

ALASBO News Link...



August 2018

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

Cassee Olin, Sitka School District



It's that time of year again, when summer starts winding down and the doors to our schools open up to let our students into our buildings. I for one feel like summer has flown by, but then again I am sure many can relate as I spent three months with my new daughter, Brynlee, who was born on May 15th. I hope that everyone found some time for summer activities as they prepare for their annual audit and the start of the school year.

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Summer Leadership was in Fairbanks/Nenana this year and we had 33 ALASBO members attending, as well as guests and vendors. Thank you to our five vendor sponsors, for their support of our Leadership Conference. The vendor presentations were on Friday night and they were very informative. It was great seeing the familiar faces of our vendor representatives from American Fidelity, Dude Solutions, GCI, KEV Group, and Tyler Technologies. Thanks to Carl Horn, Jenny Martens and Heather Heineken for local logistics support in Nenana and Fairbanks!



Josh Peach of Dude Solutions had his presentation memorably interrupted by clown Shriners!

On Saturday morning, we began reviewing the Executive Director documents for our job posting. We had an excellent discussion on what type of individual we are looking for and made some adjustments to our posting and job description. We then broke out into small groups to discuss what type of interview questions should be asked of job applicants. We came away with a great number of questions that the sub-committee will be using in the interviews. The job posting will be released very soon at different venues throughout the state and nation.

We then moved on to the next item on our agenda, which was a discussion of the New Business Manager Institute (NBMI) led by ALASBO Honorary Member, Melody Douglas. We are expecting to launch the NBMI at the December annual conference. Be on the lookout for information about the NBMI soon!

After lunch, we began planning for the annual conference with a review of the presentation proposals. At about 3 PM, the group made our way to Nenana from Fairbanks, which is about a

one-hour drive. We had great weather, great scenery and conversations to pass the time. Once we all arrived in Nenana, Carl Horn took us on a tour of the town, where we stopped to see the Coghill's General Store, the Tanana River, and the Nenana Ice Classic tripod. It was fun seeing all the sights of Nenana! Once we arrived at the Student Living Center, we heard a presentation from Jens Jacobsen, who is principal at Nenana. It was impressive to hear all of the wonderful things that are going on in the Nenana School District, which includes both residential and correspondence programs.



What's not to love about a day like this one on the Chena River?

On Sunday morning, we continued our planning for the annual conference. It was helpful to have the collaboration of our colleagues, to make sure that we are representing all components of our organization, from human resources to food service to audit and budget. We went over the conference evaluations from last year while reviewing comments and concerns along with any suggestions along the way. Our conference is shaping up to be a great one! We closed out Sunday afternoon with white water rafting down the Nenana River in 90-degree weather. After the adventure, we were treated to a great BBQ by the rafting company. All in all, it was a great weekend! Thanks to everyone who made leadership a great success!

Finally, please consider attending the ASBO International Fall Meeting and Expo to be held in Kissimmee, Florida on September 21-24. This will be my third year attending the meeting and I am always excited to have the opportunity to attend and meet many others from around the US and other countries who deal with the same thing we do every day.

I hope to see you in Florida and if not, then definitely in Anchorage in December! I wish everyone luck with their annual audit and the beginning of the new year.

Executive Director's Message

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

Once again, the summer is flying by!

President Cassee and Swarner grantee John Stackhouse have provided excellent summaries of **Summer Leadership**, which was fantastic! Carl Horn, you surpassed expectations with true summer weather! If you haven't attended before, I encourage you to consider integrating this fun event into your schedule in the future. Even sooner, you have the chance to join us at **ASBO International** in September, and of course at our December **Annual Conference**, which is not to be missed! As John points out, the collegiality (an ALASBO Value!) at these events is extremely important to our success in our jobs.

2018

 **ANNUAL MEETING & EXPO**
KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA | September 21-24

I want to make sure everyone's aware that the **Executive Director job posting** is now available on the ALASBO website! I plan to complete my tens years of service as ED in December, as discussed in the last newsletter. Note that this is a part-time, contractor position.

The Board transition team plans to interview in September/October, and the new person would begin training just before and during the annual conference, with full contract duties beginning January 1. Please spread the word, so we can find a great person for this important ALASBO leadership position! Either Cassee or I would be happy to talk further with anyone interested in learning more.



In addition to Summer Leadership this past month, ALASBO completed its **financial statements** for the year ending March 1, 2018. We had an excellent year financially. These statements as well as past statements are available on our website, on the About-Operations and Financials page.

Please start thinking about nominations for this year's **School Business Official of the Year!** The nomination form will be available in about a month. ALASBO members, immediate supervisors and school board members may submit nominations. More information about this program, including a list of past recipients is

available on our website, on the Resources-Awards page.

Finally, I'd like to give you a "heads-up" on a new pilot program we are developing, a **New Business Manager Institute (NBMI)**. This will be a multi-year program, modeled after a program that has been successfully developed at Oregon ASBO over the past six years. It is far more extensive than our current School Business Academy and mentoring programs, to provide support to those who are new, or relatively new to the business manager role. You'll be hearing more about this program over the next few months, and we plan to roll it out this December! Many thanks are due to Melody Douglas and a team of ALASBO Honorary Members who are working on developing this program.

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, including past presentations and recordings of Power Lunches at: www.alasbo.org. For additional information and events registration, navigate to our Events page!

ALASBO Baby Boomlet

What's going on out there??? ALASBO President Cassee Olin, long-time member Heidi Teshner of DEED and frequent presenter Katie Stachow of Altman Rogers all gave birth within weeks of each other this spring. Quite the baby boomlet for our ALASBO family!

Best wishes to all the new moms and families!

Summer Leadership Recap

John Stackhouse, Yupiit School District

It was hot; probably the hottest day of the year. The high cliffs on either side provide a brief respite from the sun as the raft surged through the churning water. Water that was hundred-year-old ice merely twelve hours ago drenched us as we struggled to maintain the raft upright. "Forward two!" came the call from the helmsman as we dipped our oars in unison to pull away from some unseen danger.

The weekend began for some on Friday night with dinner and presentations from vendors. I, however, straggled in late and missed the festivities. Saturday came early and I joined business managers, purchasing agents,

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accounting technicians, and ALASBO leadership for the first day of the session. Introductions were made as we learned about each other's histories, school districts, and aspirations for the future. Friendships were renewed and some new ones began.

Later on the first day, we piled into cars, trucks, and a Corvette and began the long, beautiful drive to Nenana. Pristine countryside rolled out on each side and an occasional view of Denali punctuated the horizon.

We arrived in Nenana and were proudly shown around by Carl Horn to the Ice Classic Capital of Alaska. He regaled us with tales of the first ice tripod (despite the fact that it has four legs!) and President Harding's driving of the last nail on the railroad. Later, we were treated to a fantastic tour of the Learning Center and met the famous Jens Jacobsen, 2018 BP teacher of the year.



Wahoo – we made it to Nenana!

Over the course of those days, the plan was developed for the ALASBO annual. As a team, we discussed what topics would be relevant for all business managers across the state.



Yes, It's really Nenana!

We addressed the needs of the small rural district as well as the desires of the large urban ones.

And then came the day we had all been waiting for! We remounted our trusty steeds and traveled down to "Raft Denali." We spent several hours oaring down the Nenana Gorge on an eleven-mile adventure. On this day budding friendships burst into full bloom. From shared hardship fruited camaraderie and bonded business leaders into a strong network of friends.

Note: Business Manager John Stackhouse is new to Yupiit School District and to Alaska. He received the Swarner grant to attend Summer Leadership and meet his ALASBO colleagues for the first time!



Sometimes it gets a bit...



ROUGH...



...but We're All in This Together!!!



ALASBO Awards

Thanks to ALASBO's Awards Committee, Chaired by Liz Hayes of Kenai School District for their work on our grants and scholarship selections.

Lowell Thomas Freeman Grant to attend ASBO International Conference – this grant is in honor of ALASBO's founding member and is sponsored by CORE, Inc.:

- Reena Voivedich, Denali Borough School District

Richard Swarner "Shaping the Future" Grant for first-time attendees at ALASBO's Summer Leadership Conference – this grant is in honor of another founding member of ALASBO and is sponsored by the Swarner family and National Cooperative RX:

- John Stackhouse, Yupiit School District

Mack Easton Scholarships for high school seniors – these scholarships are named for an ALASBO member who was killed tragically in a 1988 auto accident and are sponsored by GCI Education:

- Kayla Hay, Wrangell High School
- Brian Conwell, Unalaska High School

Congratulations to all recipients!

Thoughts on Leadership

Kristy Andrew, Cordova School District

The conclusion of our 2018 ALASBO Leadership Conference seems like a great time to discuss some of my thoughts on leadership. One of the things I love about our organization, and especially our Summer Leadership Conference, is that they are not just for those at the top. This conference is not just for business managers and directors, but also for accountants, payroll specialists, purchasing agents, etc. Similarly, leadership is not just reserved for those at the top, but can be found in each of us, regardless of our position within the organization.

You may have heard the phrase, "leadership is a behavior, not a position". While there are many different ways to lead, what sets leaders apart is their behavior and most importantly, their ability to influence others. Influence, however, is not something that can be given to you or granted to you with a promotion, it is something you must build. Sure, people may follow you when you have an important title, but influence is bigger than that. I believe our leadership goal, at a minimum, should be for people to follow us because they want to.

One of my favorite ideas on leadership comes from John C. Maxwell. In a recent podcast he states, "Without integrity there is no trust. Without trust there is no confidence. Without confidence there is no leadership." If you agree with this, then you have to ask... to be a leader, does one really need to work on the next promotion, or do you need to work on developing your own integrity and creating an environment of trust with those around you?

My hope is that you will each explore your own potential to lead. Are you working to develop integrity, trust, and confidence? If not, why not? You are an integral part of your organization, and you have ideas and skills, which could enhance not only your work, but also the work of those around you. You have the tools to make positive changes in your district, and you can start leading from where you are now!

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

P-CARD UPDATE

Amy Lujan, ALASBO Executive Director

During the summer of 2018, the IASBO P-card program distributed nearly \$5.5 million in rebates on a spending volume of \$384 million, and \$475,656 of that went to the twenty participating Alaska school districts!

The highest rebates were given to: Fairbanks - \$184,003; Matsu - \$71,768; Ketchikan- \$24,572; and Juneau - \$24,259. Eleven other districts, including REAA's, borough and single site districts, received rebates of \$5,000 or more. *This is not small change. Why should your district miss out?*

ALASBO began participating in this best practices program in 2007-2008. In the eleven years of participation, ALASBO has passed through **an astonishing \$2.2 million in rebates to Alaska school districts!**

What's a P-Card?

P-card stands for procurement or purchasing card. Use of p-cards is recognized as a best practice in the school business industry. In this program, the p-cards are Mastercards controlled by your school district that can be issued to a person or a department. The district administrator can also control the daily, weekly and transaction limits, and even the types of items that can be purchased on each card. This program is designed with school districts in mind, and it gives the program administrator much more control and many more options than a standard credit card program.



How is the Program Set Up?

Illinois ASBO (IASBO) originated this program and has allowed other state affiliates such as ALASBO to become involved. IASBO provides assistance with setting up the program and with issues that arise. Bank of Montreal is the card issuer.

By participating in the IASBO program, Alaskan districts take advantage of the negotiating power

of a much larger group of districts. Rebates are larger than districts could receive on their own.

There are NO annual fees! Rebates come through IASBO annually, in the spring. They're currently 1.27 – 1.62% of the transaction volume, depending on the billing cycle selected. ALASBO retains a portion of the rebate, which starts at 25% and decreases as district's purchasing volume grows. New this year, districts also receive 100% of an additional rebate related to the average spend per card.

District p-card administrators are trained in Spend Dynamics, a system that enables them to monitor card activity in real time. Since we've continued to grow our ALASBO user group, we're able to support training in the program software during our annual conference, as well as a helpful Discussion Group session and sharing among our members to maximize the program.

What are the Benefits?

In addition to the rebates, the p-card program saves money. Management studies have shown that purchase orders and high check volumes are extremely costly. Many districts also struggle to deal with vendors that don't accept PO's, small dollar purchases and last-minute items for maintenance, travel, and special events. Properly managed p-cards can solve many of these headaches and save costs, with fewer PO's, fewer checks, and real-time monitoring of expenditures.

If your district already has a credit card, why not switch to a p-card, with no annual fees and a rebate? Alaskan districts that can pay utility bills and other large-volume vendors with the p-card can generate large rebates quickly, with even a limited program.

How Can I Sign Up?

Further information and links are at www.alasbo.org, under Resources-Information Library. The application process does require a Board resolution (since you are applying for credit) and several weeks for bank approval, so get started now! There will be several sessions at the Annual Conference in December for those interested in starting a p-card program.

ALASBO Power Lunches

*11 AM to noon, via teleconference;
call 605-472-5814, code 533-330-891*

Aug 21 Chart of Accounts Revisions
See Power Lunch page on website for schedule, documents and audio from prior month.

ALASBO



Member Spotlight

Meridith Boman, Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

Tell us about your school district

I work on the School Finance team in the Department of Education & Early Development. We are a team of four. I introduced them in a previous ALASBO newsletter, and Elwin Blackwell is the School Finance Manager.

How long have you been in school business?

I've been a part of the School Finance team for almost eight years. Prior to School Finance, I worked in the Teacher Certification section of DEED.

How did you get into this business?

I'd worked in Teacher Certification for 7 years and was ready for a change of pace. Thanks to Jim Farrington who took a job with Anchorage School District, a position became available in School Finance. I was thankful to see him leave only because it afforded me this opportunity.

What do you like best about your job?

We have a small, but amazing group in School Finance. It truly is a wonderful to be a part of this team. We're able to make each other laugh, even during the stressful times.

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

Reach out to us here at DEED and get connected with an ALASBO mentor. There are so many resources to help anyone along the way.

How have you benefited from membership in ALASBO?

I feel so much more connected with business managers and district staff that I've met. Prior to attending my first conference, I felt very disconnected. It helps immensely to meet people at the annual conference.

What do you like to do for fun?

I love hiking, running, camping, fishing – just about anything outside. There's something very therapeutic about being out on a trail, or out in the fresh air somewhere.


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

I'd love to visit the Balkans, but more specifically, the Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro coastlines. A friend recently took a year off to travel with her family, which is when I first took notice from her pictures. Later, I found out another good friend has loads of family there, and they confirmed that the area has breathtaking landscape and unprecedented hospitality. It's now on my bucket list.

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

I truly don't even know. I'm such an open book. Ask me anything & I'll answer. If anything, I tend to err on the side of oversharing!

What is your proudest accomplishment?

 My children. I absolutely treasure the moments when they say or do something that shows me that all the time I've spent pouring into their lives, trying to raise good kids, they'd been listening. They're really amazing little people, and quite humorous.

Eagle Institute Report

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

This summer, I had to the honor to attend ASBO's Eagle Institute for the first time! This summer conference offers high quality leadership development in a setting where presenters can draw on historical examples. Recent Eagle Institutes have been held in Gettysburg, Washington DC, Williamsburg and Alexandria. This year's conference was held in Philadelphia.



"SIGNED AND DELIVERED AND FRANKLIN WILL POST IT TO OUR FACEBOOK PAGE."

It was inspiring to learn about the founders of our nation and the challenges they faced. We visited historic sites, including Independence Hall, where

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both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were drafted and ratified. Benjamin Franklin is probably the most famous Philadelphian, with Rocky in second place. We can all learn from Franklin's wisdom, which was integrated throughout our sessions.

This conference includes only 55 participants, so it's a great opportunity to get to know colleagues from across the country in a small group setting. We had several excellent presentations, but my favorite was on leading through **the power of positive psychology**, presented by Dr. Chris Maxwell of the University of Pennsylvania.



Benjamin Franklin had several wise things to say about happiness, including:

- *"The Constitution only guarantees you the right to pursue happiness. You have to catch it yourself."*
- *"For happiness there are three things you need: a good dog, a good wife and ready money."*

Dr. Maxwell pointed out that in our time there are two significant trends that are negatively affecting happiness levels: **income inequality**, as shown by data across many countries correlated to happiness; and **increased use of smartphones and social media**, which is particularly affecting teenagers. "Sticky" apps give us a shot of dopamine so we keep going back, but they don't really promote happiness.

Leaders are advised to develop **five areas in pursuit of happiness** for themselves and others in the work environment:

- 1) **Character Strength** – Find out what you and your team are best at, and leverage those strengths! The Via Institute on Character offers a free survey to identify these strengths. We compared our results with our colleagues and discussed the diversity. Of the 24 strengths, my top five are: Judgment,

Prudence, Forgiveness, Curiosity and Fairness. You can take the survey at: www.viacharacter.org.

- 2) **Nurture Positive Emotions** – Taking a break for a walk around the block or a chat with colleagues can do wonders to help people deal with difficult projects. The décor around the office really is important! Studies have shown that if employees are encouraged to take a few minutes to watch inspiring videos, they're better able to broaden their thinking and draw from internal resources later in the day.
- 3) **Explanatory Style** – Learned helplessness is a trait that can work against us. Often it's not the adversity that matters, but how a person explains the adversity, i.e. optimism vs. pessimism. This is something we can work on in our personal outlook on life.
- 4) **Resilience** – Life will take us through periods of adversity, but it is the beliefs we apply to each situation, through the ticker tape running through our heads that will determine the consequences with regard to feelings and behaviors. Reframing our beliefs as we face adversity enables us to be resilient.
- 5) **Grit** – This term is defined by passion and perseverance. Researcher Angela Duckworth has developed a short assessment that has proven highly predictive of success at the US Military Academy, more than intelligence, leadership ability or physical fitness! We can all develop personal grit to help us work through challenges.

Dr. Maxwell recommended his organization's website for tools and assessment to develop positive psychology for the pursuit of happiness in our own lives and for those we lead: <https://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu>

A parting note to remember: Organizations move in the direction of the questions they ask!

Upcoming Events

- *ASBO International Conference, Kissimmee, FL, September 21-24*
- *ALASBO Annual Conference, Anchorage, AK, December 2-5*
- *ASBO Executive Leadership Forum, February 14-16, 2019, San Diego, CA*
- *ACSA Legislative Fly-In, Juneau, AK, March 24-27, 2019*

ALASBO 2018 Liaison and Mentor Assignments

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

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