

ALASBO News Link...



August 2012

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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www.alasbo.org

For publishing information, contact:
Amy Lujan
e-mail: alasbo@gci.net

Editing and layout by
Edith Hildebrand, Galena City Schools
edith.hildebrand@galenanet.com

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

President's Message

Jenny Martens, Lower Yukon

I suspect everyone is already running full throttle with audits, staff back to work and students returning for another school year. Welcome fellow School Business Officials to FY13!!! I want to extend a special welcome to all School Business Officials who are new to the profession, new to Alaska, or new to your position. While you make your way through FY13 remember ALASBO will be by your side, so I hope you will reach out to ALASBO membership whenever you need assistance.

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After 40 years of success, ALASBO continues to offer school business officials many opportunities to network while gaining knowledge and tools to perform daily responsibilities.

A few weeks ago we “closed out” another successful ALASBO networking opportunity, our Summer Leadership Conference, which was held in beautiful Homer this year. Fifteen participants attended to review the ALASBO Strategic Plan and develop the Annual State Conference schedule. We welcomed five first time attendees, three of whom attended through a Swarner Shaping the Future Leadership grant, and two attendees new to the school business profession. What an impressive group of professionals. I want to thank the participants for their hard work and contributions in planning what is shaping up to be a great annual conference.



The next opportunity for us to gather together is the ASBO International Annual Meeting and Expo in Phoenix, Arizona October 12-15, 2012. This important event is packed full of professional development offerings, a chance to network, and time to have fun!! Consider joining your colleagues as we represent Alaska ASBO (ALASBO).

The event you won't want to miss is the ALASBO Annual Conference in Anchorage December 2-5, 2012. We will be celebrating 40 years of ALASBO conferences and the incredible amount of hours invested by membership to support ALASBO's success. Conference planning is well underway and focused on what is relevant to Alaska School Business Officials. The schedule includes great speakers, a birthday celebration, vendor trade show and plenty of time to network and collaborate with your colleagues. To honor ALASBO's 40th birthday, our goal is to have a record number of attendees, so make your plans and look for the online registration in early October!!!!

Thank you everyone for your dedication and contributions to the education of Alaska's children!



Executive Director's Message

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

Summer Leadership in Homer was fantastic! I'm so grateful to the ALASBO members who took time out of their busy summer schedules to participate. We also greatly appreciate the support of our vendors, who made the event possible at a very low cost to our members: Frontline/AESOP; American Fidelity; GCI SchoolAccess and SchoolDude.com. All of these vendors had representatives at Friday night's opening dinner and three of them participated in Saturday and Sunday events as well.

The Dick Swarner family and National CooperativeRX also played a role in bringing more ALASBO members as first-time attendees to the event this year, through sponsorship of the Shaping the Future Leadership grant. Recipients of this \$500 grant were: Cassee Olin, Kodiak Island Borough School District; Ricardo Tejeda, Yakutat School District; and Teri Dierick, Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC).

During the Leadership Conference, we reviewed ALASBO Strategic Plan with Dennis McMillian of Foraker Group. Then we plunged into planning this year's annual conference, using member evaluations and survey responses to guide us. Once again, we'll work together to produce one of the best annual conferences ever!

In the meantime, another great opportunity is still available for ALASBO members to attend the ASBO International Annual



Conference in Phoenix, October 12-15! The conference presents a fantastic opportunity for some of the best professional development available for school business officials. In addition, you can benefit from the networking opportunities with your ALASBO colleagues, and school business professionals from other states and countries! There are networking events planned for some really fun venues in Phoenix. Thanks to American Fidelity, I've just registered our ALASBO group for a high-energy visit to Octane Raceway (www.OctaneRaceway.com). We'll be watching for the checkered flag! So, register now for the conference at www.asbointl.org!

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I know that ALASBO members are busy preparing for the new school year, and likewise ALASBO leadership is working on preparing to support you in the upcoming year through professional development and legislative efforts.

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.



*The ASBO International Annual Meeting
and Expo in Phoenix, Arizona October
12-15, 2012.*

ALASBO



Member Spotlight

Sharon Agwiak, Lower Yukon School District

In Southwest Alaska lies the home of the Lower Yukon School District, 55 miles up the mighty Yukon River from the Bering Sea. Mountain Village holds the District Office approximately middle of our ten sites beginning from upper Yukon River Russian Mission to the coast line of Hooper Bay. This past school term, District-wide K-12, our student enrollment totaled 2011.

Ak'atamaani (A long time ago) I was hired 2/1991 full time as an Accounts Payable Clerk; then a year later I was transferred to the Payroll Department and been there since.

I got interested in business as a very young child, very fond of numbers and math all my years of school. I recently came across my elementary report card and on the comments side of the very small card read "once I open my math book, I don't like to put it down, she loves math". Here I am still working with numbers.

My job can be challenging, but I get a thrill from focusing and rushing to meet my deadlines. Once payroll is complete you get a sense of relief and accomplishment.

I think the best advice I can give to those new to school business is not to give up. You are not alone out there; you are not perfect. Learn from your mistakes and with technology you can always reverse/correct your errors.

For anyone who is working in the Business Department for any school district, ALASBO is a must. You interact with your new and "old" business colleagues from our very unique State. Directly connecting, sharing ideas, and information with the same business management, challenges, causes, victories, updates and we can't forget our connection to children. And with our diverse state, you can actually get to put name to a face at ALASBO, which is especially nice.

I enjoy practically everything a "bush life" can offer. I love the outdoors, and different types of subsistence gathering with my family is fun stuff... I enjoy crafts, i.e.: sewing, beading, knitting, and I can't overlook baking and cooking. As a typical bush girl, and even as old as I am, I take pleasure in competing with city league basketball teams, 20+ years younger than myself, LOL my daughters ☺

Lord willing, hopefully one day, I will visit St. Bernadette's shrine in Lourdes, France. She is one inspiration in my life.

And lastly, my proudest accomplishment in my life is my family, my husband, children and grandson.

Send us your pictures!

Here's your chance to get your photos into this year's annual conference slide show! Send in your pictures of school sites, activities, and you, the ALASBO members enjoying Alaska!

Send them to: yodean.armour@klawockschool.com

Board Member Perspective

Sue Jolin, Anchorage School District

Recently I had the pleasure of participating in a research group consisting of finance managers associated with the Council of Great City Schools. Our mission: review, present and discuss various issues facing urban school districts around the country. The focus included topics such as working through organizational silos, strategic planning and performance budgeting, total cost of ownership, communications, and continuity of operations (COOP) and disaster recovery planning.



Although the emphasis was on larger urban districts, I believe the discussions and lessons learned apply across districts of all sizes and geographic locations. The area of COOP and disaster recovery planning is something we all hope we never have to put into action; however, of all the topics discussed it seems to be an area that is often overlooked. It is easy to become so consumed in the day-to-day tasks that we fail to ensure our COOP and recovery plans are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Some of us may not know all aspects of our plan or even worse, we don't have one at all!

COOP and recovery planning is not only for the unthinkable—major natural disasters: 1964 earthquake; life/safety issues: Columbine or influenza pandemic, but should also include contingencies for those situations that are closer to realization than they may ultimately appear. These considerations may include how to handle the loss of a school or facility due to fire, flooding or other unexpected incident. What to do when there is a sudden loss of key personnel within a district, the loss of a major supplier of goods or services or something some of us experience on a more regular basis—major system outages or technological disasters. What do you do? Who's in charge? What are everyone's responsibilities? How do you continue to provide services? At what level can those services be provided? How do you get back to the status quo? These are some basic questions to answer when considering a COOP and recovery plan or when reevaluating or testing an existing plan.

One of the first steps in developing the plan is to determine the risks; what are the potential events that could trigger the need to put a continuity plan into effect? Identify those risks for all areas of your organization, from district-wide to the school or departmental level, then

decide what mission critical activities must be carried out. The next step would be to determine when and how those activities would be carried out and who is involved in that process—the plan. Then the plan must be tested, reworked, tested again until the best course of action is identified. Once the plan is established it must be communicated at all levels of the organization, maintained, updated and practiced, so that in the event it is put into action it is effective.

Based on my research and discussions with the council group, we at the Anchorage School District feel that we have a very effective Emergency and Security Preparedness plan; however, we also believe that more work could be done in establishing a comprehensive COOP and recovery plan that is communicated at all levels of our organization. Part of that effort would be to re-evaluate the planning within my own department to identify current risks and develop a more up to date COOP and recovery plan that could be incorporated into a district-wide effort. If anyone is interested in sharing ideas or their continuity plans please contact me, I'm very interested in hearing from you.

Have a great start to the new school year!

Power Lunch Teleconference Schedule

September 18	Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
October 23	Health Care Reform Update
October 30	1099's and W-2's
November 20	Indirect Cost Proposal
December	ALASBO CONFERENCE

11 AM to noon

**call 218-844-3377, code 252726
(spells ALASBO!)**

P-CARD UPDATE

Amy Lujan, ALASBO Executive Director

In June 2012, the IASBO P-card program distributed nearly **\$1.8 million** in rebates, and **\$92,996** of that went to the eight participating Alaska school districts! Why should your district miss out?

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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 a portion of the rebate, which starts at 25% and decreases as district purchasing volume grows.

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 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.

How to Get People to Do What You Want Them to Do

Garrison Wynn, Wynn Solutions

If this article title pulled you in, maybe you've recently realized that having a better tactic or using your (seemingly imaginary) charisma is not producing the influence you would have hoped. You've read the leadership and negotiation books and you've witnessed some disturbing YouTube videos that appear to prove you no longer need talent or a point to be in front of a camera. However, your all-consuming problems still remain: Your employees just can't get the job done, your boss is a low-IQ narcissist, and your 22-year-old kid has just told you "I don't, like, see myself as, like, working every day at a job and stuff."

Could it be that what works for others in the area of influence will not work for you? Over the years, Wynn Solutions has done anonymous surveys with thousands of extremely influential people who have a proven track record of motivating people to do what needs to be done. From them, we found that some foundational (I can't say "basic" for fear of offending a sensitive expert) ideas that we often deem irrelevant are the root of influence. Here are those things:

Are you proving to people that you see them as valuable?



Have you told them that you appreciate their talent and could not have done so well without them? That's very different from just saying "Good job!" And it's not as ridiculous as saying "You'll have a job here as long as you want one," which seems to indicate that they will definitely quit – it's just a question of when.

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Are you being sincere but emphatic with your adult child who still lives at home?

These days, over 50 percent of all adults 18-26 years old live with their parents. If you have an adult child still living at home, wearing your bathrobe, and wanting to know when more food will be arriving, you need to be forthright. You might say something loving but pointed, like this: "The only way someone else will appreciate you as much as we do and offer you opportunities is if they see you as self-sufficient. So getting out on your own (which will involve you leaving this house, by the way) will cause the good things in life to come your way." Letting them stay sends the message "We love you so much that we're willing to sacrifice your ability to be a functional adult." Being 32 and still living at Mom and Dad's house is more than just pathetic; it's creepy.

Do you have extreme clarity? Intelligence is not enough. It doesn't matter how smart you are if no one knows what you're talking about. The average IQ for an executive is 104, which is lower than the average for middle management. But if you think your boss is stupid, remember that he's just smart enough to be your boss! If you've ever been to a Mensa meeting, you might have noticed a disturbing number of grownups wearing backpacks and a lot of crummy cars in the parking lot. Intelligence is just a small part of influence.

As for tried-and-true solutions, it all comes down to value.

1. If you want to be influential, you must be able to clearly state your value (or the value of whatever you're proposing). Clarity is the foundation of value. People buy into what they grasp quickly. The leading addiction on the planet is not drugs or alcohol or video games. It's convenience. We will abandon a complex process that works for a mediocre one that's easy but barely works. Simply stated, good ideas just aren't good enough. Case in point: It took 40 years to get seatbelts in cars, but they green-lighted the Pet Rock at the first meeting. Spray cheese caught on pretty quickly too.



2. We are influenced by things that sound good instantly, and nothing sounds better than what we seem to already

believe. Making things very clear makes them familiar. When we hear something clearly stated, we will often say, "Oh, I know. Yes. That's common sense." But the truth is we did not think of it until it was very clearly stated. Clarity makes the stated value make sense. So if you think this paragraph has told you something that you already knew, then you are right and enlightened at the same time.

3. To influence people under 30 years old, what you propose must make sense at a very basic level. This younger generation grew up with so much information thrown at them that you've got to be able to show them why you're doing something. If it doesn't make relevant sense to them today, they will question it and have difficulty taking action on it. If you want young people to come to work early, you need a real business reason – not just that you like to get to work at 7:30 a.m. but don't particularly care for loneliness.
4. The key to getting people to do what you want them to do is understanding what they value. In its clear and simplest form, what they value is love, money, and prestige. If they can get that from you, they're willing to listen and take action. Unfortunately, most people believe they need to outsmart people to get them to take action. So if you're upset because you think the world is run by idiots – well, you might have a point. Most research shows that it's easier to simplify things so you can compete. The truth is that when it comes to getting people to take action, *explaining* your value is more valuable than actually *having* it.

The idea is to position yourself up front with all the influence tactics you can and then throw all your effort behind that. This strategy is central to a story I often tell about a speaking engagement I had at a convention years ago. My wife was in the audience for my event. She'd just heard me speak and she was clapping – yes, even after a few years together, she still applauded (maybe because I was through talking). In fact, she clapped so hard that she lost one of the diamonds in her ring, but she didn't know it at the time. So the next day she goes back and starts searching all along the 5,000-square-foot parquet floor. The custodians have already

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swept and mopped. Twice. Nothing has turned up. Everyone's thinking, "Lady, you're never going to find it." But my wife insists, "I'm looking anyway."

So she's on the ground, face to the floor, searching, searching... She's sucking up dust bunnies for a full hour and a half before she spies a little glimmer from across the room. And there it is! In the end, we walked away with two big lessons. First, if something is important enough to you – if you believe in it enough – then the effort, skill, talent, and ability generated from your body and channeled into achievement is amazing. But also, if you buy a r-e-a-l-l-y BIG diamond, it's a LOT easier to find.

Garrison Wynn was the keynote speaker at the 2011 ALASBO Annual Conference. He is a nationally known speaker, author and consultant. He is the CEO and founder of Wynn Solutions, specializing in how people and organizations can be more influential.

Your Moment of Excel (and Word) Zen

Susan Edwards, Lake & Peninsula School District

As part of the Office Suite of applications, Excel integrates well with other MS Office Applications such as MS Word and Power Point. One of the handiest uses of Excel is as a database for MS Word to use in mail merge functions. Every year you send out letters, memos and notices targeted to specific groups. Rather than typing them all individually or making them impersonal "to Whom it May Concern", you can use the mail merge function to personalize your communications.

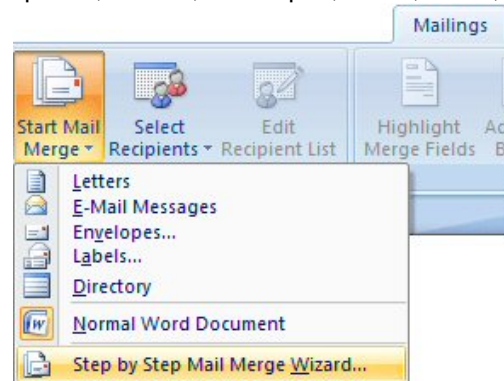
There are four steps in creating a merge document:

1. Choose a document type and a main document.
2. Create or choose a data file with the information you want to merge into the document.
3. Add fields to the document.
4. Preview the merge and then complete it.

Choose Or Create The Document.

When you open Word, it opens to a blank document. You can either create your document from scratch, or open an existing document that

you want to modify. In Word 2007 and 2010, click on the Mailings Tab on the Ribbon and then click on Start **Mail Merge**. You will get a drop down menu giving you document type options, Letters, Envelopes, Email, Label, etc.



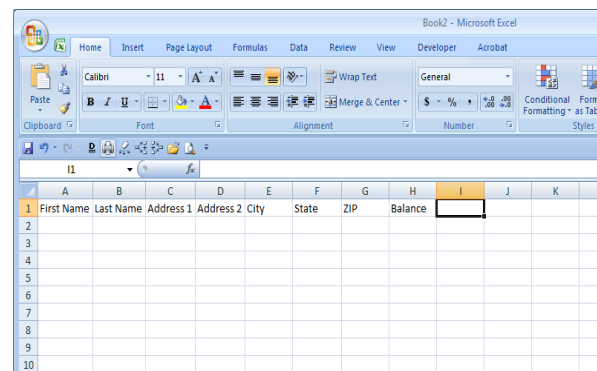
Once you get the hang of using mail merge, all sorts of possibilities arise, including file folder labels, routine email notices, and of course, form letters and memos.

There is also an option to start a step-by-step Mail Merge Wizard, which will walk you through the process, and if this is your first attempt or if you'd like to do a practice run first, use the Wizard. Practice never hurts.

Create Or Choose A Data File

The next step is to create your database list. While you can use Word to create your lists, I find Excel much easier to manipulate.

Let's say you are sending out a form letter, so you want the recipient's name and address and perhaps some other information specific to each individual, such as what they owe for their child's lunch bill. Open an Excel workbook and starting in cell A1, type in your header titles in Row 1.



In creating your list, DO NOT leave any blank columns; it's not a fatal error, but they make it a bit more difficult to use.

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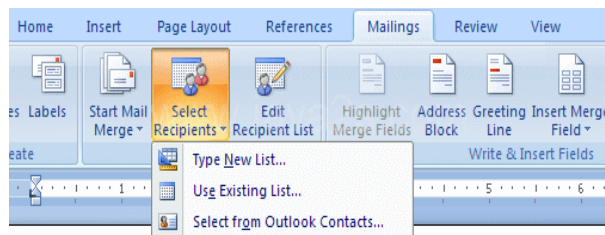
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Once you've created your header row, enter your list data. Format your data as you wish it to appear in your document.

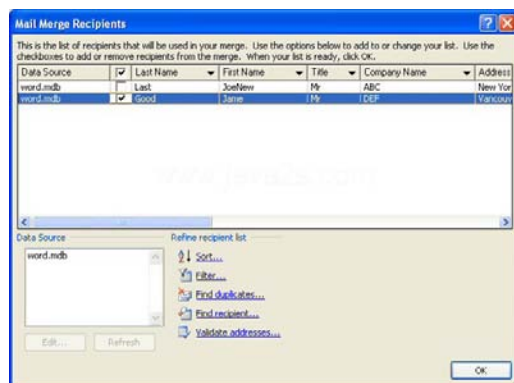
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	1	First Name	Last Name	Address 1	Address 2	City	State	ZIP
	2	Joe	Rachmoninoff	123 S Elm St	Apt #2	Sometown	AK	99611
	3	John	Elgar	Rt 1		Sometown	AK	99611
	4	Mary	Beethoven	PO Box 258		Sometown	AK	99611
	5	Joan	Propokiov	654 Oak St		Sometown	AK	99611
	6	Alex	Cage	7896 Lois Ln		Sometown	AK	99611
	7	Sally	Shubert	3322 Salmon Rd		Sometown	AK	99611
	8							
	9							
	10							
	11							

When you have your database the way you want it, save it and close Excel.

Now, Open Word to your document and on the Mailings Tab on the Ribbon, click on the **Select Recipient List** button and you get a drop down menu. Select **Use Existing List** and navigate to the Excel spreadsheet you created.



By clicking on **Edit Recipients**, you can choose what records you want to include or omit.



As you create your document, every place you want to insert a merge field, just click on the **Insert Merge Field** button. It will give you a drop

down menu with all the field names you created in the header row of your spreadsheet.

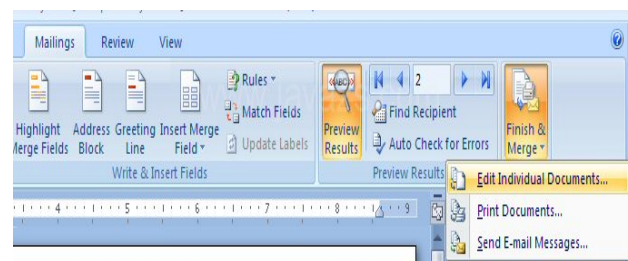


If you've not already done so, save your merge document file. Now you are ready to...

Preview And Complete The Merge

You can click on the **Preview Results** on the Mailings tab, and this works just like print preview, except you will all the recipients copies of your document. If you don't like the way they look, or you see some data that was left out or should have been left out, it is at this point that you can go back and make those corrections.

Now you need to click on the **Finish & Merge** button. From this dropdown menu, you can choose to edit the individual documents of the merge, tailoring each to the specific recipient, print or email.



Once you have printed your documents and are ready to quit, Word will prompt you to save your document. If you save it now, you will be saving all the merged documents as static document. If that is what you want, then do a **Save As** and save them with another name. This will preserve your original merge document for you to use again.

Once you begin using the mail merge function and get comfortable with the steps, all sorts of possibilities will begin to present themselves and you'll be able to automate any number of routine tasks.

ALASBO 2012 Liaison Assignments

Past-President – Luke Fulp --- Mat-Su 746-9277 luke.fulp@matsuk12.us

Robbie MacManus
Alaska Gateway Schools
883-5151x109 rmacmanus@agsd.us

Chelsea Sternicki
Aleutian Region Schools
277-2648 csternicki@aleutregion.org

Carl Warner
Aleutians East Borough Schools
383-5222 cwarner@aebsd.org

Chad Stiteler
Anchorage School District
742-4369 stiteler_chad@asdk12.org

Charlene Jimenez
Annette Island Schools
886-6011 cjimenez@aisd.k12.ak.us

Mark Vink
Bering Strait Schools
624-4256 mvink@bssd.org

Secretary -- Jim Farrington --- Anchorage
742-4344 farrington_james@asdk12.org

Sherry Kern
Bristol Bay Borough Schools
246-4225 skern@nnk.gcisa.net

Teri Dierick
Chatham Schools
586-6806 terid@serrc.org

Adrienne Fleming
Chugach Schools 522-7400
afleming@chugachschools.com

Loreen Kramer
Copper River Schools
822-3234 x225 lkramer@crsd.k12.ak.us

Verna Reedy
Cordova City Schools
424-3265 vreeedy@cordovasd.org

Karen Head
Craig City Schools
826-3274 khead@craigschools.com

Director Seat A – Lee Ann Andrew --- Southwest
Region 842-8207 landrew@swrsd.org

Kim Johnson
Delta/Greely Schools

895-4657 kjohnson@dgsd.k12.ak.us

Lorrie Terry
Denali Borough Schools
683-2278 lterry@dbsd.org

Lucienne Smith, Contractor
Dillingham City Schools
677-9263 lucienne.smith@akebs.com

Mike Fisher
Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools
452-2000 x301 michael.fisher@k12northstar.org

Edith Hildebrand
Galena City Schools
656-1883 x108 edith.hildebrand@galenanet.com

Judy Erikson
Haines Borough Schools
766-6725 jerekson@hbsd.net

Judy Hankla
Hoonah City Schools
945-3611 x203 hanklaj@hoonahschools.org

Director Seat B – David Arp --- Sitka
966-1254 arpd@mail.ssd.k12.ak.us

Selina Tolson
Hydaburg City Schools
285-3491 stolson@hydaburg.k12.ak.us

Isabelle Harrington
Iditarod Area Schools
524-3599 x224 iharrington@iditarodsd.org

David Means
Juneau Borough Schools
523-1770 david_means@jsd.k12.ak.us

Lonnie Cavanaugh
Kake City Schools
785-3741 lmcavanaugh@kakeschools.com

Antonia Moses
Kashunamiut Schools
858-7713 amoses@chevakschool.org

Dave Jones
Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools
714-8838 djones2@kpbsd.k12.ak.us

Matthew Groves
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools
247-9013 matthew.groves@kgbsd.org

Director Seat C -- Carl Horn --- Nenana City
832-5400 x230 chorn@nenanalynx.org

Yodean Armour
Klawock City Schools
755-2220 yodean.armour@klawockschool.com

Lisa Pearce

Kodiak Island Borough Schools
481-6105 lpearce01@kibsd.org

Martha Morgan

Kuspuk Schools
675-4250 x110 mmorgan@kuspuk.org

Laura Hylton

Lake and Peninsula Borough Schools
246-4280 lhylton@lpsd.com

Blair Alden

Lower Kuskokwim Schools
543-4820 Blair_Alden@lksd.org

Jenny Martens

Lower Yukon Schools
591-2411 x220 jmartens@loweryukon.org

Ken Forrest

Mat-Su Borough Schools
761-4001 Ken.Forrest@matsuk12.us

Director Seat D – Jimmy Love --- Kenai

714-8850 jimmy@kpbsd.k12.ak.us

Carl Horn

Nenana City Schools
832-5400 x230 chorn@nenanalynx.org

Paula Coffman

Nome Public Schools
443-6190 pcoffman@nomeschools.com

Tammy White

North Slope Borough Schools
852-9524 tammy.white@nsbsd.org

Karen Goodwin

Northwest Arctic Borough Schools
442-3472 x232 kgoodwin@nwarctic.org

Melody Douglas, Contractor

Pelican City Schools
398-6819 douglas.melody@gmail.com

Karen Quitslund

Petersburg City School District
772-4271 business@pcsd.us

Earle Trumble

Pribilof Island Schools
546-3324 earle_trumble@psd-k12.ak.us

Director Seat E --- Heidi Reichl --- EED

465-8682 heidi.reichl@alaska.gov

Davey Shields, Contractor

Saint Mary's Schools
245-0650 davey@acsalaska.net

David Arp

Sitka Borough Schools
966-1254 arpd@mail.ssd.k12.ak.us

Cindy O'Daniel

Skagway City Schools
983-2960 busmgr@skagwayschool.org

Lucienne Smith, Contractor

Southeast Island Schools
677-9263 lucienne.smith@akebs.com

Lee Ann Andrew

Southwest Region Schools
842-8207 landrew@swrsd.org

Stefani Dalrymple

Tanana Schools
479-9863 stefani@yukonac.com

Holly Holman

Unalaska City Schools
581-3151 hholman@ucsd.net

Director Seat F -- Susan Jolin --- Anchorage

742-4341 jolin_sue@asdk12.org

Amber Cockerham

Valdez City Schools
835-4357 amber_cockerham@valdez.cc

Pam Roope

Wrangell City Schools
874-2347 proope@wrangellschools.org

Ricardo Tejada

Yakutat City Schools
784-3317 x225 ricardot@yakutatschools.org

Lucienne Smith, Contractor

Yukon Flats Schools
677- 9263 lucienne.smith@akebs.com

Cindy Reilly, Interim

Yukon-Koyukuk Schools
220-629-3344 creilly@yksd.com

Michele George

Yupit Schools
825-3603 mgeorge@yupit.org

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

School Business Official of the Year Nomination

The nomination form for the prestigious School Business Official of the Year award will be available very soon on our website and via email. Nominations will be accepted through October 31.

The School Business Official of the Year award is a peer recognition program. Annually, a panel of previous recipients selects a deserving individual from the nominees submitted based upon their recognized outstanding service, innovative plan design and implementation, and the use of exemplary business practices within school business management.

The award recipient is announced at the ALASBO Annual Conference in December. Penair has agreed to sponsor the award for the 14th year! The recipient will receive two roundtrip tickets on Penair, a \$500 check, an engraved plaque, and well-deserved accolades from ALASBO colleagues and the general public.

Please consider nominating a deserving colleague for this award. Let me know if you have any questions!

Mark Your Calendars!



Upcoming Events

- **October 12-15 – ASBO Annual Conference – Phoenix**
- **December 2-5 – ALASBO Annual Conference – Anchorage**

Points of Confusion...

1. Why is the third hand on the watch called the second hand?
2. If a word is misspelled in the dictionary, how would we ever know?
3. Why do we say something is out of whack? What is a whack?
4. Why do "fat chance" and "slim chance" mean the same thing?
5. Why do "tug" boats push their barges?
6. Why do we sing "Take me out to the ball game" when we're already there?
7. Doesn't "expecting the unexpected" make the unexpected expected?
8. Why are a "wise man" and a "wise guy" opposites?
9. Why do "overlook" and "oversee" mean opposite things?
10. Why is "phonics" not spelled the way it sounds?
11. If all the world is a stage, where is the audience sitting?
12. If love is blind, why is lingerie so popular?
13. If you are cross-eyed and have dyslexia, can you read all right?
14. Why is bra singular and panties plural?
15. Why do you press harder on the buttons of a remote control when you know the batteries are dead?
16. How come abbreviated is such a long word?
17. Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?
18. Why do they call it a TV set when you only have one?
19. Christmas - What other time of the year do you sit in front of a dead tree and eat candy out of your socks?
20. Why do we drive on a parkway and park on a driveway? I dunno.