

NBMI Program

This outline briefly describes each of the seven (7) modules in the NBMI curriculum that will be delivered over a three year period by veteran Alaska school business officials.

Module 1

Managing School/District Finances

Managing district finances involves financial planning and financial control. The ultimate aim of both disciplines is to make sure that sufficient funding is available, at the right time, for districts to meet their educational and service-delivery objectives. In the short term, financial management provides for staffing and purchasing needed materials - like books, computers, and tables. In the long term it means planning for larger acquisitions that are part of a district's improvement and development plan.

The principles of district financial management

Overview of the module

All districts must have financial regulations and guidelines, aimed at maintaining financial integrity and compliance with statutory legislation.

Unit 1 explores these regulations and guidelines, detailing where they may be found and how you can ensure you're complying with them.

The roles of staff involved in the district's financial transactions are also examined, so you can monitor their activities and authority levels, ensuring that everything runs smoothly and happens when it needs to happen.

If things go wrong, and improprieties take place, you need to be able to recognize this very quickly, and resolve the situation, so the unit discusses the types of impropriety that might occur and what you can do to ensure that problems of this nature become an unlikely event.

Introduction

Successfully managed districts are well run, with good organization and transparent procedures. Financially successful districts contribute to the success of schools through helpful and effective allocation of resources. As the finance expert you ensure your district's success in this area by staying up to date with regulations, initiating procedures and educating and advising colleagues as to their responsibilities.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this unit participants will be able to:

- understand the legislative context of district financial management and the requirement for probity and accountability in the management of district finances
- understand the different levels of roles and responsibilities of those involved in the district's financial management

- apply general accounting principles to district financial management to evaluate a district's systems
- summarize findings from an evaluation of a district's financial policies and make recommendations for improvement

Role of the SBO

While the SBO may carry major responsibilities for the district's finances it is important to remember that these responsibilities are often shared with other staff and that part of the SBO's role may be to coach them into understanding their responsibilities.

An understanding of the differing levels of delegation and the controls and procedures necessary to manage district finances honestly, reliably and effectively is essential for anyone working in the district environment. The school business officer, as the expert, will play a pivotal role in ensuring that the board and staff fully understand their respective roles and responsibilities, that there are appropriate financial regulations and procedures in place, and that these are complied with.

This unit discusses:

- roles, responsibilities and accountabilities
- probity in the public sector
- financial risks management including internal controls and financial management procedures
- auditing
- general accounting principles including fixed asset accounting
- district accounting systems

Financial policies and procedures

All districts should have financial policies. These are a set of requirements, restrictions, procedures and guidelines aimed at maintaining financial integrity and compliance with relevant policies and legal standards.

Underpinning the financial regulations should be a financial procedures manual that guides day to day operations and lays out how your district uses and manages its money. The financial procedures manual helps to establish financial controls within the district; ensuring accuracy, timeliness and completeness of financial data. The manual is generally used by finance staff, but it should also act as a reference for the board, administrators and other staff.

The regulations and procedures should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis and be accessible at all times to provide a definitive guide to best practice.

Grants Management

Overview of the unit

Districts often receive significant grants from other governments and organizations to support their programs and activities. Grants typically come with specialized requirements that can apply to the general operations of the grant, specific compliance rules, monitoring of other parties that may receive resources from the grants and specialized reporting requirements. There are generally negative consequences for failing to meet these requirements. Further, grants may, either as a condition of the grant itself or politically, commit a government to financially maintain a program or asset after the expiration of the grant. Accordingly, a district should develop a grants policy that requires certain steps be taken before applying for or accepting

grants to maximize the benefits of grants while minimizing their risks. This unit discusses various policies and procedures that should be considered for effective grants management and accounting.

Introduction

Effective Grant Management and Accounting is complex and challenging for a variety of reasons. Two of the biggest reasons are the adverse financial consequences associated with losing a grant, and the different and ever-changing rules, regulations, eligibility, recordkeeping, reporting and possible post-grant requirements that apply to various types of grants. Despite the challenges, grant funding resources often provide positive impacts to student achievement and district finances.

Some grant rules are far more stringent than typically good business and accounting practices, especially for federal grants. Uniform Guidance, issued by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), along with agency, program and grant specific requirements, obligates an organization receiving grant funds to understand the rules and regulations.

The mismanagement of grants can have both immediate and long-term negative consequences for a grantee. This includes loss of funding from both current and would-be future grantors, damage to one's reputation, and in the most severe cases, criminal prosecution. If grant reimbursements are denied, the district will be forced to cover the shortfall, most likely from the general fund, which may seriously impact the district's financial resources.

The school business official needs to maintain grant awareness and appropriate oversight to help the district avoid the worst-case scenario, where failure to follow grant rules could potentially require legal restitution of grant monies that have previously been spent.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Conduct the grants management process in an ethical manner
- Follow the terms and conditions associated with the grant
- Make requests for changes to an award in a timely manner before the project end
- Account for grant revenue and expenditures
- Fulfill reporting requirements throughout the grant award period
- Submit final reports in a timely manner
- Follow closeout procedures as stipulated by the grantor
- Fulfill records retention requirements
- Review district grant process for potential problems and recommend improvements

Module 2

Managing Self and Personal Skills

Overview of the module

Every position in the workforce has its demands and requires each of us to evaluate how best to meet those demands. Management of our time, resources and skills are critical to our success. This module will review:

- How you currently spend your time. What might you do to improve utilization of your time?
- How is your work space organized? Simple changes to our work space can provide significant improvements to our productivity.
- How do you prioritize workload and delegate to others? If you aren't delegating, why not?
- Continued professional development and networking are also key to your success today and into the future.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this module the successful candidate will be able to:

- Manage skills and time in order to achieve work objectives, understanding how the work role fits into the overall vision and objectives of the district.
- Understand how networking within the district and with colleagues in other contexts can support both current and future work
- Appreciate how Career Professional Development can support in the current role and in future career development
- Act with integrity, honesty, loyalty and fairness within the limits of professional competence

Module 3

Managing Human Resources in a District

Managing human resources (HR) involves attracting, recruiting, selecting, training and assessment of people and organizing their payroll and benefits. In addition it's concerned with managing people in a way that meets their work-life needs, while reducing risks to the district from difficulties with staffing. An important focus of every SBO's role is on helping all staff to contribute as fully and productively as possible to the wellbeing of everyone involved in the district. In circumstances where the District has collective bargaining agreements HR and the business office may also serve as the District's primary contact with the employees' representative. How SBOs can do this is set out in this module.

Personnel Management

Overview of the module

How do you ensure that your district recruits and retains the best people? There are five key components to successful staffing.

- Planning and Monitoring
- Recruiting
- Selecting
- Placement and Orientation
- Developing and Retaining

Planning is the first step to successful staffing and should be driven by needs. The staffing needs in your district will be impacted by many different issues, such as enrollment growth, mandatory program changes and attrition.

Unit 1 looks at everything you need to do to organize effective recruitment. The unit guides you through a needs assessment, recruitment processes from application to interview, and explains how to provide a thorough orientation to the successful candidate, so they feel welcomed into their new position and understand how their employment needs will be managed by you.

As you study this unit, you'll research the recruitment and selection processes employed by your district.

Introduction

This unit describes the employment life cycle. It focuses first upon the recruitment and selection process, including the evaluation of the need for a person to fill a position, the preparation of a job description and person specification. It looks at the practical tasks of advertising the vacancy, managing the selection process and hiring procedure, and drafting hiring and rejection letters.

The unit also covers employment issues such as orientation, probationary periods, discipline, grievance, competence, lay-offs, absence and termination of employment.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this unit participants will be able to:

- understand the principles and procedures for recruitment and selection processes in districts.
- assess a district's compliance with state legislation and guidance relating to equality rights
- evaluate correct procedures for the recruitment, selection, orientation, appointment and termination of personnel contracts within a district context
- report on current recruitment and selection practices in a district and make recommendations for improvement

Module 4

Working with People

On completion of this module the successful candidate will be able to:

- Understand how the success of their work impacts upon others
- Understand the importance of teams in the work place and the factors involved in successful team work
- Understand the importance of effective communication when working with others
- Support colleagues in identifying their learning and development needs and helping colleagues meet those needs

Module 5

Managing School Facilities

Facilities management is a significant element of the School business officer's role. It is a vital discipline in every school, and involves responsibility for the strategic development of the school site. Your job is therefore to create the necessary improvements to your school's infrastructure and operations while continuing to provide a safe and efficient working and learning environment.

Introduction

This unit outlines the key issues in planning the development of school premises including:

- How to identify and quantify need in order to avoid under, or over building? And the relationship to bonding
- Guidance on the use of external consultants and contractors, including the importance of effective briefing of consultants
- Examining the options for local management of capital works and the responsibilities associated with this approach
- Planning regulations in relation to schools

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this unit participants will be able to:

- Understand the principles and processes of strategic facilities planning in schools
- Use planning tools to evaluate a school's future facilities needs
- Identify potential projects in line with strategic development plans
- Produce a Facilities Development Plan for a school project

Module 6

Managing risk within the District

Accidents and natural disasters can be especially traumatic for students, staff and young people. Students look to us for guidance on how to manage their reactions; they also expect us to do as much as possible to ensure that risk in their environment is lessened or prevented. This module examines different types of risk, from sudden accidents and disasters to workplace health and safety issues that can develop over long periods. Studying the module will help you to understand risk and how it can be measured, managed and mitigated.

Management of risk

Overview of the module

Districts face many risks, including both high-level strategic risks such as damage to their reputation, and operational risks such as the possibility of injury to their employees.

In Unit 1 you'll find out how to manage these types of risk by carrying out regular risk assessments.

Identifying and removing some risks can only be done when risks and hazards are reported, so the unit considers what you can do to ensure that all types of risk are systematically reported, whether they stem from security breaches, public health concerns, or anything else - including levels of care of your students and staff.

But managing risk isn't just about preventing unwanted things from happening.

In this unit you'll discover risk management has a positive contribution to make to the functioning of your district - improving the quality of the learning environment and reducing insurance costs being just two possible contributions.

Introduction

In this unit we consider the risks, such as fire, theft, reputational damage that schools within your district face in their everyday operations. In order to minimize the possibility of loss you need to carry out regular risk assessments and the unit provides guidance on how to do this, using a 5-step model.

School business Officials (SBOs) responsible for the management of risk need to be able to evaluate both the likelihood of a specific hazard occurring and its potential impact on the smooth running of the school or district. Once potential hazards have been identified the SBO needs to put in place measures to control the risks involved and you will consider some of the ways of doing this.

NBMI Program Outline

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this unit participants will:

- understand the benefits of risk management to districts
- evaluate and take precautions against risks in schools within your district
- evaluate how you need to manage risk and the systems and processes involved
- summarize how districts could improve its policy and practice in risk management

Module 7

Ancillary Services

Society tends to view the mission of school districts as instructional only. That couldn't be further from the truth. Without the numerous support functions provided to support instructional programs, student instruction wouldn't happen. This unit will take a look at several of the "other" support services that school districts provide to ensure an environment conducive to quality learning.

Food Service Programs

Introduction

Food service is a key to effective and efficient operations of schools. This function is less visible than many others but provides vital instructional support through provision of quality nutritious meals.

Food services may not be required within all school districts however many districts choose to offer meals regardless of the mandate. Food Service programs include strict guidelines and policies designed to assist in meeting nutritional standards in a fair and equitable manner. They also play a role in educating students on healthy eating and living.

Poor student performance has been linked to nutrition and is supported by significant data. The role of food service in schools has increased over time as the link between nutrition and student performance has grown. In this unit you will consider the practical, regulatory, educational and social aspects of food service programs.

If your district does not provide a food service program reach out to a neighboring district and ask their staff for assistance with this unit. If you contract your services, you should discuss compliance with your program manager.

Before beginning this unit, go to the following website and review the various resources available to assist you in all aspects of your food services program.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit participants will:

- understand the policies, regulations and guidelines relating to food service;
- understand the general operations of food service programs;
- understand how to set meal prices;
- understand the impact of meal subsidies;
- understand how to evaluate and determine whether internal or external service provision is best for the district.

Student Transportation

Introduction

As is the case with food service an effective and efficient transportation system is critical to school operations. Every child deserves the opportunity to attend school without hardship. Transportation systems are key to providing equitable educational programs for students that would otherwise be disadvantaged if they could not get to school.

Transportation services may not be required within your school district. However, all stakeholders should be concerned about insuring student access to education. The first step to student success is accessibility. Every child has the right to a quality education regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Transportation services are undoubtedly one of the most visible services in all of schools. Bright yellow buses arrive at various pick up locations through-out the district to pick students up and deliver them to school. At the end of the day, these same buses reverse their routes and return these students safely home. This may create many questions and concerns regarding operations.

Transportation services include three primary areas with which the school business official should be familiar:

- Home to school
- Extracurricular activities such as sporting events, theatre, etc.
- Instructional and non-instructional fieldtrips

Before beginning this unit, go to the following website and review the various resources available to assist you in all aspects of your transportation program.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit participants will:

- understand the policies, regulations and guidelines relating to transportation;
- understand the general operations of transportation programs;
- understand the impact of funding subsidies;
- understand how to evaluate and determine whether internal or external service provision is best for the district