

ALASBO

News Link...



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Association of School Business Officials
and its affiliate members.

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President's Message

Rene' Spracklen, Copper River School District

I want to thank everyone who attended the ALASBO conference in December. It's great to meet new members and the individuals we talk to throughout the year. As this conference is the only training that some districts send their employees to, I am interested in hearing suggestions from you on what you would like to see at this year's conference to continue your training.

The board has authorized the hiring of Duane Guiley for the Executive Director position effective in April. Thank you to Tammy White

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President's Message (Continued)

and Melody Douglas, who have continued to help us through this year's transition. We are growing as an organization and this is only the beginning of great things to come. I encourage all of our members to continue providing leadership in the ALASBO organization. The theme for the 2007 ALASBO Annual Conference is, "ALASBO - Needs You!"

**ALASBO - Needs You!
Annual Conference
December 3-5, 2007**

The ALASBO board members have been given their Liaison assignments and should be contacting each school district to let them know who they can contact for help. Please feel free to contact any ALASBO member for help and we will try to accommodate the best we can.

The ASBO Leadership conference will be in February. ALASBO will be sending both transitioning Executive Directors to this conference. Tammy, Duane and I have asked Cindy Reilly, ALASBO President-Elect to attend in my place. I have been told this is an excellent conference and look forward to going next year.

The Professional Development Committee has met this year and we are looking forward to starting the power lunches again. If you are a member who is willing to lead one of these sessions or has a topic idea to suggestion, please contact Chad Stiteler at the Anchorage School District.

With one month gone in the new calendar year, we are all busy with Impact Aid, W-2's, 1099's, e-rate and getting budgets for FY08 prepared, as well as all the daily work we have before we start winding up this school year. There is never enough time, so take it one day at a time and somehow we always seem to get things done.

"Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much." - Helen Keller

**Executive Director's
Message**

Tammy White, ALASBO Executive Director

As I announced in December, I am stepping down as your executive director. I have truly

enjoyed the multitude of experiences. The variety of challenges and all the friendships I have gained have been beyond what I ever dreamed this organization could bring me.

My hope for the future of ALASBO is that you as the members take the opportunity to volunteer to support your organization. Your president's theme is "ALASBO - Needs You". Your organization does need you! What you will find is that you also need ALASBO. The personal gratification you will receive from becoming involved in your organization far outweighs the time and energy you give.

I will continue to work and transition with the new executive director, Duane Guiley after he comes on board in April. At that time, ALASBO will be looking for members to take over some of the volunteer duties that need to be done.

I look forward to sitting at round tables at the annual meeting and taking full advantage of the professional development opportunities offered to all members.

**Duane Guiley Selected as
ALASBO Executive Director**

*Melody Douglas, Kenai Peninsula
Borough School District*

The ALASBO Executive Director Search Committee recommended Duane Guiley of Eagle River, Alaska to serve ALASBO as executive director beginning April 2, 2007. The ALASBO Board of Directors approved this recommendation at their January 26, 2007 meeting.

Mr. Guiley brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to ALASBO. Duane has served as the finance officer at the Special Education Service Agency for the last ten years. Before that he was at the Department of Education (DOE) in Juneau as the director of school finance for five years, the business manager for the Lower Kuskokwim School District for seven years, and before that, an auditor for Mikunda, Cottrell & Co.

Mr. Guiley graduated Cum Laude from Eastern Washington University with a B.A. in Business Administration degree with a major in Professional Accounting and he has completed additional coursework toward an MBA and a CPA certificate. Duane was serving as

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Executive Director Selected (Continued)

ALASBO's president in 1991 when he was hired by the Alaska Department of Education. The political environment at the time necessitated his resignation from ALASBO to take that position. Thankfully, times have changed!

Mr. Guiley will attend the ASBO Leadership Conference early in February to begin his professional development for the role of executive director, and to meet executive directors from other affiliates. Developing a relationship with his peers will allow him to create a resource that will be invaluable to him as he leads ALASBO. He will also attend a half day workshop on the *Seven Measures of Association Success* presented by the American Society of Association Executives.

Duane is well equipped to take ALASBO forward based on the Strategic Plan!

Kerry Jarrell Receives Alaska School Business Official of the Year Award

Loreen Kramer, Copper River School District

Congratulations to Kerry Jarrell, Assistant Superintendent of Business for Bering Strait School District, who received this year's School Business Official of the Year Award at the December 2006 ALASBO annual conference! Each year's award-winner is selected from nominees solicited from school business officials around the state, by an ALASBO committee that includes past SBO of the Year recipients and retired ALASBO members. The award is sponsored by PenAir.



I have known Kerry for over 20 years and have always admired and aspired to be as professional and knowledgeable in all areas of our profession. Kerry was very instrumental in aiding me to achieve many of my own professional goals.

Here are some of the comments from Kerry's nomination packet:

- Kerry has established a level of conduct and expertise that is well recognized and valued.
- The district has never faced a financial crisis due to ignorance about its financial health.
- Kerry is an innovator.
- Kerry has started incentive programs for the community and schools.
- Kerry is well liked and a respected member of our community.
- We can say without reservation that Kerry is one of the top administrators that we have worked with.
- Kerry has a great relationship with all of the employees that he supervises. He is always willing to listen to suggestions and is willing to implement changes as needed. He works hard to meet the individual needs of everyone.

Congratulations Kerry Jarrell, and thanks for all your hard work as a School Business Official!

ASBO International News

*Melody Douglas, ASBO Immediate Past
President, Kenai Peninsula Borough School
District*

The ASBO Leadership Conference is scheduled for February 9 and 10, 2007 with pre-conference sessions scheduled February 8, 2007. The ASBO Board will be meeting to make appointments to the Leadership Development Task Force, Ethics Committee, and to appoint the leadership of the Bylaws Committee. The Board will also be addressing the FY08 ASBO budget, which includes funding for increased staff to address the recently revised Strategic Plan, and operation manuals impacting the budget.

Most significant on the ASBO horizon are upcoming bylaw changes to allow ASBO to be a more nimble organization. This is the final step in a long process to become flexible enough to handle the myriad of frequent changes facing professional organizations these days. You may recall that the ASBO Board totally revamped Board Policy for this same purpose about six months ago and that various operational manuals (annually approved by the Board) were expanded, allowing for flexibility in association operations.

As you probably know, there are significant 403(b) changes expected in the near future with the release of final regulations impacting the management of these programs. There are two free ASBO webcasts on these retirement

ASBO International News (Continued)

programs. The first session is presented by Robert Architect, Senior Tax Law Specialist with the IRS Employee Plans Division, where he examines 403(b) and 457 plans, in addition to providing other deferred compensation guidance. The other webcast is a panel discussion presented by industry experts and legal counsel titled *403(b): What You Need to Do Now*. If you haven't stayed abreast of this issue, you need to know that BIG changes are expected, which will have a significant impact on district requirements for participating in these plans. Go to www.asbointl.org to access these educational opportunities on this important issue.

Please let me know of any concerns or suggestions you have relative to ASBO International. I may be reached at 907-714-8847 or at mdouglas@kpbsd.k12.ak.us. Mark your calendar to attend the ASBO Annual Meeting and Exhibits to be held in Toronto, Canada, October 12-15, 2007. *Please note: US citizens are now required to have a passport to travel to Canada.*

ASBO Conference Report

Lana King, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

It's hard to believe that ASBO in Pittsburgh has already come and gone! From sectionals on everything from 403B & 457 plans, to 403B audits, to recognizing fraud in the workplace, to FMLA and Worker's Comp, there was something for everyone. With powerful guest speakers, round table discussions, the exhibit hall, and discussions with friends and colleagues, we were busy from dawn until way past dusk!

Going to the ASBO Conference with such a great group of Alaskans was very special. It also offered the opportunity to meet other members from different states and countries and to share experiences and concerns.

The best part of the whole trip, however, was being a part of the group supporting Melody in her presidency of ASBO. While working with her the last nine years, I not only admire and appreciate her professional attributes, but have grown to know and love her for the grand lady that she is. In Pittsburgh, I was proud to be a part of her delegation and was awed as I realized that the international community not only honor and respect her, but they absolutely love her!!

Thanks to the Lowell Thomas Freeman Scholarship for the opportunity to share in the pride of Alaska's own – Melody!

Member Spotlight: Chad Stiteler

For this quarter's edition of the "Member Spotlight" feature, Robin Mullins has picked Chad Stiteler for the spotlight!

Tell us about your school district – The Anchorage School District

- serves over 48,700 students, K-12
- has schools that range in size from less than 100 students to a high school with more than 2,100 students
- has a total of 96 schools and programs serving students, including 59 elementary, 1 elementary/middle school, 9 middle, 1 middle/high school, 8 high schools, 1 K-12 school, 1 vocational school, 10 specialized programs and schools, and 6 charter schools
- has 94 different languages spoken by district school children and,
- has an FY08 budget of over \$698 million.



How long have you been in school business? 6 years.

How did you get into this business? *From the cushy city life in Seattle, WA I followed a girl and a new career to Metlakatla, AK. Having very purposely given up my HR/Accounting career track, I was pursuing my Masters in Education degree online through UAS while working in the middle school computer lab when the business manager for Annette Island School District retired.*

The Superintendent "recruited" me (accountants on the island at the time were about as rare as winter kings) and after a summer of 16+ hour days, cancelled vacations and countless hours of assistance from Lucienne Smith and Elizabeth Sweeney, I was in the business of school business. I still have a half-finished

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Member Spotlight (Continued)

teaching degree I think about every summer while my wife is vacationing outside, but I love what I do because I'm helping schools, and reconciliations and spreadsheets excite me in a way that should be embarrassing.

What do you like best about your job? *I love supporting public education. Working in a supporting role within public education makes it easy to put the extra effort and time into the job when I know the results affect classrooms. The total absence of "dull moments" make the days fly by and always provide new challenges.*

What advice do you have for those new to school business? *Get out of your office and spend some time in the classroom. Volunteer; read a book to kindergartners; try to keep up with a high school PE class... The productivity lost is easily made up in passion gained by seeing the end product that we work so hard for.*

AND,

Use ALASBO members. Inventing new forms, schedules and policies might be fun work, but it's time consuming. Since you're likely volunteering after your first 40 hours each week, work smarter, not harder and call an ALASBO member to see what they can share with you. It's easier to adapt a successful existing policy to your district than to create something from scratch.

How have you benefited from membership in ALASBO? *There are BRILLIANT people within the organization with all the answers to your questions; trust me because I've tested the theory many times. Many of the problems we face affect all districts and it's so much easier to tackle the problem as a group rather than as an individual. The collaboration, sharing and discussion between districts have made my job easier.*

What do you like to do for fun? *I'm so excited to live in Anchorage because it has great trails for mountain biking just outside the city. In the summer, I'm happiest covered in dust, mud and blood from downhill mountain biking. I'm also slowly and painfully learning to skate ski this winter so if you see a skier sprawled across the trail while you're in Anchorage, be sure to wave!*

If you could visit anyplace in the world, where would you go and why? *I'm really excited to spend time traveling across the United States without an itinerary, stopping in*

particularly interesting areas for indefinite periods of time. I think there must be some incredible small towns, wilderness areas and gorgeous sunsets out there I haven't experienced yet.

Tell us something about yourself that most people don't know? *My retirement plans are to own and operate an RV park.*

What is your proudest accomplishment? *I am proudest of my family – my partner, Gretchen, furry companion, Chewedon and fat cat, Budda. They are my favorite mammals and teach me every day to love simple things and appreciate that life is as simple or complex as I chose to make it.*

Safe Routes to Schools Program

Steve Soenksen, Department of Transportation

The way children get to school impacts their lives each day and for the rest of their lives. The SRTS Program is intended to support children to walk or bike to school where it is safe. Where it is not safe there is technical assistance on how to "make it safe". There is a grant program to support your school by making funds available to develop a program in your community. You might be able to fix some problems your school may have.

We expect the grant applications process to be up and running within the next few months. Schools can use this money to develop local SRTS Programs that include Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, and Evaluation, (5-E's) topic areas to help teachers, students, and administrators learn to be safer and to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Please check the state website for program updates at:

www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/saferoutes/. The links on this site will provide information and resources for developing a program. We will be putting updates for the program on this site, including details on the grant program. We plan to have a training program in Anchorage in April to help you learn how to become involved with this national and international movement and develop School Route Travel Plans and programs at the local level.

One of the first tasks will be to look at the routes

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Safe Routes to Schools (Continued)

students use to get to school within a two mile circle by walking or biking. Putting together a School Route Travel Plan is relatively easy and can be done with a local committee to study the issues. What are the "safe routes"? Where are the barriers and disconnects? What are the issues of traveling through this area for kids? What can be done to improve these routes to make it "more safe"? As you identify the issues, you become aware of the needs for children's safety. These can be developed into a "SRTS Plan" using the "5-E's" listed above to make it more safe and encourage kids to walk or bike to school.

SafeRoutes

Alaska Safe Routes to School



How does a school start a Safe Routes to School Program? Each school starts Safe Routes programs with different circumstances. Some schools have great places for walking and bicycling but few students taking advantage of it. Other communities have children walking and bicycling to school in unsafe conditions or along poorly maintained routes, while some communities do not have children walking or bicycling to school at all. Successful Safe Routes programs involve the whole community. Parents, children, neighborhood groups, schools, law enforcement officers, community leaders and transportation and public health professionals help identify the issues and solutions. Additional information is available at: www.saferoutesinfo.org.

We encourage you to check into the SRTS program. It supports your School Wellness Program and everyone who lives within 1-2 miles of schools and who want to make their communities more safe. Please feel free to contact our office for assistance, 907-465-4069, steve_soenksen@dot.state.ak.us.



Visit to an Elementary School in Tanzania

Amy Lujan, Nome Public Schools

Inspired by my mom and aunt, my husband Stan and I had the pleasure of accompanying these two intrepid travelers on a photo safari in Tanzania East Africa over the winter holidays. What could be more exotic than dancing with Masai warriors on New Year's Eve?

Tanzania is the location of the Serengeti Plain, Ngorogoro Crater, and Olduvai Gorge, where the Leakey's documented some of the earliest evidence of mankind. Did we see lots of wildlife? Incredible! Elephants, giraffes, lions, hippos, rhinos, zebra, wildebeest, cheetah, leopards, ostriches, warhogs, antelope, gazelles, many birds – the list goes on and we saw THOUSANDS on migration! The safari was a life-changing experience - highly recommended!

Thirty years ago, Stan was a Peace Corps volunteer for two years in Tanzania, training staff for the newly established network of public primary schools near Arusha. During the second year, he was moved to the city of Dar Es Salaam, due to the danger posed by Idi Amin's raiders from Uganda near the border! Stan found that little has changed in Tanzania, but the country has benefited from being one of the most stable and peaceful countries on the continent of Africa.

Because of our work in education, and especially Stan's previous work in Tanzania, it was a special thrill to visit Bashay Primary School near Karatu, not far from the Ngorogoro Crater Rim. The road into the school was very bad, but nearly everyone walked to the school (no bus service!) We were met by the headmaster who wore rubber boots due to the recent rains. Some of the students had several inches of mud caked on their shoes!

We were told that this school serves about two square kilometers. Students and staff walk to and from school twice a day, including going home for lunch (no lunch program!) Now, try these stats out on your local teachers: 700 students attend the school (grades 1-7) and there are 14 teachers. OK, that's 50:1! It was hoped that one textbook would be available for every two students, an improvement from 1:3 in the previous year.

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Tanzanian Elementary School (Continued)

Depending on the grade level, teachers instruct 9-11 subject areas. We Americans were interested to learn that one of the subjects is Religion. Each student at this school could choose between Muslim, Lutheran or Catholic instruction, which is provided by the local missionaries. A nice cooperative agreement to relieve the teaching staff, but it wouldn't go over too well back here at home!

The headmaster's small office was papered with thank-you's to people from around the world who had made donations to the school, even recognizing as little as \$25. Grand Circle, the parent company of our tour group, had recently donated \$35,000, which paid for construction of two new classrooms, plus desks (no CIP list!)

I asked about parent involvement. We had previously learned that parents who don't send their kids to school are jailed. The headmaster told us that parents are supportive of the school; when there's a construction project, they bring bricks and help out!

The highlight of our visit with the headmaster was when he proudly showed us his test scores, handwritten on a chart posted in the office. The headmaster had been at the school six years, and during that time the percentage of students who passed the "exit" exam at grade 7 had risen from 30% to 80%. This exam is truly "high stakes". Students who do not pass the exam end their education, since there is not enough capacity to instruct everyone at the secondary level. The only other choice would be private school, if the family could afford the expense.

The discussion of test scores seemed very familiar. We heartily congratulated the headmaster on the success of his school. Perhaps Bashay Primary would make AYP in our system!

Next, we got to meet some of the students. All students wear uniforms, which cost \$20. That's a significant investment in a country where the average wage is \$80/month. We noticed that many of the uniforms appeared several sizes too big, perhaps to last several years!

Since it was the first day back from holiday break, students were helping to clean up the school grounds (no grounds crew!) Older students were using machetes to cut the grass (student accident insurance - ?) Others were mopping up and helping to organize the very small collection of books in the school library, which was about half the size of our typical elementary classroom. We had brought a few books to add to the collection.

We went into one of the classrooms, which was as basic as you could imagine. There was a blackboard and handmade desks. No posters or supplies. We looked at some of the lesson books, where we saw samples of excellent penmanship. I was even more impressed by the work these teachers are doing.

One of the teachers told us she'd been teaching for thirty years. She remembered the days when Peace Corps volunteers like Stan had helped establish the schools. She thanked Stan for his work, which was a very touching exchange. Stan also got to show off some of his Swahili with the kids; kids are the same everywhere, and it wasn't too hard for Stan to get the thumbs up and high-five's going all around.

Travel in the third world really brings things into perspective! If you'd like to see a few pictures of Bashay Primary School, send me an e-mail and I'll send some your way: stanandamy@aol.com.

Yes - we saw all these and more!





Alaska Association of
School Business Officials

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Mark Your Calendars!

- ***October 12-15 – ASBO Annual Conference, Toronto***
- ***December 3-5 – ALASBO Annual Conference, Anchorage***