



A newsletter publication of Alaska Association of School Business Officials

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Association of School Business Officials
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the above address. The format is Acrobat PDF.*

President's Message

Elizabeth Frances, Dillingham School District

Hello Everyone and Happy May, Cinco de Mayo and all that good stuff!!!! Not to mention the end of another wonderful school year. I hope everyone is feeling the same pride of accomplishment that I am. We have all been an important part of the educational teams helping children gain knowledge and realize their potential throughout the great State of Alaska. I always find it really rewarding to know that students will be crossing that stage shortly to receive their diplomas and to know that I was part of their success! Each student that succeeds has the ability to become a valuable

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President's Message (Continued)

member of society with the potential to shape our state and nation into a brilliant future.

It is easy for us to lose sight of the outcome of our hard work. We become mired in the details of everything from grant reporting, to paying the bills, to processing payroll, to negotiating union agreements, to preparing budgets, to purchasing textbooks, etc., etc., etc. We work tirelessly to meet deadlines and do the best possible with limited resources. Few see the constant efforts put in by school business officials at all levels. There is an old saying that goes "We the few, working for the many are doing the impossible for the ungrateful. We have done so much, for so long, with so little, we are now qualified to do anything with nothing." Our circumstances are probably not that dire although at times it may seem so. When it does, stop and change your perspective.

Remember that as each graduating student in your district crosses the stage and accepts a diploma at the end of this school year, every school business official in your district played an important role in that individual's success. Those students are the outcome of our hard work. Congratulations to each and every one of you that made their dreams possible! Be proud of the accomplishments of the students in your district and prouder still of the vital role you played in making them possible. Thank you for your professionalism, dedication and hard work all year long! Have a great summer.



**Team ALASBO
Educating Alaska
Annual Conference
December 4-6, 2006**

Upcoming POWER Lunches

Don't forget to join your colleagues from around the state for training each month through ALASBO's Power Lunches. Upcoming Power Lunch Topics will be:

- May 24, 2006 at Noon - **New Tier for TRS' and PERS'**— Tracy Carpenter and Melanie Millhorn will provide training on implementation of the new Defined Contribution System. This will follow the state training that the Division of Retirement and Benefits is offering throughout the state

and afford an opportunity for everyone to ask follow-up questions.

- June (date to be announced) - **Pupil Transportation** – Experts in pupil transportation will provide information relating to preparing RFP's, evaluating regular routes and provide opportunities for participants to ask questions about this important process.
- July (date to be announced) - **State Contract Procurement** – Find out how to effectively utilize state contracts to procure goods and services for your school district. Many school districts are using them now and saving big bucks.
- August (date to be announced) - **Student Activity Accounting** - This will be a discussion of policies, best practices and proper GAAP for student accounting. Join in the discussion that will allow participants to share ideas between districts.

To participate just call 218.862.6100 and use code 8421060. Watch the website and for Cindy Reilly's e-mails to keep you posted on dates and topics for future Power Lunches.

ALASBO Legislative Fly-In

Elizabeth Frances, Dillingham School District

The Legislative Fly-In took place March 29-31. The first day was used to meet with various people and develop talking points. We started by meeting with Commissioner Roger Sampson, who gave an excellent presentation on his Performance Incentive Program. The presentation addressed many of the concerns ALASBO initially raised related to the Program. We also talked with him on the teacher and administrator mentoring programs that had been cut from the EED budget. Both of these programs can have a positive impact on education and will not impact funding through the foundation formula.

Eddy Jeans was on hand to follow the Commissioner with an overall summary of the status of all current pending educational legislation. Next we had the opportunity to meet with Kevin Ritchie of the Alaska Municipal League. The discussion centered on the need to support a Municipal Revenue Sharing Program in the budget. As local government incomes increase they are more able to

Legislative Fly-In (Continued)

contribute to the local school districts. Therefore, municipal revenue sharing has a direct impact on educational funding.

Finally, we had the opportunity to meet with Melanie Millhorn and her staff from the Division of Retirement and Benefits. We talked about legislation related to SB141 and the upcoming implementation of the Defined Contribution Plan.

Following our meetings we developed our talking points. They included:

- **Education Funding**
 - Support the Governor's Base Student Allocation of \$5,352 at a minimum
 - Implement a change to the area cost differential effective FY07
 - Implement a substantial revenue sharing program to support local infrastructures and education funding
- **PERS & TRS Issues**
 - Fund increased costs within the foundation formula
 - Fully fund all increases AND do not repeal the 5% PERS ceiling
 - Supplemental funding for PERS employers who received late Employer Contribution rate increase under Section 96 of SB141
 - Continued work toward reducing and/or paying off the unfunded liability
- **Performance Incentive Program and Mentoring Programs**
 - Support accelerated growth in student achievement
 - Fund these programs outside the foundation formula with sustainability
- **Consideration to development of a Comprehensive Long Term State Fiscal Plan**
 - Create endowments for constitutional mandates
 - Implement POMV or similar plan
 - Invest CBR for a future revenue stream
 - Implement Broad base tax

We then spent the next two days visiting with Legislators. We hit Juneau during a time that was relatively quiet and as a result were able to speak directly with many Legislators. The process enabled us to answer many of their questions and provide additional information to broaden understanding on the issues. The ALASBO Legislative Committee did an excellent job speaking to educational funding issues. I thank them for their time, effort and commitment. I also would like to remind everyone that the

Session is not over yet. There is still an opportunity to call your Legislators and let them know priorities for your District. Every voice makes a difference. Make sure your voice is heard!

Professional Development Awards

Robin Mullins, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

Excitement for ASBO in Pittsburgh is building! This year, five individuals applied for the Lowell Thomas Freeman professional development award, and three individuals were selected to receive the award. The award provides financial assistance for the recipient to attend the annual ASBO International conference. Normally only one scholarship per year is awarded, but since Melody is president of ASBO this year, the board decided that additional awards would be made.

It was tough to pick only three! And the lucky winners are:

Rene' Spracklen, Accountant
Copper River School District;

Diane Simmons, Assistant Director,
Administrative Services
Northwest Arctic Borough School District;

and

Lana King, Payroll Specialist II
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District.

Thanks to the members of the Awards committee who assisted with the selection process. Congratulations to the recipients, and we look forward to seeing you in Pittsburgh!



Financial Perspective

Carl Warner, Southwest Region School District

As the gates were opened, a flood of young students in white shirts flowed from the Sihanoukville School grounds, while I snapped some pictures of the mass exodus from the other side of the street. Many greeted me with a friendly "hello" as they swept past and dispersed into town, practicing their foreign language skills. English is part of the standard curriculum for public school students in Cambodia, in an effort to help rebuild their impoverished country.

One of the fringe benefits of traveling in developing countries is an appreciation for the standard of living and freedoms that we often take for granted in the U.S. The Sihanoukville School is not equipped with the numerous computers, textbooks and supplies that our school district budgets provide. A quick survey of the school after the students left revealed stark bare classrooms with dirt covered concrete floors, ancient looking bench tables, windows without glass, and an absence of shelving, closets, or any instructional materials other than blackboards. Teachers reportedly earn the equivalent of about \$50 a month, with no health insurance or retirement benefits. I suspect that more money is spent for basketball in most Alaska districts than the entire budget of the Sihanoukville school system.

This was a brief unplanned visit while waiting for friends in town, on the way to the beaches for swimming and seafood. Prior to the trip, however, I came across an excellent Internet article about education in Cambodia and the Toul Ampil English School near Phnom Penh, and in response to an email inquiry to the director, Kadada Chhim, received a gracious invitation to meet and visit his school. In the article entitled *Khmer and Twenty-something* (www.talesofasia.com/rs-43-twenty.htm), the author mentions the young average age of Cambodians due to the genocide during the late 1970's, in which teachers among others were targeted, and the importance of education to the new generation.

Back in Phnom Penh the following week, Kadada picked me up on his motorbike on the way from his day job to the school, located near the Killing Fields, for evening classes. After 15 miles of motorbike traffic congestion and bumpy roads, we found the school engulfed in darkness due to a frequent power outage, while the staff fired up a generator. The two school buildings were of the same dilapidated design as the one

in Sihanoukville. Classes got under way again, in which the students appeared attentive and eager to learn. No slackers to be seen.

In order to survive, most public school teachers supplement their incomes with private tutoring, which is a commonly acknowledged problem since regular classes tend to get neglected in favor of the more lucrative private practice. This is where the Toul Ampil school comes in, providing English classes primarily for students whose families can't afford private lessons in the rural Choueng Ek area. The nine volunteer twenty-something staff members teach over 300 students in two shifts. Most of the teachers sleep on the hard floors of the school at night. In conversations with a few of them, they expressed a single-minded devotion to the school and students, consistent with the motivation and respect displayed by the pupils earlier – qualities evidently not dependent upon their Base Student Allocation.

So while Alaska school budgets shrink and contentions arise over priorities and funding, we shouldn't forget how our situation compares with real financial hardships of numerous other schools like those of Cambodia. Perhaps their students could also help many of ours appreciate the educational resources and opportunities available to them.

PS> The Toul Ampil school is in dire need of school supplies, of course, and if any of your schools have surplus items eligible for donation, I'd be glad to accept and mail them. Among the smaller and lighter items of need are educational videos and games, maps, pens, pencils, chalk, rulers, and erasers. And "English speaking volunteers."

Professional Development Surveys

The ALASBO Professional Development committee would appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete and distribute to your business office staff two surveys, enclosed as inserts to this newsletter.

The surveys are ALASBO Professional Development Survey and ALASBO Annual Conference Survey. Please ask all your business office staff to complete the annual conference survey as ALASBO wants to better serve all school business staff.

Please return the surveys to: **Laura Hylton, P.O. Box 498, King Salmon, AK 99613, lhylton@lpsd.com, fax: (907) 246-4473.** We look forward to your responses and comments. Thank You!

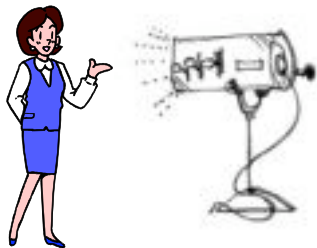
Member Spotlight: Holly Holman

For this second edition of the new "Member Spotlight" feature, Loreen Kramer has picked Holly Holman for the spotlight!

Tell us about your school district – Unalaska City School District has two schools, Unalaska Elementary School and Unalaska High School. For the first time ever, we just broke the 400 mark in enrollment this spring. We have a very diverse student population, and excellent student test scores. We are fortunate to have tremendous support from our community, which has been the key to such a successful school.

How long have you been in school business? 15 years.

How did you get into this business? I was just finishing up my MBA at Western Washington University and was thinking about moving to Unalaska. I also have my degree in math education, so when I visited the school here and saw the job posting for business manager, I thought it was an excellent fit. Fifteen years later, I still do!



What do you like best about your job? Our district office is in the school and I love being able to see the students every day. I like working at our school because I feel like I'm making a contribution to the education of our students.

What advice do you have for those new to school business? Join the ALASBO team! There are so many resources available that will make your life so much easier. ALASBO members are so friendly and helpful, and to be able to draw on their wealth of experience is an invaluable tool for a brand new business manager, as well as those of us that have been around many years!

How have you benefited from membership in ALASBO? ALASBO has helped me tremendously in my job, and on a personal level I've made lifelong friendships that are priceless! The conferences are always packed with valuable information that I can start using

immediately in my job, and of course they are packed with lots of fun and catching up with colleagues!

What do you like to do for fun? I love to spend time with my husband, Mike, and 6-year-old daughter, Taylor. We do a lot of fishing and camping in the summer. I run and train for marathons, and my daughter has accompanied me on many runs on her bike!

If you could visit anyplace in the world, where would you go and why? I would love to visit Nome for the Iditarod some year! I love following the Iditarod every year in the news, and it would be great to actually experience it (as a fan!) up close and personal.

Tell us something about yourself that most people don't know? I put my name in the lottery, and got into the Seward Mount Marathon race this year! Hopefully I'll make it up and down the mountain in one piece! If you happen to be in the neighborhood, the race is on July 4th, and the women's race starts at 11am.

What is your proudest accomplishment? Training for 5 marathons while living in the Aleutians – and I don't run on a treadmill! I ran 2005 miles last year – all outside.

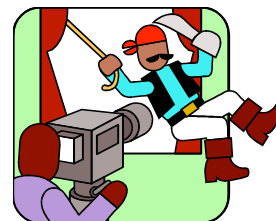
Are you going to ASBO in Pittsburgh?? I'm going to try!

Call to All Photographers, professional and amateur!!

We need photographs! It is your pictures that make the slide show great!! The show is a hit at the annual ASBO conference, as well as at our ALASBO luncheon.

Please keep your cameras handy this summer and snap pictures from all over Alaska for our slide show. Forward pictures to:

elizabeth@dlgsd.org or if not digital to Elizabeth Frances c/o DCSD, P.O. Box 170, Dillingham, AK 99576.



McClain J. "Mack" Easton Memorial Scholarships

*Mike Fisher, Fairbanks North Star Borough
School District*

It is a pleasure to announce the winners of the scholarships awarded to the Senior Class of 2006. This year fifty-one students representing sixteen Alaskan school districts and twenty-four high schools applied for the scholarships. We had many deserving students and it was a tough task to narrow the pool down to only three award winners. The scholarship committee selected the following students for awards:

\$1,000 Award Winner

Natalia Potrzuski, Sitka High School
Sitka School District

\$ 500 Award Winner

Naphtali Fields, Kodiak High School
Kodiak Island Borough School District

\$ 500 Award Winner

Jeffrey Gibson, Gustavus High School
Chatham School District

Best of luck to the winners and to all the applicants! And thanks to this year's Scholarship Committee: Mike Fisher, Fairbanks; Holly Holman, Unalaska; Cindy Reilly, Yupiit; Marcy Po, Anchorage; Isabelle Harrington, Iditarod; and Dennis Neidermeyer, Retired SBO.

Professional Development Opportunities Available – Right from Your Office!

*Robin Mullins, Fairbanks North Star Borough
School District*

School business officials don't often get the chance to take advantage of professional development opportunities. Limited travel budgets, lengthy travel distances, and meeting the latest "beat the clock" deadline makes it a constant challenge to continue developing your own professional skills.

With "TEAM ALASBO – EDUCATING ALASKA" the theme this year, your ALASBO board members are focused on providing increased professional development opportunities. The ALASBO conference, (held each December in Anchorage), and the international ASBO conference, (held this year in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), offer outstanding educational

and networking opportunities for school business officials, but attendance requires significant time and financial resources.

This article is to call your attention to some worthwhile professional development opportunities that are available to you right from your own office! One is the series of ALASBO "Power Lunch" teleconferences. (See page 2!)

Another opportunity is web-based. Take a moment to visit the PERI website at <<http://www.riskinstitute.org>> and follow the links to the free training courses. The PERI organization (Public Entity Risk Institute) is an educational partner of the Public Risk Management Association, (PRIMA). Many school business officials share similar concerns regarding the need to effectively manage risks, and PERI maintains an online national database (the Data-Exchange) to assist public entity risk managers.

The new PERI "E-Training Center" features key risk management courses covering critical issues for the protection of small organizations. The E-Training Center goal is to provide managers and staff across the country with access to valuable risk management courses. The training is accessible 24 x 7. You can review the courses when your schedule permits. I reviewed a couple of the modules and found them to be well done and useful. Some course topics include:

- Risk Identification and Analysis for Small Public Entities
- Aggression Management
- Construction Security
- Fleet Safety Fundamentals
- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Playground Liability
- Preventing Health Claims from Becoming Workers' Compensation Claims
- Reducing Claims with a 7-Step Safety Program
- Return-To-Work
- Return-To-Work-Overcoming Organizational Obstacles
- Selling Safety to your Organization

And last, but not least, don't forget the other important resource available right from your office. Your ALASBO colleagues are just a phone call away. Whatever the latest challenge happens to be, chances are good that one of us may already have "been there" or "done that". All you need to do is pick up the phone, and call for help!

Enjoy Spring Everyone!



This is the year! Melody Douglas of Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is our ASBO International President. Please plan to attend the conference Team ALASBO has been waiting for.

Register today @ www.asbointl.org

There are 40 members of Team ALASBO who already have hotel rooms at the Westin (convention hotel) reserved for this conference. You can now reserve rooms through the ASBO, Intl website. Don't wait until the last minute or you won't get into the hotel of your choice.

This year's conference is sure to be the finest yet. Please plan on attending. Much more information is also available on the ASBO website about the fabulous professional development opportunities available at the conference.

The tentative schedule for ALASBO members will include:

October 13th Noon – lunch at Westin ALASBO Suite
8pm – Midnight ALASBO Reception at the
Convention Center

October 14th First General Session – Workshops

October 15th Second General Session – Workshops

October 16th Final General Session – Workshops

5pm – 7pm President's Reception (Melody's last formal reception)

Perhaps an ALASBO dinner – (we try to do something every year)



Obviously there is much much more, including pre-conference workshops. I would encourage everyone to arrive in time for a bit of rest prior to lunch on the 13th. Once that day comes most everyone goes non-stop until we relax after the "must attend" President Reception.

Looking forward to seeing you in Pittsburgh,
Tammy L White, Executive Director, ALASBO



Alaska Association of
School Business Officials

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Akiachak, AK 99551

Mark Your Calendars!

- ***October 13 – 16 – ASBO International Conference, Pittsburgh***
- ***December 4 – 6 – ALASBO Annual Conference, Anchorage***