

# ALASBO

## News Link...

May 2011



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*ALASBO News Link*  
is published for the members of the Alaska  
Association of School Business Officials  
and its affiliate members.

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rather than electronically? Send a message to Amy  
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## **President's Message**

*Luke Fulp, Kodiak*

**Each** summer the executive board convenes to work on strategic initiatives while also dedicating time to plan for the upcoming annual conference. This summer, the executive board, along with any other interested ALASBO members, will be meeting for our Summer Leadership Conference July 22-24 in Fairbanks.

We'll begin the event with a day of leadership training, facilitated by Illinois ASBO Executive Director, Mike Jacoby. This portion of Leadership will be focused on team building and change management. Given the fact that many of us are entrenched in software conversions, implementing new policies or introducing p-cards to our schools, I anticipate this training will be relevant to all participants.

Our leadership training will be followed by planning for the 2011 ALASBO Annual Conference. We'll discuss which sessions will benefit our membership the most, and will formulate a draft agenda for the event.

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It's amazing how much is accomplished in just two days at Summer Leadership. Over the past few years, we've tried to dedicate some time for a fun event like deep sea fishing in Kodiak or bear viewing in Wrangell. For our Fairbanks visit, we've lined up an afternoon trip to Chena Hot Springs!

There are still three \$500 Swarner Scholarships available to support the cost of travel for interested members. Thanks to our sponsors, most meals and lodging in Fairbanks are provided at no cost to participants, so it's very affordable to attend. Don't miss out on this worthwhile event, and come join us for Summer Leadership in Fairbanks. I hope to see you there!



## **Executive Director's Message**

*Amy Lujan, ALASBO Executive Director*

Well, the legislators have FINALLY left town...

It was a disappointing year in that we were unable to gain traction for a multi-year funding plan for the Base Student Allocation (BSA), like the one we had for FY09-FY11. However, the legislators did approve a new funding mechanism for vocational education (SB84) and one-time funding of \$20 million each for school districts and municipalities (HB108). A generous capital budget was passed at the last minute, including funding for the governor's performance scholarships. All these bills are still pending the Governor's signature. Additional summary information regarding this session's activity will be coming soon.

At this time, I want to encourage you to consider registering for ALASBO's Summer Leadership Conference in Fairbanks. As reference by Luke Fulp above, we look forward to outstanding training in leadership by Mike Jacoby, as well as planning for our annual conference and FUN at Chena Hot Springs! There is NO fee to register, and most meals and lodging in Fairbanks are provided, thanks to our sponsors. You can access registration from our website, [www.alasbo.org](http://www.alasbo.org) under events-conferences-upcoming,

If you are a first-time attendee, please apply for a Swarner Shaping the Future grant. The application is due June 10 and is available on our website, [www.alasbo.org](http://www.alasbo.org) under opportunities-grants. There will be THREE \$500 awards this year, to cover airfare and incidental costs.

It's also time to start thinking about attending the ASBO International Conference in Seattle, September 16-19! Registration is already open on the [www.asbointl.org](http://www.asbointl.org) website and can also be accessed from our site. We'd love to see a large turnout of Alaskans, since the conference is close to home this year! We're planning some fun events, including a box at a Seattle Mariners game sponsored by American Fidelity.

If you have been in school business in a supervisory position for less than five years, consider applying for a Bridges to the Future grant to attend the ASBO International Conference. There will be twenty \$2,000 awards, sponsored by Met Life. The application is available on the ASBO website (above) and is due June 1.

In other business, the Board has approved a change in ALASBO's fiscal year to April 1 – March 31, starting with the period beginning April 1, 2012. This change reflects our business cycle, with the conference having been changed to December in recent years. The Board has also approved a plan to support a candidate for ASBO Board of Directors; see box below.

Wishing you all a great start to the summer! If you have questions about any ALASBO program, please do not hesitate to contact me at [alasbo@gci.net](mailto:alasbo@gci.net), or 907-500-9086. You'll also find useful information at: [www.alasbo.org](http://www.alasbo.org).

### ***ALASBO to Support ASBO International Board of Directors Candidate***

*The ALASBO Board recently approved a plan to support an ALASBO member to run for the ASBO Board of Directors in 2012 or 2013! This will be a fantastic professional development opportunity for the candidate, and will also draw ALASBO members into a shared project to increase participation in ALASBO and ASBO.*

*Tom Freeman of Anchorage served as an ASBO Director in the early 80's and Melody Douglas of Kenai was a Director and later President of ASBO in 2001-2007. Applications to be our next ALASBO candidate will be available soon!*

## **Make your Next School Board Presentation a Winner**

*David Levin, author of "Don't Just Talk, Be Heard!"*

Does this sound familiar? You're standing before your school board, about to make a presentation. You have bad news to share and you know they don't want to hear it. As you stand there, your heart is pounding, your mouth is dry (unlike your underarms)—and you haven't even started yet!

Don't feel bad. You're not alone. Presentations in general give lots of people fits. But school board presentations can be especially challenging. For one thing, no two boards—or board members, for that matter—are alike. Everyone will have their own expectations, interests, even agendas, which can get very complicated to sort out. My suggestion is, rather than driving yourself crazy trying to shape your message for each board member individually, speak in a way that works with all of them, no matter their differences. Here's how.

Don't tell them stuff. Connect with them. First, always keep in mind that the most important part of your presentation is not the information you're sharing, but HOW you're sharing it. That's hard to remember when you're in the hot seat, but it's true, and very important. The worst thing you can do is get up there, bury your face in your notes and start reading. For one thing, it's boring. "Blah blah blah." More important, it comes off as weak and lacking in confidence, which are exactly the wrong impressions to give.

More than anything else, board members need to feel that you're someone they can count on and trust, that you know what you're doing, and understand their needs. The more they think that of you, the more likely they are to hear what you have to say. So, rather than reading from your notes, just talk to them. Stand up straight. Look them in the eye. Smile. Speak up. Speak clearly.

You want to come off as confident, open, relaxed, and trustworthy as possible. Anything that supports those impressions helps you. Anything that undercuts them hurts. Reading from a prepared statement definitely hurts.

### **NOT Just the Facts**

Style is one thing. What about substance? How should you share the information itself? First, it's a given that it has to be shared completely, no

matter what. You would obviously never want to change the facts of a presentation to please an audience. But the words you use to share those facts can definitely change how they are received. Consider these two examples:

- A) "The numbers are \_\_\_\_."
- B) "This next number is one I'm afraid you're not going to be happy about. The truth is, I'm not happy about it either. I know this is something you feel strongly about and that it's frustrating for you. I apologize for that, and understand that it's our responsibility to get the job done. Honestly, we are disappointed with the numbers too. All I can say is that we've been working hard on it, it has our full attention, and we are making some progress, though not as much as any of us would like."

The main objective with all your communication is to keep people from dismissing you or filtering your words so that they really hear what you're saying. I think it's clear that the second approach does just that. The board may not like the information, but it's pretty hard for them to just write you off and go into reactionary mode when you've demonstrated such humility, candor, empathy, and accountability.

The point here is not to somehow make the news better, or even make board members like it better. The point is to keep the bad news from damaging the relationship, because the quality of the relationship is the most important factor in your success, long-term. Done well, sharing bad news not only doesn't have to harm the relationship, it can actually make it stronger.

### **Planning, Feedback, and Practice**

Finally, I can't emphasize enough the importance of planning, feedback, and practice. First, plan out exactly what you want to say, taking into account all we've talked about with connection and the relationship. Then, run your plan by someone for feedback. This is a critical step that too many people overlook. I can't tell you how many times I've seen someone say exactly what they intended—without realizing what a bad idea it was in the first place! Before you go out and plant your foot in your mouth, get feedback! Find someone who: 1) Knows what to look for; 2) Will tell you truth; 3) Ideally, can suggest other things to say, if necessary.

Finally, practice. Practice brings confidence and helps you connect. It also sends powerful

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messages of respect, especially when you consider the impressions of not being practiced and ready. When you show up not knowing your stuff, winging it, acting nervous and not ready to answer questions, at best it says you're incompetent. At worst, that you don't care. You simply must practice your presentation. And I don't mean just running through your presentation once the day before. I mean run through it a LOT. If you have opening and closing comments, memorize them. Practice them out loud, and standing. If you have materials, practice with them too. Make it as much like the actual presentation as possible, and you should practice the whole presentation until you are comfortable with all of it and have the opening and closing memorized.

There are plenty of other things to say about effective presentations, too. But if you take these few suggestions to heart you'll go a long ways to making your next board presentation the best one yet!

*David Levin is the author of "Don't Just Talk, Be Heard!" and the co-author of three books, including the bestselling "QBQ! The Question Behind the Question". His keynotes and training tools help people communicate better, so they can live their full potential—at work and at home. Please visit [www.JustBeHeard.com](http://www.JustBeHeard.com) for information.*



# ALASBO



## Member Spotlight

*Yodean Armour, Klawock City Schools*

### ***Tell us about your school district***

Klawock City School District is a single site district in Klawock, located on Prince of Wales Island (Southeast Alaska). We serve 130 students in grades K-12, and have 20 certified staff and 19 classified staff.

### ***How long have you been in school business?***

This is my 6th year as Business Manager.

### ***How did you get into this business?***

My first year in Klawock Schools I worked as the Activities Director, and a year later was hired as the Business Manager.

### ***What do you like best about your job?***

Being part of a great team and working alongside some of my past teachers (I am STILL learning from them).

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

Be sure to attend the Annual Conference in December, and don't hesitate to email/call a fellow ALASBO member for assistance.

### ***How have you benefited from membership in ALASBO?***

The networking opportunities, power lunches, and various updates have all been incredibly helpful.

### ***What do you like to do for fun?***

When I have time, I love being out on the water.

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

New Zealand – to experience beautiful scenery and the Maori culture.

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

From Head Start to High school, I just knew I was going to be a doctor....but dropped that idea when I discovered the requirement for the college anatomy class (cadaver?!).

**What is your proudest accomplishment?**

Moving back to Klawock and giving back to the community that held me up while I was at school.



## Awards Committee Announcements

*Cindy Reilly, Yukon-Koyukuk School District*

The Awards Committee has been busy since our annual conference giving out money! Each year, we read applications for three scholarships: the **Lowell Thomas Freeman Grant** to send a member to the annual international conference; the **McClain "Mack" Easton Memorial Scholarship** for deserving high school seniors; and the **Richard Swarner Shaping the Future Grant** to send first-time attendees to the Summer Leadership Conference.

This year, we had five members apply for the \$1,500 LT Freeman Scholarship. The winner is Carl Horn, Director of Finance at Nenana City Public Schools. All five applicants were very deserving, but what the committee determined was that Carl had been a member of ALASBO for several years but never had the opportunity to go to the annual conference, which this year is in Seattle, September 16-19. Thanks to CORE, Inc. for their multi-year sponsorship of this grant program.

Forty-six seniors from across the state applied for the Mack Easton Memorial Scholarship. The committee agreed they were all MORE than

deserving...very top-notch young adults. The winners are:

- Sonja Jones, Kodiak Island Borough School District
- Leanna Rice, Wrangell Public Schools
- Kelley Sefton, Seward High School (Kenai Peninsula Borough School District).

We were able to award three scholarships of \$1,000 this year, one more than in previous years, thanks to the sponsorship of Alaska Communications Systems, Alaska Education and Recreational Products, LLC and GCI SchoolAccess.

**The final grant opportunity of the year is now open for applications through June 10.** If you would be a first-time attendee to ALASBO Summer Leadership, we would love to have you apply for one of the \$500 Swarner grants to attend. Since lodging in Fairbanks for the July 22-24 event and most meals are covered by our event sponsorships, the \$500 will in most cases cover airfare and incidentals, making it very affordable to attend and participate in this excellent professional development opportunity.

This year, THREE grant awards will be available, thanks to the Swarner family and National Cooperative RX. The application is available on the ALASBO website, [www.alasbo.org](http://www.alasbo.org), in the opportunities-grants section.

### Call for Presentations

*What do your colleagues need to learn about at the annual conference in December? What can you contribute?*

*ALASBO is currently seeking presentation proposals for the December 4-7, 2011 Annual Conference. The networking and information sharing among our members and associates is what makes the ALASBO conference so valuable to Alaska school business staff each year.*

*Please consider submitting a presentation proposal for this year's conference. We need ideas for sectionals, cracker barrels (less formal, more Q&A) and roundtables. Present a project you've been working on, or perhaps a panel discussion with several colleagues. We need your input!*

*The proposal form is available on the ALASBO website, [www.alasbo.org](http://www.alasbo.org) under events-conferences-upcoming, and it's due July 15.*

## Website Updates

If you have a question or are looking for something, [www.alasbo.org](http://www.alasbo.org) is a good place to start for updated information! Here are some of the **recent updates** and where to find them:

- Registration links for members and vendors, for upcoming events: events-conferences
- Call for Presentations form for annual conference: events-conferences-upcoming
- Power Lunch schedule for 2011 and materials from recent Power Lunches: events-workshops
- Updated Board Job Descriptions: about ALASBO-policies & procedures
- Updated Policy Manual: about ALASBO-policies & procedures
- Current grant and scholarship applications: opportunities tab
- Presentation materials from 2010 Annual Conference: resources-downloads tab
- Membership form for anyone in your district who is not yet a member (it's just \$75!): membership tab

Let me or anyone on the Services Committee know your suggestions for making the website more useful!

## ALASBO 2011 Liaison Assignments

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## Your Moment of EXCEL Zen

You probably use conditional formatting to highlight specific values in a conditional way. For instance, if a value is less than 0, you might want to display that value in red. You can also use conditional formatting to highlight a range of input cells - it's simple and the result is an easy-to-implement data entry guide.

The following sheet shows a simple savings calculator that uses conditional formatting to highlight the input cells for each savings option. The user selects a savings options from the list and conditional formatting highlights the input cells. Those cells remain highlighted until the user selects a different savings option from the

list. The formulas above the input area display the appropriate savings result.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Savings List						
2	Future Value (Monthly)	\$	-				
3	Future Value (One-time)	\$	-				
4	Savings Goal	\$	-				
5		Interest Rate	Years to Save	Monthly Savings	One-time Savings	Deposit	Savings Goal
6	Savings Goal						
	Future Value (Monthly)						
	Future Value (One-time)						
	Savings Goal						

Before we get started, you should know that this example is about using conditional formatting to highlight input cells. It is *not* about the savings formulas or the other pieces used to round out this example. In fact, you don't have to enter the formulas at all to get this technique to work. There are a number of ways to enhance this sheet further *if* your goal is to build a savings calculator. For instance, a finished sheet might display only the relevant results (column B in the upper portion). In addition, I based the data validation list on the static list in the upper part of the sheet. You might not want to display that list in the actual data entry portion. For the sake of explanation and simplicity, I chose to put everything on the same sheet.

Now, let's get started! To build the sheet, do the following:

1. Use the sheet below (which displays gridlines) as a guide to entering the labels.
2. Next, define the following names:  
B6 Rate  
C6 YSave  
D6 MSave  
E6 OTSave  
F6 Deposit  
G6 Goal
3. Enter the following formulas  
B2 =IFERROR(FV(Rate/12,YSave\*12,-MSave,-Deposit),"Error")  
B3 =IFERROR(FV(Rate,YSave,0,-OTSave),"Error")  
B4 =IFERROR(PMT(Rate/12,YSave\*12,-Deposit,Goal),0)

At this point, your sheet should resemble the one below. You might want to apply the currency format to B2:B4 and D6:G6. I also shaded and outlined a few label cells. (These formatting steps aren't necessary for the technique to

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work.) Now you're ready to build the list that offers savings options.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Savings List						
2	Future Value (Monthly)	\$	-				
3	Future Value (One-time)	\$	-				
4	Savings Goal	\$	-				
5							
6							
7							

1. Select A6.
2. Click the Data tab.
3. In the Data Tools group, click the Data Validation dropdown.
4. Choose Data Validation. In Excel 2003, choose Validation from the Data menu.
5. In the resulting dialog box, choose List from the Allow dropdown.
6. Enter =\$A\$2:\$A\$4 in the source control and click OK.

The Data Validation dialog box is shown with the 'Settings' tab selected. Under 'Validation criteria', 'Allow' is set to 'List'. The 'Source' field contains the formula '=\$A\$2:\$A\$4'. The 'Ignore blank' and 'In-cell dropdown' checkboxes are checked. The 'Apply these changes to all other cells with the same settings' checkbox is unchecked. The 'OK' button is highlighted.

The next step is to add the conditional formatting that highlights the input cells for each savings option. To do so for the first savings option, Future Value (Monthly), do the following:

1. Select cells B6:D6 and F6.
2. Click the Home tab.
3. In the Styles group, click the Conditional Formatting dropdown. In Excel 2003, choose Conditional Formatting from the Format menu.
4. Choose New Rule. (Skip this step in Excel 2003.)

5. Select the Use A Formula To Determine Which Cells To Format option in the Select A Rule Type section. In Excel 2003, choose Formula Is from the Condition 1 dropdown.
6. In the Format Values Where This Formula Is True control, enter the formula: =\$A6="Future Value (Monthly)".
7. Click Format.
8. Choose color from the Fill tab and click OK.
9. Click OK to return to the sheet.

The 'New Formatting Rule' dialog box is shown. Under 'Select a Rule Type', 'Use a formula to determine which cells to format' is selected. In the 'Edit the Rule Description' section, the formula '=\$A6="Future Value (Monthly)"' is entered. The 'Preview' section shows a sample text 'AaBbCcYyZz' with a light blue fill color. The 'Format...' button is highlighted.

Repeat the steps above to set the conditional formatting for the other two savings options:

- Future Value (One-Time) uses input cells B6:C6 and E6 and the conditional formula, =\$A6="Future Value (One-Time)".
- Savings Goal uses input cells B6:C6, F6:G6 and the conditional formula, =\$A6="Savings Goal".

If you like, you can turn off the gridlines by clicking the Page Layout tab and unchecking the View option under Gridlines in the Sheet Options group. At this point, your sheet should resemble the first sheet shown above, which highlights the input cells for the third option, Savings Goal.

To guide data entry for the first option, Future Value (Monthly), choose that option from the validation list. As you can see below, doing so highlights a different set of input cells. Choose Future Value (One-time) to change the input cells to accommodate that savings option.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Savings List						
2	Future Value (Monthly)	\$	-				
3	Future Value (One-time)	\$	-				
4	Savings Goal	\$	-				
5							
6	Future Value (One-time)						
7							

(Continued on page 10)

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Remember, you can further enhance this sheet as an actual savings calculator. You might want to use different (more precise) formulas, or add more savings options and input values. You'd probably want to apply validation rules for the input cells and protect the formula and label cells. In addition, you should probably delete input values when changing options. They won't interfere with the formulas if you leave them, but they might confuse users.

The sheet, as is, illustrates how to use conditional formatting to highlight input cells. It doesn't complete the savings calculator as a useable product.

## Mark Your Calendars!



### Upcoming Events

#### 2011 ALASBO

- **July 22 – 24 - ALASBO Summer Leadership – Fairbanks**
- **September 16-19 – ASBO International Annual Conference – Seattle**
- **December 4-7 – ALASBO Annual Conference – Anchorage**

### Power Lunch Teleconference Schedule

11 AM to noon, the 3rd Tuesday  
each month  
call 218-844-3377, code 252726  
(spells ALASBO!)

June 21	RFP Bid Process
July 19	Business Office Inservice
August 16	Cooperative Purchasing
September 20	TBA
October 18	Health Care Reform Update
November 16	1099's and W-2's
November 22	Indirect Cost Form
December	ALASBO CONFERENCE