

ALASBO News Link...



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

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www.alasbo.org

For publishing information, contact:
Amy Lujan
e-mail: alasbo@gci.net

Editing and layout by
Edith Hildebrand, Galena City Schools
edith.hildebrand@galenanet.com

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the above address.*

President's Message

Holly Holman, Unalaska City School District



I hope this finds everyone enjoying our Alaska summer and fitting some summer fun into your busy schedule of preparing for the annual audit and the start of school!

Summer Leadership was in beautiful Sitka this year and we had 21 ALASBO members attending, as well as guests and vendor representatives. A huge thank you to our sponsors! The vendor presentations Friday night were very informative and it was great having the familiar faces of American Fidelity, Frontline Technologies, and SchoolDude that have supported our Leadership Conference for many years, as well as our new sponsors NMS (Nana Management Services) and GovDeals!

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A special thank you to Cassee Olin for her local support of the event and setting up the wonderful Saturday night event at her colleague Lesley Young's private family beach! More fun was had during our Sunday afternoon event at the Fortress of the Bear and the Raptor Center. We had informative tours, and lots of time to watch the bears and birds! The bears put on quite a show, and it was hard to tear ourselves away from Sitka to catch our planes that evening.

On Saturday morning we started with a review of our Strategic Plan. The current Strategic Plan was developed during Summer Leadership two years ago in Wasilla, but a lot has changed in our state over the past two years! We reviewed our three themes: Professional Development, ALASBO will be THE resource for School Business Best Practices, and Sustainability, and prioritized the details in each theme. There was excellent discussion throughout the day, as we broke into groups, then restructured the groups so we all had a chance to work in a small group with everyone in the room. The product from the planning session is not a different plan, but a more focused plan that prioritizes the goals and action items.



Summer Leadership Participants, Sitka

We started the annual conference planning on Saturday afternoon, and then really delved into the details of the conference on Sunday. The major change to the December conference for this year is that the vendor trade show will be just one day (Monday) instead of two. This was a result of changes requested by the vendors, which will allow them more focused time with ALASBO members.

The change in the vendor trade show allowed us to add another sectional timeslot to our program, as well as change the schedule on some of our other sessions. As always during the conference planning, the conference evaluations from last year were carefully reviewed and comments and

suggestions were incorporated as much as possible. The conference agenda is shaping up to be another great one!

I am excited to announce that our keynote speaker at December's conference will be the legendary dog musher DeeDee Jonrowe! I have been a fan of DeeDee's for years, not only because of her dog mushing prowess, but because of her other athletic accomplishments, and mostly because of her positive attitude in the face of adversity. She is a breast cancer survivor and has lived through many other challenges, such as losing her home to fire two summers ago. She has pulled through it all and continues to run the Iditarod, being one of the top contenders in most Iditarod years, and she has been in the top 10 many times in her mushing career. I knew that DeeDee would be a great choice for our special speaker that demonstrates our theme of *Pulling Together* in many areas of her life.

The ASBO International Annual Conference is right around the corner! This year's conference is in Denver, Colorado from September 22 – 25th. The ASBO Conference is packed with informative sessions that relate to everything we do in school business, and it is a great way to meet business officials from around the nation and world. This year's keynote speakers include Pamela Meyer, Author, TED Speaker, and Certified Fraud Examiner, and Aron Ralston, Adventurer and subject of the film *127 Hours*. Check out their bios and the conference agenda at: www.asbointl.org

The ASBO Annual Conference is a great way to continue to network with other ALASBO members, and also to make contacts with other school business officials around the world. As an ASBO member, I look forward to the School Business Daily that is e-mailed to me daily and summarizes school business news from around the nation, and also to notices from the Global School Business Network (GSBN), which is similar to our Ed Connect, where members can ask questions and share information. It is great to be able to read some of these notices and to have actually met some of the people face-to-face! There is a lot of value brought back to our districts from this conference, and the ASBO website outlines many of the ways the conference can help you in your job: <http://asbointl.org/meetings/annual-meeting-expo/greenlight-guide-to-getting-approval>

I hope to see you in Denver! Good luck with your audits and launching the new school year.

Executive Director's Message

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

I hope you're all enjoying summer, in Alaska or wherever your travels may have taken you!

President Holly Holman has done an excellent job summarizing our fantastic Summer Leadership in Sitka and highlighting our upcoming ASBO International conference and ALASBO December conference! I'll just add a few details below.



Summer Leadership – Congratulations to Maisha Ekamrak of Yupiit School District and Alicia Campbell of Matsu School District, who were selected for the Swarner

“Shaping the Future” Leadership Grant to attend this event! It was great to have them join us as first-time attendees. Thanks to the Swarner family and to National Cooperative RX for their support of this program.

ASBO Conference – I'm looking forward to another great conference in Denver! If you plan to attend, register soon so we can make sure you're part of the ALASBO activities as well. Thanks to sponsorship from American Fidelity, I'm planning a special evening out for ALASBO members to an “escape room experience”, a concept that is new to me, but should provide some fun interaction for our group. Then we'll have dinner in one of Denver's cool downtown restaurants.

Legislative Session – Well, they did finally wrap it up, and EED session summary is posted on our website:

(<http://www.alasbo.org/2017/03/02/legactivity/>).

But there's talk of yet another special session this fall, ahead of the regular session. The fall special session would be focused on a fiscal plan, which has been the #1 ALASBO priority for many years. Hopefully it would be productive; if not, we'll each have to decide how many points to give our legislators for trying!

Meanwhile, Dave Jones, Holly Holman and I have begun working with the ACSA Joint Position Statements Committee on this year's statement of priorities.

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.

School Finance Minions

Meridith Boman, AK Dept of Ed & Early Development

Hello everyone! We here at the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) are doing our best to provide excellent service/support to you all. We've recently undergone a reorganization of our divisions, and have had many staffing changes. We are still working with the transitioning of many positions.

If you're lost as to who to contact these days, pick up the phone or shoot us an email and we'll be happy to help you navigate the DEED changes. For those not familiar with the School Finance section, Elwin Blackwell is the School Finance Manager overseeing four support staff. Here's my version of a cheat sheet for each of the four minions providing School Finance program support:

Mindy Lobaugh, aka Sassy - Why does she deserve such a title? Well, Urban Dictionary (super legit source for valid definitions) says that sassy is “possessing the attitude of someone endowed with an ungodly amount of cool.” (**Eyebrows up & mic drop**) Her actual job duty is primarily navigating the labyrinth of the foundation formula.

Alenita Danner, aka Sneezzy - Poor thing is allergic to the world, and we love her for it. One sneeze at a time is never enough for her – she sneezes at least five times in a row and does it like a boss! When she isn't causing small hurricanes from the powerful forces of her sneezing, she enjoys filling her days by compiling audit data to send to the Feds, and she's our master for the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) calculations.

Linda Hall, aka Sneaky - Linda is our newest addition, and we have come to learn that she's a fabulous practical joker. Just recently she almost gave Sneezzy (Alenita) a heart attack due to a well-hidden and very life-like feeling lizard placed in the greenery of a peace lily. While she enjoys office pranks, she does do actual work here! She's our internal auditor, and is currently leading our group throughout the budget review process.

Last but not least there's me, **Meridith Boman**. I'll dub myself **Happy**. Sometimes my enthusiasm in life is a little too in-your-face for some people, and they don't even see me coming.

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I tend to speak and act without any processing whatsoever, which is how recently I found myself at the ALASBO Summer Leadership surprise bear-hugging poor Andy Ratliff. He never saw me coming, and I remembered too late that some people actually have personal bubbles. Sorry about that, Andy. Sometimes my glee gets the



best of me and it explodes into other people's personal spaces. When I'm not attacking people with joy, I work with the school bond reimbursement program, boarding home and residential programs, and indirect cost rates.

Our small, but lively section has collectively worked for DEED for over 40 years, and we look forward to working with, and supporting the school districts for many more.

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

Summer Leadership Experience

Maisha Ekamrak, Yupiit School District

I work as an Accounting Technician and am relatively new to ALASBO. I am very glad that the Swarner Leadership Grant helped benefit me to attend the 2017 ALASBO Summer Leadership Conference in Sitka, Alaska.

I did see some familiar faces from the 2016 ALASBO Annual Conference. I am very excited about the changes that were planned for the 2017 Annual Conference this year. There was a lot of good input and the conference will provide great resources that will be awesome for our staff. I believe that the sessions will help many school district staff members to be more alert and efficient with the work that we do.

I am looking forward to attending the 2017 ALASBO Annual Conference to participate in the sessions that relate to my job. Also, I would love to meet with other school districts that have similar procedures.

I enjoyed the group activities during the Summer Leadership conference. It was such an adventure! I am very glad to have experienced the beautiful site of Sitka, Alaska, which I had never visited before. I'm very curious to know where the next site will be for Summer Leadership!

This opportunity was greatly appreciated.



Maisha and husband Jarin in Sitka

Fraud in School Business

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

The number of fraud cases in the media, affecting all types of organizations is truly alarming! While it's comfortable to think, "it won't happen to us", warnings from ASBO International and details of actual cases demonstrate that **Alaska school districts are the perfect potential victims of fraud.** And in our rapidly changing world of technology, the methods to steal money and data keep evolving!

The most important thing you can do TODAY to prevent fraud is to remind your employees that they need to check with their supervisors if they notice any unusual request or activity. Just like at the airport, the mantra should be: **"If you see something, say something."**

There are two types of fraud, both of which are becoming more common in school districts and other entities:

Internal Fraud – An employee steals money, supplies, equipment or data. In this case, the employee is knowingly stealing from the organization. It's amazing to hear about cases like in several Alaska unions and school district student activities programs where the stealing goes on for years undetected. Internal controls and program audits that go below the level of the

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overall school district audit are critical for preventing this type of fraud. Again, it's important for all employees to be drilled that, "If you see something, say something!"

External Fraud – In these cases, employees are duped by fraudsters from outside the organization into transferring money or data. We've all learned to ignore the African prince emails and more recently the fake invoices for immediate payment.

But the fraudsters are becoming more sophisticated, and they can now easily make the email look like it came from your Superintendent, the Business Manager, or the Board President, for example, even without hacking into your email system. Even the personal email style of the supervisor can be imitated by the fraudster.

An employee trying to work efficiently might go ahead and process the financial transfer or send confidential data, without stopping to question an unusual request. Why does the Superintendent need everyone's W-2 information? Why does the Business Manager need a large transfer to an outside bank account, with "details to follow"? A "reply-to" email may go to the fraudster. So, **the number one training tip to employees is to verify unusual requests by phone or personal contact, don't rely on email alone!**

Sadly, ALASBO fell victim to external fraud in late 2016, and the Board has been working with me to strengthen internal controls. Another local case hit the Juneau Soccer Club, written up here: <http://juneauempire.com/local/2017-04-14/juneau-soccer-club-scammed-out-more-13k>

At a recent ASBO event, I attended an IRS session on fraud and found out just how easy and common it is for personal data such as W-2 information to be sold on the "dark web". The big money is for fraudsters to use this data to apply for tax refunds. If this type of data is stolen, it is critical to report the theft ASAP to the IRS!

At the IRS session, I learned about phishing, typo squatting, ransomware, to name a few...it's all rather overwhelming! Regular updates on the latest schemes and how to prevent or deal with them are here: <https://www.irs.gov/uac/security-summit>.

It's impossible to cover all the types of fraud that are cropping up in this short article. But here are some practical actions to take:

- Talk to your employees and volunteers who handle money and data – Use some of the examples above, review internal controls and emphasize, "If you see something, say something!"
- Talk to your auditors – What kinds of fraud are they seeing? How do they recommend strengthening internal controls and internal audits in your district?
- Talk to your insurance provider – What kinds of fraud are they seeing? Are you covered for the latest types of risk?
- Talk to your bankers – What kinds of fraud are they seeing? Are your funds protected?
- Attend internal control and fraud sessions at ALASBO and ASBO conferences. Sadly, it looks like fraud will continue to be a hot topic for a long time to come.

Alaska Education Challenge

ALASBO member comments on the AK Education Challenge are welcome! ALASBO has so far hosted two Power Lunch discussions on this topic, in May and August. Thanks to Luke Fulp of Matsu School District, who is representing ALASBO on the Modernization and Finance Committee.

You can find out more about the challenge on the Governor's website: <https://gov.alaska.gov/administration-focus/alaskas-education-challenge/>. Also, information and discussion groups are available on Ed Connector.

Discussion by ALASBO members at the August 16 Power Lunch focused on the Enabling Resources Affinity Draft; in particular, references to the **foundation formula** were discussed. Organizers of the Education Challenge are looking for transformational change. We continue to emphasize that *adequacy of funding through BSA is paramount; consistency and predictability of funding would be transformational to education delivery in Alaska!*

In addition, any changes to foundation formula should be research-based; recent studies have supported the current formula.

Committee meetings for the Alaska Education Challenge will continue through the fall, with reports to the Governor and the Legislature expected by the end of the year.

Summer Leadership Experience

Alicia Campbell, Matsu School District

As a first time participant in the Summer Leadership event, I want to share with you my experience. Participating in ALASBO Summer Leadership was an invaluable experience. I am grateful that I was able to attend this year, and encourage you to attend next year!

The Summer Leadership event allowed ample opportunities to network and learn from school business officials throughout the state. I found that ALASBO members who attend leadership have extensive knowledge of Alaska school business and are always willing to share their time and expertise. I learned how other school districts do business, and how they overcame challenges within their districts. As you face new challenges in your districts, the information gathered here can be so useful.

Attending Leadership also gave me an opportunity to participate in the planning of the December conference. The conference is a large event and so much goes into providing a quality experience. Thank you to everyone during who participated in the leadership event, putting time and effort into insuring that the December conference agenda meets the needs of all ALASBO members.

Lastly, I want to say that I loved Sitka and thoroughly enjoyed my visit. It was fantastic to visit a new community and to spend time with new and longtime friends. Thank you to Sitka School District staff Cassee Olin and Leslie Young for being such great hosts. I love your town!



Alicia and colleagues, networking on the beach in Sitka!

ASBO Federal Legislative Resources

ASBO International has stepped up efforts to monitor and influence federal legislation that affects education in recent years. ASBO now co-hosts an annual July Fly-In to DC with the National Association of School Superintendents.

Even if you can't make it to DC, here are some ways you can use ASBO resources to keep track of what's going on:

- Review **Legislative Resources page** on ASBO website, which includes summary of current priorities and PDF document with detailed descriptions:
<http://asbointl.org/resources/legislative-priorities>
- Join the **Legislative Affairs Community** on ASBO's Global School Business Network (GSBN), which gives you access to regular updates on current activity in DC. All ALASBO members have access to GSBN, even if you're not currently an ASBO member. If you need help using GSBN, contact ALASBO Executive Director Amy Lujan, alasbo@gci.net.



Upcoming Events

- ASBO Annual Meeting and Expo, Denver, Co Sept 22-25
- ALASBO Annual Conference, Anchorage, AK Dec 3-6

ALASBO 2017 Liaison and Mentor Assignments

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

Past-President -- Mark Vink --

Bering Strait, 624-4256, mvink@bssd.org

Robbie MacManus

Alaska Gateway Schools
883-5151x109 rmacmanus@agsd.us

Chelsea Sternicki

Aleutian Region Schools
277-2648 csternicki@aleutregion.org

Megan Antolin-Antonio

Aleutians East Borough Schools
383-5222x7003 mantolin@aebdsd.org

Jim Anderson

Anchorage School District
742-4369 anderson_jim01@asdk12.org

Ashley Coila

Annette Island Schools
886-2272 acoila@aisd.k12.ak.us

Mark Vink

Bering Strait Schools
624-4256 mvink@bssd.org

Secretary -- Carl Horn --- Nenana

832-5400 chorn@nenanlynx.org

Sherry Kern

Bristol Bay Borough Schools
246-4225 skern@bbbsd.net

Teri Dierick, Contractor

Chatham Schools
586-6806x235 terid@serrc.org

Adrienne Fleming

Chugach Schools 522-7400
afleming@chugachschoools.com

Kathy Gearhart

Copper River Schools
822-3234x298 kgearhart@crsd.us

Kristy Andrew

Cordova City Schools
424-3265 kandrew@cordovasd.org

Cynthia Bennett

Craig City Schools
826-3274 x3004
cbennett@craigschools.com

Director Seat A -- Alicia Campbell --- Matsu, 746-9225,
Alicia.campbell@matsuk12.us

Kim Johnson

Delta/Greely Schools
895-4657x25 kjohnson@dgsd.k12.ak.us

Reena Voivedich

Denali Borough Schools
683-2278x5015 reenavoivedich@dbdsd.org

Lucienne Smith, Contractor

Dillingham City Schools
677-9263 lucienne.smith@akebs.com

Lisa Pearce

Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools
452-2000x11302 lisa.pearce@k12northstar.org

Edith Hildebrand

Galena City Schools 656-1883x108
edith.hildebrand@galenanet.com

Judy Erekson

Haines Borough Schools
766-6725 jerekson@hbsd.net

Amy Stevenson

Hoonah City Schools
945-3611 stevensona@hoonahschools.org



Carl Horn may kayak into the Sitka sunset...!

Director Seat B -- Lila Krossschell --- North Slope, 852-9669, lila.krossschell@nsbsd.org

Lucienne Smith, Contractor

Hydaburg City Schools
677-9263 lucienne.smith@akebs.com

Tammy White, Contractor

Iditarod Area Schools
460-0047, tammywhite@coreak.org

David Means

Juneau Borough Schools
523-1770 david.means@juneauschools.org

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Lonnie Cavanaugh
 Kake City Schools
 785-3995 lmcavanaugh@kakeschools.com

Antonia Moses
 Kashunamiut Schools
 858-7713 amoses@chevakschool.org

Dave Jones
 Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools
 714-8838 djones2@kpbsd.k12.ak.us

Adam Thompson
 Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools
 247-2116 adam.thompson@k21schools.org



Miniature owl at Alaska Raptor Center, Sitka

Director Seat C -- Meridith Boman --- EED,
 465-8683, meridith.boman@alaska.gov

Yodean Armour
 Klawock City Schools 755-2220x232
 yodean.armour@klawockschool.com

Sandy Daws
 Kodiak Island Borough Schools
 481-2283 sdaws01@kibsd.org

Martha Morgan
 Kuspuk Schools 675-4250x253
 mmorgan@kuspuk.org

Laura Hylton
 Lake and Peninsula Borough Schools
 246-4280x310 lhylton@lpsd.com

Blair Alden
 Lower Kuskokwim Schools
 543-4820 Blair_Alden@lksd.org

Andrew Leavitt
 Lower Yukon Schools
 591-2411 aleavitt@lysd.org

Luke Fulp
 Mat-Su Borough Schools
 746-9277 luke.fulp@matsuk12.us

Director Seat D -- Karen Quitslund --- Petersburg, 772-4271, business@pcsd.us

Carl Horn
 Nenana City Schools
 832-5400x230 chorn@nenanalynx.org

Genevieve Hollins, Contractor
 Nome Public Schools
 677-9263 gevenieve.hollins@akebs.com

David Nielsen
 North Slope Borough Schools
 852-9664 david.nielsen@nsbsd.org

Lucy Nelson
 Northwest Arctic Borough Schools
 442-1819 lnelson@nwarctic.org

Royce Mattson
 Pelican City Schools
 735-2236 rmattson@pelicanschool.org

Karen Quitslund
 Petersburg City School District
 772-4271 business@pcsd.us

Tammy White, Contractor
 Pribilof Island Schools
 460-0047 tammywhite@coreak.org



Fortress of the Bear grizzly, Sitka

Director Seat E --- Vacant – contact Amy Lujan,
Executive Director – ALASBO, 723-7415,
 alasbo@gci.net

Davey Shields, Contractor
 Saint Mary's Schools
 245-0651 dshields@smcsd.us

Cassee Olin
 Sitka Borough Schools
 966-1254 olinc@sitkaschools.org

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Cindy O'Daniel
Skagway City Schools
983-2960x2 busmgr@skagwayschool.org

Lucienne Smith, Contractor
Southeast Island Schools
677-9263 lucienne.smith@akebs.com

Ryan Ayars
Southwest Region Schools
842-8207 rayars@swrsd.org

Teri Dierick, Contractor
Tanana Schools
586-6806x235 terid@serrc.org

Holly Holman
Unalaska City Schools
581-3151 hholman@ucsd.net

Director Seat F -- Ryan Ayars --- Southwest Region,
842-8207, rayars@swrsd.org

Amber Cockerham
Valdez City Schools 835-4700
acockerham@valdezcitieschools.org

Pam Roope
Wrangell City Schools 874-2347x250
proope@wrangellschools.org

Teri Dierick, Contractor
Yakutat City Schools
586-6806x235 terid@serrc.org

Nancy Shewfelt
Yukon Flats Schools
662-2515x32 nancy.shewfelt@yukonflats.net

Jenny Martens
Yukon-Koyukuk Schools 374-9409
jmartens@yksd.com

Lisa Taylor
Yupit Schools
825-3600 ltaylor@yupit.org



Beachcombers, Sitka

School Business Academy Mentor Assignments

Mentor—Quitslund, Karen Finance Director
Petersburg, 772-4271 business@pcsd.us
Tim Bauer, Superintendent
Annette Island, 788-6412, tbauer@aisdk12.org

Mentor—Cassie Olin Business Manager
Sitka, 966-1254 olinc@sitkaschools.org
Kelley Fink, Payroll Supervisor
Juneau, 523-1781, Kelley.fink@juneauschools.org

Mentor—David Means Director of Admin Services
Juneau, 523-1770, david.means@juneauschools.org
Anthony Habra, Superintendent
Haines, 766-6725, ahabra@hbsd.net

Mentor—Alicia Campbell Accounting Supervisor
Mat-Su, 746-9225, Alicia.campbell@matsuk12.us
Sarah Jahn, Finance Officer
Juneau, 523-1780, sarah.jahn@juneauschools.org

Mentor—Amy Lujan Executive Director
ALASBO, 723-7415, alasbo@gci.net
Erich Kuball, Interim Superintendent
Kuspuk, 675-4250, ekuball@kuspuk.org

Mentor—Carl Horn Director, Admin Services
Nenana, 832-5400, chorn@nenanalynx.org
Caleb Rehfeld, School Finance Acctg Spec
SERRC, 523-7215, kalebr@serrc.org

Mentor—Jenny Martens Business Manager
Yukon Koyukuk, 374-9409, jmartens@yksd.com
Ralph Watkins, Principal
Hoonah, 946-3611, watkinsr@hoonahschools.org

Mentor—Laura Hylton Business Manager
Lake & Pen, 246-420, lhylton@lpsd.com
Amanda Williams, Accounting Specialist
Yukon Koyukuk, 374-9400, awilliams@yksd.com

2017
ANNUAL MEETING
ASB
& EXPO
September 22-25 | Denver, Colorado