

ALASBO

News Link...



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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the above address.*

President's Message

Laura Hylton, Lake and Peninsula

It's hard to believe summer is almost over and the frantic activity of starting school is upon us. I hope all of you experienced some sun and relaxation this summer.

Many thanks to Pam Roope and the City of Wrangell for ordering up warm sunny weather for the ALASBO summer Leadership Conference; it was a nice treat!

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Thanks to the attendees for spending their weekend planning for ALASBO's future and creating the December conference. I am always impressed by the innovative ideas and information produced during these collaborative planning sessions.

It was exciting to work with many first time attendees as well as many returning members. The Dick Swarner Leadership Grant was awarded to first time attendee David Arp of Sitka School District. ALASBO is fortunate that the Swarner family recognizes the value of growing leadership potential to sustain ALASBO into the future.

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This year's Leadership agenda included the history and purpose of summer Leadership, a review of the mission, vision, values, strategic plan and association goals. Attention was then turned to the 2009 conference evaluations and the professional development survey results to focus on membership needs for 2010 conference planning. The data received was an incredible tool for the group. We appreciate the time you took to complete the evaluations and survey.

Summer Leadership provides time for members to come together as a team and focus on what ALASBO is and needs to be. This collaboration is the driving force responsible for the expanded level of services we know today. Summer Leadership history includes the following items in addition to conference planning:

2005 – Restructure of committees, committee manual update/creation.

2006 – First in-depth strategic plan, mission and vision update. Major goals created to hire part-time executive director and develop revenue source other than dues and conference.

2007 – Reviewed layout of conference topics and developed subject tracks to insure something for everyone during each time slot: business manager, payroll, general, accounts payable/purchasing, accounting/grants, facilities and pupil transportation.

2008 – Focused on developing action items for goal to provide high quality professional development. Developed School Business Academy concept to implement during 2008 conference.

2009 – Second review of mission, vision and strategic plan. Created values and updated goals to reflect current environment. Many new participants in 2009; only two attendees participated in 2006 update.

2010 – Reviewed goals to insure they are still current. In-depth review of member survey to insure goals and focus of association and professional development offerings are relevant and useful.

It has been my pleasure and honor to participate every year. Thank you to all who take time out of your busy lives to support ALASBO. It is truly rewarding work.

Executive Director's Message

Amy Lujan, ALASBO Executive Director

I hope you're enjoying another whirlwind Alaskan summer! The last of my out-of-town visitors just departed – whew!

The **ALASBO Summer Leadership Conference** in Wrangell was a highlight of my summer! Thanks so much to the twelve ALASBO members who took time to meet to discuss ALASBO's future, and also to our **sponsors who made it possible: Frontline/AESOP, SchoolDude.com and Lincoln Financial.** As Laura mentioned, we got a great start on annual conference planning.

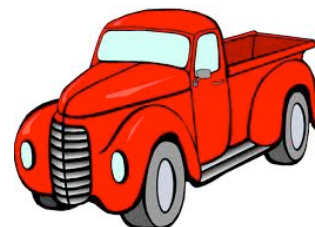
Also at Leadership, we had some excellent discussions on ALASBO's Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Plan, using some of the tools I've picked up at ASBO Executive Director training. We identified **ENVIRONMENTAL** issues that ALASBO is responding to directly:

- GASB changes
- ARRA
- Need for new multi-year funding plan for base student allocation (BSA)
- Cost differential issues in Alaska
- ASBO certification program
- Turnover of school business officials
- Technology changes
- Social networking

We also identified **MEGA** issues that may be beyond our control but that we need to be aware of in our planning:

- Global recession
- Oil-dependent Alaskan economy
- Population shifts within Alaska
- Generational shifts

As you can imagine, the above issues stimulated some lively discussions. When Leadership attendees were asked to **select a make and model of car that best represents ALASBO**, they overwhelmingly chose a very practical vehicle, such as a truck, SUV or van. My favorite image is the small red truck – sturdy and dependable, but with a bit of ZIP to get the job done!



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We capped the event with a visit to the Anan Bear Observatory near Wrangell, where we saw numerous black bears at VERY close range consuming mass quantities of salmon, and even a grizzly and cubs too! You'll surely see more bear pictures in this year's annual conference slide show, as well as a celebrating bear on this year's conference pin, in honor of ASBO's 100th!



This young bear, about 15' up a tree just a few yards from the Anan viewing platform, entertained us with gymnastics to scratch a few itches!

The next few months will be busy-busy, with putting together the **annual conference**. As in recent years, we will open with a pre-conference day on Sunday, December 5, and an opening reception for all attendees that evening. The regular conference will run from Monday-Wednesday, December 6-8, and we are working on some post-conference sessions for Thursday and Friday to further enhance the value of your trip to Anchorage. Details will be available when **registration opens October 1**, with an Early Bird deadline of October 31.

Best of luck with audit and school start-up activities! If you have questions about any ALASBO program, please do not hesitate to contact me at alasbo@gci.net, or 907-500-9086. You'll also find useful information at: www.alasbo.org.

Send us your pictures!

Remember to take pictures this summer and over the next few months of your school sites, activities, and you, the ALASBO members enjoying Alaska! Sent them in for the annual conference slideshow to: yodean.armour@klawockschool.com.

Why Visit the ALASBO Website?

If you have a question or are looking for something, **www.alasbo.org** is a good place to start for the most updated information!

- Power Lunch schedule and related downloads - events-workshops tab
- Conference dates and registration forms/links - events-conferences-upcoming
- Latest news on ALASBO activities, including newsletters, legislative activity and event summaries – news tab
- **NEW:** Job Vacancies, statewide through ACSA and ATP, and nationwide through ASBO - opportunities-career oppty tab
- Application forms for grants, scholarships and awards – opportunities tab
- Application for ALASBO membership – membership tab
- ALASBO info and governing documents – about ALASBO tab
- ALASBO committee members – resources-committees tab
- School district contacts via link to EED database – resources-districts tab
- Helpful links and downloads – resources tab

OASIS Training

Dennis Niedermeyer

The State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has established electronic reporting requirements for the fall foundation funding reporting. Districts are required to submit their individual student membership information in an electronic format to the Department of Education by November 5, 2010 for the 20 school day count period ending October 22, 2010.

The Alaska Association of School Business Officials is again providing training and technical assistance opportunities to school districts in order to assist you in meeting this requirement. These half day training sessions are **tentatively** scheduled to be held:

October 12, 2010 –

Northwest Arctic Borough School District, Kotzebue

October 14, 2010 –

Fairbanks Northstar School District, Fairbanks

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October 16, 2010 –
Anchorage School District, Anchorage

October 22, 2010 –
Ketchikan Gateway School District, Ketchikan

October 23, 2010 –
Juneau School District, Juneau

October 25, 2010 –
Lake and Peninsula School District, King
Salmon

Topics will include but not be limited to:

- Incorporating the required State Student ID into the reported data
- Understanding the reporting requirements and regulations;
- Using existing student records systems to meet the requirements;
- Strategies and methods for extracting data from existing systems;
- Using the ALASBO/OASIS database programs;
- Assistance in updating checking and submitting data;
- Getting prepared to send the data;
- Data security;
- Updated requirements resulting from regulatory and required reporting changes;
- An introduction and use of the new State SRM online validation reporting portal developed in conjunction with the Unity data project;
- New reporting requirements for fall OASIS.

If you wish to attend, please provide the following information by email to dennism@alasbo.org:

Name, School District, telephone #, session you plan on attending, and a fax number.

Space may be limited and registration will be on a first come first serve basis.

ALASBO will also be conducting OASIS update and project planning sessions at the ASBO conference in September and at the ALASBO conference in December in Anchorage.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at dennism@alasbo.org

ALASBO



Member Spotlight

Verna Reedy

Cordova School District

Tell us about your school district

The Cordova School District is located within the Chugach National Forest on Prince William Sound. It had a student population of 365 students at FY10 year-end. We have an elementary school (Mt. Eccles) and a Junior/Senior High School. Both schools are located in Cordova with Mt. Eccles currently undergoing renovation. Mt. Eccles was a blue ribbon school in 2005. Our high school students are addressing community energy issues through wind power and methane gas.

How long have you been in school business?

I worked for three years as an Accountant at Lake and Peninsula School District before moving to Cordova where I have been the Business Manager for four years. I also was a school board member when my children were in school in Montana.

How did you get into this business?

Twenty years of my life were spent in the timber industry as a nursery manager and when the company I worked for was sold, I went back to school for an accounting degree. I then worked for a mill in western Montana but they were cutting back due to the economy so I decided it was time to get out of timber and into another field. I saw an advertisement for an accounting position in King Salmon with Lake and Peninsula School District so I applied.

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What do you like best about your job?

The best part of my job is working with the people here, as they are all dedicated to giving our students the best possible education and they are fun to be around. I also get to bring my dog, Copper, to work with me and he is excellent company when everyone is gone for the day.

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

Find a mentor if possible and learn from your mistakes

How have you benefited from membership in ALASBO?

Membership in ALASBO has allowed me to learn more each year by attending the conferences and finding out what other districts are doing. Every year I learn something new at the ALASBO conference.

What do you like to do for fun?

My idea of fun is a good book, a soft chair, a bowl of popcorn, and a hot cup of tea. This works well in Cordova given the amount of rain we get.

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

I am very interested in my family history so would love to go to Germany as that is where my grandfather was born. He crossed the Atlantic Ocean by himself at the age of 13 when the point of entry was still Castle Garden.

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

I conduct the Eucharistic Service at our church when our priest is out of town.

What is your proudest accomplishment?

My proudest accomplishment is being the mother of three fantastic young men. Seth is a member of a hot shot fire crew, Colin is a physical education teacher, and Justin is a smoke jumper. Colin is attending the University of Wyoming for a master's degree in special education and Justin is attending the University of Montana for a master's degree in Business Management.

P-CARD UPDATE

Amy Lujan, ALASBO Executive Director

In late June 2010, the IASBO P-card program distributed over **\$1.3 million** in rebates, and **\$59,468** of that went to the six participating Alaska school districts! This rebate nearly doubles last year's total and is on track for another large increase in 2011. Why should your district miss out?

What's a P-Card?

P-card stands for procurement card. In this program, it's a Mastercard 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.



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, which owns Harris Bank in Chicago, 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. Many aspects of the program have been customized to school districts.

There are NO annual fees! Rebates come through IASBO annually, in the spring. They're currently 1% or more of transaction volume, depending on the billing cycle selected. ALASBO retains 25% of the rebate and the school district receives 75%.

District administrators are trained in Details Online, a system that enables them to monitor card activity in real time.

What are the Benefits?

In addition to the rebates, the p-card program can save money. Management studies have shown that purchase orders and high check volumes are extremely costly. Many districts

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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 even a few 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-downloads. 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.

It's Not Too Late to Register for the ASBO International Conference! September 24-27, 2010 – Lake Buena Vista, Florida

Here's what your peers are saying:

"I am paying for ASBO International's Annual Meeting with my own funds—that's how strongly I feel about how these opportunities will affect my job." —Gayle Isaac, Newton Comm. School District (IA)

"First rate professional development — This conference absolutely rocks year after year!" —Trish Williams, Independent School District No. 1-1 (OK)

"The Disney Institute programming is extremely inspiring and insightful. I found many applications to use within my own district." —Steven V. Ayers, Ed.D., CPA, Hilton CSD (NY)

It's ASBO's 100th anniversary! Tickets for Sunday's **Gala celebration** for ALASBO members and a guest are **FREE**, thanks to American Fidelity to ALASBO. So, be sure to let Executive Director Amy Lujan know if you want to attend the Gala!



ASBO Changes to February Leadership Conference

Amy Lujan, ALASBO Executive Director

As part of its strategic planning process, ASBO International has made some changes in the format of its February Leadership Conference—changes big enough to warrant a change in name to the **ASBO Executive Leadership Forum**. The changes were implemented earlier this year in Orlando, where attendees received excellent leadership training through the Disney Institute. Continued implementation of the new plan is generating excitement for the next Leadership Forum, which is scheduled for February 24-26, 2011 in Grapevine, Texas!

In recent years, ASBO International had been losing in excess of \$100,000/year on the Leadership Conference. The event was retained, because it was thought to be an important opportunity for ASBO leaders to come together for training, for committees to meet face-to-face, and for affiliate leaders to have a preview of the upcoming annual conference site. However, the annual deficit, dwindling attendance and less than stellar reviews of the training provided, had to be addressed.

ASBO learned from member surveys, the work of the Future's Task Force, and the Membership Committee that there was a need for true leadership training, and a focus on developing more leadership training opportunities for members became one of four goals in the ASBO Strategic Plan. If the tradition of holding the meeting in the location of a future annual conference were set aside, the new Leadership Forum could be held in the locations where the best possible training was available. If warm weather locations were selected, that would also help attract members to attend, especially in February!

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Last year's Orlando conference was the first implementation of the new focus on top quality leadership training, and the attendee reviews were fantastic! The availability of the Disney Institute and the warm weather of Orlando in February meant the tradition of meeting in the location of a future annual meeting was retained in 2010, but for the 2011 Leadership Forum that tradition will be abandoned.

The February 2011 Leadership Forum will feature top quality leadership training by American Airlines. Executive trainers from American's Flagship University, which is headquartered at DFW in Grapevine, will present a case study of the leadership lessons learned from the 9-11 crisis, as well as their recovery from bankruptcy and how they were able to form a partnership with the unions to survive. Additional training on crisis communication will also be provided and a full agenda will be available in the fall. Unlike the Leadership Conference, which was open only to ASBO committee members and affiliate leaders, the new Leadership Forum is a leadership development opportunity available to all ASBO members and non-members.

In addition to the above agenda, committees will meet in a pre-conference session, as will the Executive Directors (AEDG). The Strategic Governance Symposium, which provides training specific to affiliate leaders and boards, has been moved to take place as an annual conference pre-conference session.

Since I've received several questions on this topic, I wanted to take the opportunity to relay the information I've received from ASBO International on the changes to the February Leadership event. Ron Skinner of ASBO reviewed and provided input to this article. Giving up the opportunity to visit future annual conference sites has been a difficult issue for affiliate leaders who are planning events, but they are coming up with ways to work around this change. Personally, I'm excited about the opportunity to participate in some of the finest leadership training available, and I don't mind visiting warm locations in February either!



ASBO INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

Erin Green, ASBO President

Editors note: ASBO President Erin Green will be joining us for the ALASBO Annual Conference in Anchorage, December 5-8, 2010!

During my six years on the ASBO Board, many things have happened. The organization developed a strategic plan, and vetted the ideas through various stakeholders including our committees, our affiliates and our members. Task forces were established, one to review a possible move to offer an International credential for our profession, one to review membership directions, and one to survey the future for our profession and organization, in order to best serve our growing membership. I am so pleased to be able to tell you that many of the plans that were committed to are now coming to fruition.



ASBO members who are part of the **certification commission** under the able direction of Bambi Staatz, are hard at work developing the program for a U.S. & Canadian credential, a dream of the organization for over 30 years. The program will be unveiled this year and the first round of candidates certified. This credential will be extremely useful to states and provinces without licensing or regulation for business officials. It can work in tandem with the licensing or regulation, as an added "credential", helping to insure quality candidates for SBO positions, and add to the ease of mobility needed by younger members of our profession. The credential has been developed in conjunction with high quality consultants to create a sustainable world-class program. A two-part exam will be taken to qualify for the credential, along with meeting the other requirements of the program.

I am also pleased to report that **ASBO membership** is holding, showing only a 4% loss over last year, amazing to us given the economy last year. New members come in daily, and are coming to our profession from other types of

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jobs, such as accounting, business schools, banking, teaching, public administration and the business world.

ASBO continues to **add services** every year, such as a newly invigorated Executive Leadership Forum to be held February 23-25, 2011 in Grapevine Texas (Dallas-Fort Worth area), our world class summer Eagle Institute to be held this year in Gettysburg to meld a reflection of Civil War history and current challenges in education leadership, ASBO radio providing newscasts for our members, School Business Daily our daily briefing on national education news, our renowned SBA magazine published monthly, and our award programs that enhance fiscal credibility for us, badly needed in these times when trust in government is low and the need for communication is high. ASBO has recently started the AREF (ASBO Research and Education Fund) to provide resources to fund research projects that directly benefit students. Coming this year is a new ASBO blog to help us share best practices.

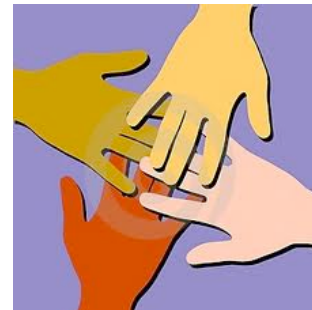
I hope this is enough to convince you to **give ASBO membership a try**, in addition to the great services you obtain from ALASBO. There simply is no replacement, digital or otherwise, for our world-class professional development where you can develop your own "network of support" amongst colleagues from around the country and the world. ASBO has changed in the past 10 years. It is not unusual to find colleagues from Great Britain, Australia and even South Africa at our events.

Education is undergoing tremendous changes; I don't need to tell you that! We are moving away from the model of the 1950's where 30 students sat compliantly listening to lectures, preparing to work in Fortune 500 company cubicles. Instead we are going to be embracing an education that is personally relevant to each student, delivered in a learning style that works for them, framed in a global way, as the jobs of today require cultural competence, the ability to work across countries and cultures, the ability to be creative and innovative, apply knowledge and solve real world problems.

It is clear that our communities and school districts are looking to us to help guide them through this transformative period. It will fall to us to have real conversations with education unions, as the wages/benefits provided to education staff are unsustainable in many regions, and far above what the average worker

supporting our schools can earn. It is time to start meaningful collaboration with the business sectors, as business is a large stakeholder in our system by way of taxes paid, AND they receive our end products, the workers needed to propel our economy into the future. It is time to align our curricula with the skills needed in the real world. Jobs will continue to shift to the countries that can perform them adequately at the lowest cost. The jobs in the US may require more creative design work, as opposed to manufacturing. Jobs requiring innovation and arts education may grow. This all has great implication for K-12 education.

As we transform ourselves from being managers to leaders in our districts in this globalized economy, consider ASBO your partner, alongside ALASBO. We will stand by you and be your "network of support"!



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COMING SOON: *Nomination forms for ALASBO's School Business Official of the Year award will be distributed shortly via email and will be available on our website! Please consider nominating one of your peers for this prestigious award. The deadline for applications will be October 31*



Your Moment of EXCEL Zen Counting: And a one and a two...

Sometimes you need Excel for some complex number crunching and other times it's just a simple task of summing or counting. Where counting is concerned, Excel offers three functions: COUNT(), COUNTA(), and COUNTBLANK(). Regardless of your counting tasks, one of these functions should meet your needs.

Excel's COUNT() function counts only the numbers in a range. This function uses the following forms:

COUNT(*v1*, *v2*, ...)

COUNT(*range*)

where *v1* and *v2* represent the literal values you want to count and *range* identifies a range of cells whose contents you want to count.

This function counts only numbers. Cells can contain any type of data, but the function counts only numbers, including dates. The function ignores empty cells, logical values, text, and error values.

In the following figure, the COUNT() function in cell D12, COUNT(D2:D10), returns the value 7. Although D2:D10 comprises nine cells, only seven contain valid numbers. The string N/A in D6 is a string, not a number and cell D8 is blank. The function does count 0 in cell D7.

D12 =COUNT(D2:D10)						
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	ID	Product Name	Unit Price	Units In Stock	Units On Order	Reorder Level
2	1	Chai	18	39	0	10
3	2	Chang	19	17	40	25
4	3	Aniseed Syrup	10	13	70	25
5	4	Chef Anton's Cajun Seasoning	22	53	0	0
6	5	Chef Anton's Gumbo Mix	21.35	N/A	0	0
7	6	Grandma's Boysenberry Spread	25	0	0	25
8	7	Uncle Bob's Organic Dried Pears	30		0	10
9	8	Northwoods Cranberry Sauce	40	6	0	0
10	9	Mishi Kobe Niku	97	29	0	0
11						
12		COUNT()		7		

COUNT() is straightforward. It's easy to understand and implement, but it isn't always adequate.

When you need to count all values, not just number, use COUNTA(). This function uses the same forms as COUNT() but be careful because

this function considers all values—even the ones you can't see.

Notice that the in the example below, the COUNTA() function in D13 returns 9, even though D8 appears empty. Did you expect the function to return 8? Cell D8 actually contains a formula, "=", which returns an empty string. Consequently, the cell isn't truly empty and every cell in D2:D10 contains a value. If you remove that formula, COUNTA() would return 8.

D13 =COUNTA(D2:D10)						
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	ID	Product Name	Unit Price	Units In Stock	Units On Order	Reorder Level
2	1	Chai	18	39	0	10
3	2	Chang	19	17	40	25
4	3	Aniseed Syrup	10	13	70	25
5	4	Chef Anton's Cajun Seasoning	22	53	0	0
6	5	Chef Anton's Gumbo Mix	21.35	N/A	0	0
7	6	Grandma's Boysenberry Spread	25	0	0	25
8	7	Uncle Bob's Organic Dried Pears	30		0	10
9	8	Northwoods Cranberry Sauce	40	6	0	0
10	9	Mishi Kobe Niku	97	29	0	0
11						
12		COUNT()		7		
13		COUNTA()		9		
14						
15						

COUNTBLANK() counts empty cells in a specified range of cells. Unlike the other two count functions, this function takes only one form: **COUNTBLANK(range)** which makes sense—you can't really enter a blank as an argument.

Now, here's where things get a bit sticky. COUNTA() counts cells that contain a formula that returns an empty string. Since COUNTBLANK() is counting blanks, you might expect it to not count cells that contain formulas that return an empty string—but it does. The COUNTBLANK() function in cell D14 returns 1 because it treats the "=" formula in cell D8 as a blank cell.

D14 =COUNTBLANK(D2:D10)						
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	ID	Product Name	Unit Price	Units In Stock	Units On Order	Reorder Level
2	1	Chai	18	39	0	10
3	2	Chang	19	17	40	25
4	3	Aniseed Syrup	10	13	70	25
5	4	Chef Anton's Cajun Seasoning	22	53	0	0
6	5	Chef Anton's Gumbo Mix	21.35	N/A	0	0
7	6	Grandma's Boysenberry Spread	25	0	0	25
8	7	Uncle Bob's Organic Dried Pears	30		0	10
9	8	Northwoods Cranberry Sauce	40	6	0	0
10	9	Mishi Kobe Niku	97	29	0	0
11						
12		COUNT()		7		
13		COUNTA()		9		
14		COUNTBLANK()		1		
15						



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