaska school business staff each year.

Please consider submitting a presentation proposal for this year's conference. We need ideas for sectionals, discussion groups (less formal, more Q&A), roundtables and longer pre/post-conference sessions. Present a project you've been working on, or perhaps a panel discussion with several colleagues. We need your input!

We also welcome vendor and agency presenters, so long as the presentations focus on best practices and are not a sales pitch. So please pass on this invitation!

The proposal form is available on the ALASBO website, www.alasbo.org under Events, and it's due July 14.



State Museum Reception During Fly-In

AK Education Challenge Kicks Off

DEED Commissioner Michael Johnson's Alaska Education Challenge initiative kicked off on April 20 with a meeting in Anchorage. ALASBO is represented on the Modernization and Finance Committee by Luke Fulp of Matsu School District.

Luke provided an update during our May 16 Power Lunch and will keep us posted on additional opportunities to provide input to the process. Commissioner Johnson and other policy makers are looking for direction on "transformational" change to K-12 education in our state.

ALASBO 2017 Liaison and Mentor Assignments

Liaison/Mentor match-up's are a two-way street; contact your match today!

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(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

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(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

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Upcoming Events

- *ALASBO Leadership: July 21-23, Sitka*
 - *Register from ALASBO website by June 30!*
- *ASBO Annual Meeting and Expo, Denver, Co Sept 22-25*
 - *Register from ASBO website by July 28 for early bird price*
- *ALASBO Annual Conference, Anchorage, AK Dec 3-6*



May flowers in Juneau