

ALASBO News Link...



February 2015

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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*Would you like to receive this newsletter in print,
rather than e-mail? Send a message to Amy Lujan at
the above address.*

President's Message

*Robin Mullins, Fairbanks North Star Borough
School District*

Hello ALASBO!

First of all, I'd like to applaud and give heartfelt thanks to Jim Farrington, Amy Lujan, and all of the past presidents, executive directors, boards members and leader-members dedicated to this organization. I wish I had adequate words to express my appreciation and admiration for all of your hard work on behalf of ALASBO. I will try to pick up where you've left off with the same zest and perseverance.

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I hope 2015 finds everyone well. A challenging year awaits; nothing new in the world of education finance. Every year brings different challenges and opportunities. ALASBO's mission "to promote the highest standards in school business practices" remains as vital as ever, since integrity and trust is critical to gaining and keeping community support for public education programs.



Through the years, ALASBO has provided reliable and objective information in response to legislative and other queries. We will continue to do so as legislative studies ordered last year progress. ALASBO has provided high quality professional development opportunities. We will continue to do so, in a cost effective manner, via the monthly teleconference "power lunches", and the summer leadership and winter conferences held in Alaska. We will also continue to offer mentoring opportunities to new Alaskan school business officials, as well as the benefit of our collective experience when questions arise and are circulated among our members. We couldn't do it without **YOU!**

You know who you are! You're the one who sends an email in response to the questions that Amy blasts out to all ALASBO members. Perhaps you answer questions from your nationwide colleagues when they're posed on the ASBO network, too. You're the one who picks up the phone, (or promptly returns calls) when advice is requested, or individual questions arise. My hat is off to all of you for the time and effort you spend in support of each other, as well as of our mission and goals.

Here's a challenge for ALASBO members: Encourage and help at least one new person from your organization to join ALASBO today. Our strength is in our membership, and it's a bargain to join at just \$75! The membership form is here: <http://www.alasbo.org/members/> Everyone involved with Alaskan school business is encouraged to join ALASBO! No one can do everything, but everyone can do something.

Is it just me, or does the 2014 conference seem like a distant memory to you, too? Maybe it's just the hustle and bustle of the "after conference" tasks we all return to: closing out the first semester and second quarter of the year, completing the annual calendar year end rituals, getting the FY15-16 proposed budgets finalized for public comment and school board

action, and the mid-year analysis to project fund balance. Maybe it's keeping a nervous eye on the impending negative budget impacts anticipated from the drop in oil prices that leaves me breathless. Maybe it's just that it's dropped to 40 below in Fairbanks this past week.



Whatever the reason, the next twelve months are likely to shape up to be a memorable year. "Achieving Success Together" is the ALASBO theme for 2015. I've no doubt, we will.

Take care of yourselves, folks!

Executive Director's Message

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

I hope your 2015 is off to a great start!

There's a lot going on in the ALASBO world already this year. Of course we're already into the legislative session, and I'd first like to highlight the **ALASBO Fly-In, March 16-18 in Juneau**. The Fly-In is a great way to learn more about how the legislative process functions, to work with your colleagues to get the word out about support ALASBO can provide and about our district needs.

We'll begin with a planning session on Monday from 1:30-5:30 PM, and then I'll be scheduling appointments for Tuesday and Wednesday. It's important for legislators to hear from constituents from around the state about the impact of funding levels and proposed legislation. Please let me know if you're able to attend the Fly-In!



On the ALASBO website, you'll find the ACSA Joint Position Statements in the "news" section. This document was approved by ALASBO membership at our annual meeting. After the Fly-In, our updated 2015 Talking Points will also be posted. On the "resources-downloads" page, you'll find a document with tips on how to keep up with legislative activity. There are some nice technology tools to help!

From our December conference, we now have 19 documents loaded from **annual conference presentations** on our website, www.alasbo.org, under resources-downloads. Check them out!

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Following up on our discussions of the **ALASBO Improvement Model (AIM)** at the annual conference, we are asking members to participate in team-based reviews of sections of the model. Participation in this process will enable you to find identify ways to improve your district's processes immediately, and the resources to make those improvements! Please contact me if you'd like to participate.



We are also starting a new SFO Certification Study Group this spring, with our first teleconference on Tuesday, February 24 at 11 AM. If you're interested in working with the group toward your **ASBO Certification** and the chance to get the certification for ****FREE****, please read the separate article below, pp 5-6!

Finally, if you have a colleague who missed the annual conference and has not yet renewed **membership for 2015**, please encourage your colleague to visit the "membership" tab of our website. Membership is just \$75, and it's an easy way to keep informed about school business topics through the ALASBO network throughout the year!

If you have questions about any ALASBO program, please do not hesitate to contact me at alasbo@gci.net, or 907-723-7415. Our website address is: www.alasbo.org.

Send us your pictures – anytime you're traveling around the district, take a photo for ALASBO! Send them to yodean.armour@klawockschool.com.

Holly Holman Named ALASBO School Business Official of the Year

Congratulation to Holly Holman, Business Manager of Unalaska City School District who was named the Alaska School Business Official of the Year at ALASBO's December 2014 annual conference in Anchorage. Candidates for this prestigious award are nominated by their colleagues within the Alaska school business profession. Annually, a panel of previous

recipients selects a deserving individual from the nominees submitted based upon their recognized outstanding service, innovative plan design and implementation, and the use of exemplary business practices within school business management.

The award has been sponsored for the past sixteen years by Penair. The recipient receives roundtrip travel certificates, a check for \$500 and an engraved plaque.

For more than two decades, Holly Holman has guided the planning and implementation of the annual school district budget for Unalaska City School District, while also managing all aspects of the district's finances with just one part-time staff person. She is skilled at presenting the complexities of school finance, anticipating and responding to questions. In addition to her job responsibilities, Holman is an active and respected member of the Unalaska community, having served on various boards and commissions. Among her colleagues, she is known for her professionalism, integrity and positive attitude!

Holly Holman has been active in ASBO International and ALASBO. She is currently Secretary of the ALASBO Board and will be ALASBO President in 2017.

Congratulations, Holly on this well deserved honor!



Where Has the Time Gone?

Melissa Bell, Alaska Dept of Education & Early Development

It's hard to believe I am just about to celebrate my 18th year with the Department of Education & Early Development (DEED). During these years with DEED, I have held various positions.

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I entered state service in 1997 as an Administrative Clerk, moved to a position as an Accounting Technician, then took a job as a Grants Administrator, and in 2007 I was promoted into my current position as the Lead Grants Administrator.

I'm proud to say I live and work in this beautiful state. Although I did not grow up here, I like to call this unique and amazing place "home". I grew up in Wisconsin with my three sisters, two of whom share my birthday. I am the oldest of the triplets and consider myself the "extra one" as my sisters are identical and I am the fraternal one of the trio. Our other sister is just ten months older than we are. I grew up in the typical setting with my mom staying home taking the role as homemaker, caring for the four children, while my dad sold vacuum cleaners door-to-door. He was known to his customers as "the man with the triplets." (Can you imagine four babies in diapers?)



During my time at DEED, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with a number of really great people in various capacities. In December 2013, I was nominated to be on the ALASBO board and I just finished my first year of serving on this board. Serving on the ALASBO board is an honor and it has changed my whole perspective of the organization and what it takes to put the annual conference together. One of the board member duties is helping with the planning of the upcoming conference, which starts at Summer Leadership. (Note: you do not have to be on the board to participate in Summer Leadership, as one of the main goals is to plan the upcoming conference.)

I had the opportunity to attend the Summer Leadership meeting this past July, and I'll have to say it was one of the highlights of my year. Why? Well, on the last day of the meeting each year there is an activity that attendees can participate in. This year the activity was zip-lining. Despite my nerves, I was brave enough to go (thank you to those who were in my group, who exhibited much patience) and the experience was amazing! Thanks to Amy for her hard work keeping things running smoothly!

In my role as the DEED Lead Grants Administrator, I have had the opportunity to attend not only the ALASBO Conference, but I have also had the opportunity to attend the forums hosted by Brustein and Manasevit. If

you get the chance to attend one of these forums, I highly recommend it. One of the topics of this year's spring forum (May 6th-8th, 2015 in Washington, DC) is the new EDGAR: Every Day Grants Administration Rules. The Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the U.S. Department of Education issued changes to the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) on December 19, 2014. The new Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG) has replaced the old administrative, cost, and audit rules. These regulatory changes have a direct impact on all federal programs. Administrators now need to have "written" policies and procedures on cash management, allowability, conflicts, procurement, equipment management, travel, and indirect costs. I will be attending this year's forum and am looking forward to learning more about these changes.



This brings to mind this year's theme for ALASBO: "Achieving Success Together". The only way we will be able to make these necessary changes to the way we all do business day-to-day is to work together, hence achieving success. We will need to adjust to the major revisions to the federal rules governing costs, audits, and administrative principles. We will be shifting focus from compliance to performance and from process to outcomes, especially in the areas of time and effort, inventory controls for computers, procurement, meals/conferences, travel, indirect costs, and "pass-through" responsibilities. So let's all work together to implement these changes and achieve success!

Grants and Scholarships

ALASBO will once again be offering **two \$1,000 scholarships** to high school seniors! Please forward this information to your high school counselors.

- The scholarships are in memory of school business official Mack Easton
- Support for the scholarship program was received this year from: Chartwells School Dining Services, Horace Mann and National CooperativeRx
- The application deadline is **March 27, 2015**
- ALASBO members can sign more than one application from their district
- Application information can be found here: <http://alasbo.org/opps/scholarships/>

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ALASBO members are encouraged to apply for the **Tom Freeman professional development grant to attend ASBO International**.

- This program is in recognition of ALASBO's founder, Tom Freeman
- The grant provides \$1,500 toward registration and travel costs for the ASBO International conference, which has been described as "the ALASBO conference on steroids"!
- The grant is generously sponsored by CORE, Inc.
- The conference dates are October 23-26, 2015 in Grapevine, TX (near Dallas)
- The application is simple and the deadline is **February 28, 2015**
- The application can be found here: <http://alasbo.org/opps/grants/>

ALASBO members can also access funding to attend ASBO International through ASBO's new **Emerging School Business Leaders Scholarship**.

- This program is for those who've been in the school business profession five years or less (including past positions, past districts, etc.)
- 18 grants of \$2,000 will be awarded to attend the October 23-26, 2015 conference in Grapevine, TX (near Dallas)
- The program is sponsored by US Communities
- The application deadline is **May 1, 2015**
- Application information can be found here: <http://asbointl.org/learning-career-development/awards-scholarships/emerging-school-business-leaders-scholarship>

Finally, ALASBO will be offering **Swarnar grants to attend ALASBO Summer Leadership!** Details will be available soon...so mark your calendar for July 24-26, 2015 in Wasilla, Alaska!



The ALASBO website, www.alasbo.org, is a great source for the latest news and updates. Check here for ALASBO information, such as legislative reports and committee memberships, to register for an ALASBO or ASBO event or to download materials from a Power Lunch training or conference session you may have missed!



ASBO SFO Certification Study Group

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

Last spring, we had a very successful SFO Certification Study Group. Fifteen members participated in the study group, eight participated in enough sessions to earn a fee waiver from ASBO, and five pass both exams, to earn their SFO Certification in 2014! We currently have nine Alaskan SFO's, plus a few more who earned the SFO and have since left the state.

We are planning to offer another Study Group this spring!

Between the ASBO Study Group Fee Waiver and sponsorship funding from Melody Douglas (DBMS), **we can offer the certification FREE** to the first three study group participants to get their SFO certification in 2015, and at a significantly reduced cost for other study group participants!



WHY STUDY FOR ASBO SFO CERTIFICATION?

Participation in the study group provides professional development in the essential elements of your job as a school business professional, even if you never take the test! Obtaining your ASBO SFO Certification has these benefits, among others:

- enables you to demonstrate your professionalism and dedication to the school business profession
- provides a way to be recognized for your professional knowledge, which builds your own confidence and the confidence of your colleagues and members of the public
- increasingly, job announcements across the country for school business officials are noting ASBO SFO certification as a "preferred" qualification

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Find out more about the certification process on the ASBO International website:

<http://asbointl.org/learning-career-development/certification>.

HOW WILL THE STUDY GROUP BE STRUCTURED?

We have adopted a curriculum that has been used successfully by ASBO and by other state affiliates. Sessions will be led by current ALASBO SFO's. We plan to cover the curriculum in 8 1-hour teleconference sessions, meeting approximately every two weeks. Some sessions may run as long as 90 minutes. Note that after just the first TWO study group sessions, you will have completed the curriculum for Part 1 of the exam!

There are currently 16 test sites in Alaska, located in Seward, Kotzebue, Anchorage, Nome, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Fairbanks, Palmer, Juneau, Sitka, Dillingham, Skagway and Bethel.

WHY PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY GROUP?

The study group will help keep you motivated and on track to review the material for the exam. You will learn from your colleagues and have a chance to discuss their real-world experiences.

After you've completed the Study Group, you'll qualify for a waiver of the exam application fee, a \$150 value for ASBO members (\$225 for non-ASBO members)! In order to qualify for this waiver, you must attend at least five of the eight the Study Group sessions.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR STUDY GROUP SESSIONS

Test prep materials is available on the ASBO website, and I will be updating the materials on the ALASBO



website as well for study group participants. It is recommended that participants review the material prior to each study group session to formulate questions for discussion with their colleagues, to enhance the value of the study group.

I hope we'll have many participants in our Study Group! We plan to start on **Tuesday, February 24 at 11 AM**. Watch your email for more details! Please contact Executive Director Amy Lujan (alasbo@gci.net) if you're interested in participating, and let me know if you have questions.

Upcoming Events

- **February 19-21, 2015 ASBO International Executive Leadership Forum – San Diego, CA**
- **March 16- 18, 2015 ALASBO Fly-In, Juneau**
- **July 24-26, 2015 ALASBO Summer Leadership, Wasilla**
- **October 23-26, 2015 ASBO International Annual Meeting & Expo, Grapevine, Texas**
- **December 6-9, 2015 ALASBO Annual Conference**

ALASBO



Member Spotlight

Laurie Olson, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

Tell us about your school district

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District has 44 schools, about 8,900 students and includes all the Kenai Peninsula as well as Tyonek, which is across Cook Inlet to the west. There are 3 schools besides Tebughna (in Tyonek) that are only accessible by air or water – they are in Seldovia, Port Graham and Nanwalek.

How long have you been in school business?

I started with the KPBSD in March 1992. That was my first school business job, so my entire career has been in the same district.



How did you get into this business?

I worked in the other end of the building in the Kenai Peninsula Borough revenue department. There was an opening in the school district

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payroll department, so I put in my application. I had some payroll experience from a previous position at a credit union in Montana, so that got me into the interview with Melody Douglas and Dick Swarner.

What do you like best about your job?

The people that I've worked with over the years and the feeling that I'm helping others to accomplish what they need to do.

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

Hang in there! We were all new once. Ask questions and listen to the answers, but be sure to listen with a critical ear and don't be afraid to ask more questions.

How have you benefited from membership in ALASBO?

The friendships and working relationships I've developed have been a big boost to me in my job. It's a great association to belong to because everyone wants to see everyone else succeed. I have benefitted both personally and professionally from the relationships I've made through ALASBO and by extension, through ASBO International.

What do you like to do for fun?



I like to read, do crossword and other puzzles, garden, spend time with family and friends and walk on the beach.

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

I'd go to Europe to see all the old buildings and museums and places I've read about.

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

My husband and I have been growing berries and rhubarb for the last several years and have evolved so that we are now operating a winery and tasting room.

What is your proudest accomplishment?

I'm proud that I was part of the first SFO study group through ALASBO and got my certification last year.

Power Lunch Schedule

*11 AM to noon, usually the 3rd Tuesday of each month via teleconference;
call 712-432-1212, code 533-330-891*

Feb 17	Legislative Update
Mar 10	Time Management
Apr 14	Student Nutrition Training
May 12	Preventive Maintenance
Jun 9	GASB 68
Jul 14	Grants Update
Aug 11	Time & Effort Reporting
Sep 8	Highly Qualified
Oct 13	Impact Aid
Nov 10	Indirect Cost Rate Proposal
Dec	ALASBO Annual Conference

ALASBO 2015 Liaison and Mentor Assignments

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

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Now is Not a Good Time

Ron Rosenberg, Speaker

I was talking with a good client of ours the other day, the president of a group we've spoken for several times in the past.

We were reviewing the details of an event I'll be presenting at and I asked about the expected attendance for the session. She said she wasn't quite sure what to expect, because the economy is good and people don't see the need for training.

I found this very interesting, because the last time we had worked with this group, we weren't sure what to expect back then because the economy was *bad* and people didn't feel they could spare the time or expense for training.

Is it difficult to justify the time, money, and effort for training when the economy is challenging? Absolutely. But that may be the time when you most need support, inspiration, and new skills.

Is it tough to take time out to work on your business when you're overwhelmed and overburdened? Yes. But if you don't, you may find yourself in trouble later because you were so focused on the present that you forgot to keep one eye on the future.

I remember when my daughter was in high school and she'd say things like, "You just don't understand - you're not in school any more!" To which I'd calmly reply, "Actually, I'm in school all the time."

If a day goes by where I haven't learned something new, then I consider that a wasted day.

So when a good conference, training event, or webinar shows up on your radar screen, try to take advantage of it. And even if that doesn't work, at least take a few minutes every day to consider the "big picture" as it relates to your business and your life.

Personal and professional development are like many things in life: it's rarely a *good* time, but it's almost always the *right* time.