

ALASBO News Link...



March 2013

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

President's Message

Laurie Olson, Kenai Peninsula Borough

It's hard to believe that it's about three months since we were together at the conference. I find myself remembering moments or people I saw and reflecting on what happened while we were together. It's always great to see everyone and make my once-a-year connections, knowing that it's possible that person I'm chatting with will have moved on to another job or even another state by this time next year.

We are working on our FY14 budget, as I imagine most of you are.

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One big question is whether or not to include the Governor's proposed one-time money in the budget. Since it's not a part of the foundation formula, it's not a big change to add it in at some point, so we have chosen to leave it out until we hear more about the legislature's plans.

With the Legislative Fly-In in late February, we start to get a better feel for how things are going. But since education funding is usually decided at the 11th hour, we need to keep an eye on things until the end of the session and provide input as appropriate.

Please join me in thanking Amy again for all her hard work in difficult circumstances supporting us at the annual conference!! I know I speak for the board when I say that the conference wouldn't be such a great success without Amy's hard work and attention to detail. Thanks so much!! Now she's moved on through coordinating ASBO Leadership and the Legislative Fly-In; a busy conference season!

Thanks also to the outgoing and incoming board members: Carl Horn, David Arp, Lee Ann Andrew, Luke Fulp, Holly Holman, Mark Vink, Martha Morgan and Robin Mullins. It's our volunteers that keep the organization running.

As you work on the FY14 budget and plan for the year, there are a few dates to mark on your calendar. This summer, you can help plan the December conference and participate in additional leadership training if you attend the Summer Leadership Conference, July 26-28. And in October, ASBO International's annual meeting will be held in Boston, October 25-28. What a great city to visit! And the Annual Meeting is always well worth the trip.

This year's theme is **ALASBO, Leadership that Counts**. Please exercise your leadership muscles by attending one or both of these meetings if you can. "The only real training for leadership is leadership." - Anthony Jay

Executive Director's Message

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

Thanks so much for a great 40th Annual Conference! It takes a lot of prep work and behind-the-scenes organizing by our Board members, and based on the evaluations I think

we pulled it off with tremendous value to our members. We had the support of 50 vendors as well. Their participation provides extra value and makes it possible to keep costs low to our members.

We are set to go in the new year with a full schedule of **Power Lunches**, listed on page 3 and on our website ("events-workshops"). Please make sure to get these on your calendar, along with other upcoming events.

February was also a busy month for conferences. **Please be sure to read my special Legislative Fly-In report on page 4!** Earlier this month, seven ALASBO members and their guests participated in the **ASBO Executive Leadership Forum** in New Orleans; what a fun city!

Training at the Executive Leadership Forum is really top-notch. During the pre-conference, ALASBO President Laurie Olson, President Elect Jim Farrington and I had a chance to put our heads together regarding best practices for the upcoming year during the Strategic Governance Symposium.

During the following two days, we participated with all 250 attendees in training by the Ritz Carlton Institute, the Franklin Covey Institute and the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau. A highlight was a visit to a local school district, to tour their impressive vocational training center. If you're looking for top quality leadership training, consider attending this winter meeting in the future! Next February the location will be Orlando, FL.



In other news, I've been working with two ad hoc committees of the Board on ALASBO support for GASB 68 implementation and on the Management Review proposal. I'll keep you informed as these committees move forward.

Finally, I'd like to encourage you to become involved with an ALASBO committee, if you have not already signed up for this year. The ALASBO Committee Manual explains the function of each committee and can be found on our website under "about ALASBO-Policies &

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Procedures". The 2013 Committee Chairs are:

- Audit – Chad Stiteler, Anchorage
- Awards – Liz Hayes, Kenai
- Bylaws – Lorrie Terry, Denali
- Legislative – Dave Jones, Kenai
- Nominations – Jenny Martens, Lower Yukon
- Professional Development – Jenny Martens, Lower Yukon
- Services – Yodean Armour, Klawock
- Sponsorship – Amy Lujan, ALASBO

Please contact me or the Committee Chair if you would like to serve on one of these committees!

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!

Anytime you're traveling around your district this spring, take a photo for the annual ALASBO slideshow! **Send them to:** yodean.armour@klawockschool.com

Dave Jones Named ALASBO School Business Official of the Year

Congratulation to Dave Jones, Assistant Superintendent with Kenai Peninsula Borough School District who was named the Alaska School Business Official of the Year at ALASBO's December 2012 annual conference in Anchorage!

Candidates for this prestigious award are nominated by their colleagues within the Alaska School Business profession. 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 has been sponsored for the past fourteen years by PenAir. The recipient receives roundtrip travel certificates, a check for \$500 and an engraved plaque.

Dave Jones came to Alaska in 1997, having previously served as a school business official in Montana and Wyoming districts. From 1997-2007, Jones was Director of Finance for the Kodiak Island Borough School District. In 2003, he received the prestigious ASBO



International Eagle Award for his Service to the Community, in recognition of his work with the Kodiak football team.

Dave has been active on both ASBO and ALASBO committees. He served as ALASBO President in 2002 and currently chairs the Legislative Committee.

Dr. Steve Atwater, KPBSD Superintendent said, "KPBSD is thrilled that Dave is being recognized for his long and distinguished career in school finance. The District joins ALASBO in applauding Dave for receiving this award."

Congratulations, Dave on this well deserved honor!

Power Lunch Teleconference Schedule

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

March 19	Worker's Compensation
April 16	Electronic Records
May 21	Facilities
June 18	Food Service
July 16	Grants Administration
August 20	FMLA
Sept 17	Unemployment
October 15	Digital Grant Reimb
Dec 17	1099's and W-2's

Legislative Fly-In Report

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

On February 25-27, a group of ALASBO members met to make our presence known at the state capitol in Juneau!

On Monday afternoon, we met to formulate our Talking Points. This session involved analysis of current bills and discussion of the best approach when talking to legislators. The Talking Points we came up with are available on our website, on the "news" page.

On Tuesday and Wednesday (and with one follow-up on Thursday!) we split into teams and met with 20 legislators, plus twelve staff members when legislators weren't available. We focused on members of the Education and Finance committees.

All legislators are aware that school districts are being forced to cut staff and programs, and that more funding is desired. However, we heard that funding is tight this year, and the focus is on budget cuts, with or without the costly changes to the oil tax structure being proposed by the Governor.

Specifically, we learned the following about possible changes to school district funding:

- There's only a small possibility of additional BSA funding this year.
- The Governor's proposed \$25 million in energy funding is likely to pass; this would be the third year of "one-time" funding.
- There are bills in the House and Senate (HB120 and SB57) to adjust the new Pupil Transportation funding mechanism to increase with Anchorage CPI, rather than the current 1.5%; these have some chance of passing.
- HB141 proposes a partial solution to the recent large increases in worker's comp; we advocated for additional changes to address in-state medical costs.

Note that we can't count on any of the above until after the legislative session, when the ink is dry from the Governor's veto pen! That's just the kind of legislative situation we're living in right now.

Regarding other bills, we spent a lot of time reviewing HB27, now in House Finance, which proposes several changes to help school districts better plan financially. One provision is to use the student count from the prior year to determine minimum funding for the next year.

There would be trigger mechanisms if districts had unusual growth and needed to apply for additional funding. For districts experiencing a reduction in ADM, funding based on the prior year count would provide additional transition time to make reductions.

HB27 also increases the allowable unreserved fund balance to 15% and prevents local governments from taking back district balances. Again, the idea is to allow for better planning and funds to be used for transitions. However, some people we spoke to were surprised to learn that most districts don't even carry a 10% fund balance!

We supported HB27 but asked for careful analysis of situations involving intensive students. How would the trigger mechanisms work if a district had declining overall enrollment, yet experienced a large spike in intensive student enrollment?

The legislature is also considering other non-monetary ways to assist school districts, such as extending the deadline for distribution of tenured teacher contracts. Ideas about statewide salary schedules and a statewide health insurance pool are being raised, but these concepts are only in the preliminary discussion phase.

You've probably also heard about the discussion of vouchers, and the proposed constitutional change, which would require a 2/3 vote in the legislature to be put before the voters. When we were asked about this controversial issue, we could only respond that there has not been enough information yet from the advocates for this proposal to know how it will affect our schools. If this proposal doesn't pass this session, we will probably see it yet again next year.

I encourage all of you to keep an eye on the legislature as they wrap up this session, which ends April 14. There are some great new technologies to stream hearings and listen to them after they occur, and to receive notices when bill status changes. My best tips on following the legislature are posted on our website, on the resources-downloads page.

I will also keep you informed of anything that's particularly HOT. I may receive questions and ask for your input. In the meantime, I encourage all ALASBO members to get in touch with their local legislators and let them know how things look from your point-of-view!

Special thanks to EED, ACSA, APEI and AMLJIA for support of this year's Fly-In!

ALASBO



Member Spotlight

Pam Roope, Wrangell School District

Tell us about your school district

Wrangell School District has 303 students. It is located in South East Alaska. Our district has a great staff with quite a few teachers spending their entire career in Wrangell. The town and school environment is a friendly and welcoming place. We take care of each other and have a team attitude. We share our time and energy in our community, we teach our students to be involved. We encourage them to be in scouts, swimming, little league, and youth activities at clubs or church.

How long have you been in school business?

15 years

How did you get into this business?

My favorite classes in school were accounting classes. I like numbers there are clear answers with numbers not so many gray areas. My first job in Alaska was working for the Foss Freight Company. The man who ran it also owned a propane company, a National car rental agency, a storage company and was the Mayflower moving company contractor. There were "lots of hats" to wear depending on who was coming through the door. I learned to multi-task. I loved the job and my boss was great. He had a good sense of humor and was a fun loving guy. He hired me at \$4.00 per hour and about every other month he gave me a \$ 1.00 raise. I learned flexibility and prioritizing skills.

Next, I went to work for a local grocery store as their bookkeeper. I loved that job too. I got to know most the people in our town. The boss I worked for was the best teacher I will ever have. I have great respect for him. He taught me to be consistent and precise. He also taught me by his example that it is important to treat all people fairly. He expected a fair day's work for the fair wage he paid. I worked for him for 8 years in

total. I don't think I could have had a better business education.

When my husband and I started a family I wanted to be home with my children. Eventually I start my own home daycare. I ran the daycare for about 7 years. I loved that job too, but it was a very hard job. I learned lot from the children I took care of. You need patience, a sense of humor and respect for different personalities when you care for and work with children. I have some wonderful memories of those days.

So how did I become the Business Manager of the Wrangell School District? I applied for the job. I don't know why they chose me. It may have been Divine intervention. I think sometimes the pieces just all fit together. The experiences I had with my previous jobs helped develop the skills I needed as a Business Manager for a small district. If you can use patience, respect, flexibility, consistency, precision then problems get solved quicker. Multi-tasking, prioritizing, and wearing "lots of hats" are all parts of the business manager job. During the day care days I had a small grant for meal reimbursement. I learned to process State paperwork. Looking back it all seems to fit together.

What do you like best about your job?

I like the variety of challenges this job requires. I love being busy. Keeping my mind on all the different projects that come across my desk is fun. I know that may seem like a strange word to describe work, but there are very few days that this job feels like work. Of course there are those days....when, well, it is work.

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

Keep a sense of humor. When I started my job Karen Goodwin taught me a lot of things about being a Business Manager. One of the things she told me was "don't sweat the small stuff" and then she added "it's all small stuff". The other thing she told me was "some day it will feel like you are all caught up.... but you won't be". *Keep your sense of humor.*



How have you benefited from membership in ALASBO?

ALASBO conferences have been the most beneficial for me personally. The sectionals I have attended over the years have educated me in so many areas. I can't name them all. I am very thankful that the first Superintendent that I worked for insisted that I attend. It would have

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been very easy for me to suggest we use that money budgeted for something else or save it. It would have been even easier to save I just don't have time I have so much to do. I am glad he insisted.

I value the education I have received. But most of all I value the people I have met over the years. To share experiences of the job with other professionals has been helpful. To seek guidance from more experienced people or just to laugh over the difficult parts of the job has encouraged and helped build my confidence. I have attended every ALASBO conference since I started as Business manager, and without fail I have learned something new each year.

What do you like to do for fun?

One of my favorite things to do is to go sailing. I like to have friends over for dinner and games. I also like to read, sew and travel.

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

Greece, I have never been there. It seems like a beautiful place, the history and the people are interesting and would be fun it to get to know more about both.

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

Most people don't know that I am shy.

What is your proudest accomplishment?

I am so glad to be a mom. I don't know if that ranks as an accomplishment or not. I love being a mom even though I mess it up sometimes. Being a mom gets you all kinds of trouble and joy with a few proud days mixed in and a few embarrassing days too. It has been the highlight of my life. I would not trade the experience for anything in the world.

ALIO Intelligence Project

Mark Vink, Bering Strait

A project that I've been working on with our tech department along with EMA is the addition of ALIO Intelligence to our CIMS software.

With the addition of ALIO Intelligence, we are able to give department and grant managers as well as principals real time access to their budget and expenditure information. In the past we have run monthly reports here in the business office and sent



them out. And of course the data is outdated as soon as it is printed. We will now be able let people look at their information whenever they want to as well as be able to drill down and see what was charged to accounts as well as open purchase orders so that better management can be done.

We are also looking for input from users to create additional reports to provide better information for the management of what that person is overseeing.

When I first began working for Bering Strait School District, the software was one of the things that I had to learn, as I was new to Alaska and school business accounting. I was able to learn the basics of the software and spent some time with Bob Ricci at EMA to pick up some pointers. I first met Bob at our December conference and have learned much from him as well as some of what our system is capable of. I know there is still much to learn.

From my experience, I would recommend that any school business manager to spend some time with your software support to learn what your system is capable of. The person who was in your job had their own way of doing things and with software upgrades, there may be better, easier, and quicker ways to perform a task as well as seeing other features of your software that may not of been used to provide information to better manage your school district.

School Visits in Laos and Cambodia

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

One of the main hobbies that my husband Stan and I enjoy is traveling internationally. We are pleased to have found an organization that includes school visits on each travel itinerary and provides sponsorship to schools around the world.

On our recent trip to Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, we visited a school in Laos for several hours, and we were also able to interact with students at a Cambodian floating school.

These countries are still recovering from the traumatic wars of the 1960's and 1970's. Both have GDP/person below \$2,800, compared to the US at \$48,000/person. Education for youth

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is required in both countries, but one gets the idea that there is little enforcement of the requirement and that there are no schools available for some students. In Cambodia, teachers work two 4-hour shifts a day, plus they provide extra tutoring sessions, and they still make less than workers in the garment factories. The extra shifts are necessary in part because teachers were one of the persecuted groups during the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975-1979. In both countries, Buddhist monasteries are still a source of education for up to 60% of young men.

In Laos, we drove to a small village outside Luang Prabang that includes Hmong minority and Laos people, living in harmony. We visited a local toolmaker, who was using bomb casings to make knives ("the best metal"!), the Hmong shaman, and had lunch at the home of the village chief. Most of the families in this village are farmers. Some have been re-settled here to move them out of clear-cutting and opium growing activities.

At the school, we were warmly greeted by a group of first and second grade students. Thirty of these students are taught in a single classroom by one teacher. Fortunately, they have solid desks, a large blackboard and cheerful visual aids on the wall. Donations from travelers like us have recently provided ceiling fans and toilets, so the kids don't have to run into the woods. The classroom had no lighting, but there appeared to be adequate light from skylights.



A library is next on the wish list for this school. We brought books to donate, and the students were eager to interact with us, review the books and repeat back English words! Most could count to at least 10 and could recite the English alphabet. After their songs and math

demonstrations, they did their best to follow us in spirited renditions of "Hokey Pokey", the alphabet song, "Itsy Bitsy Spider" and "BINGO".

In Cambodia, our boat ride to a floating fishing village on Tonle Sap Lake near Siem Reap took us by a floating school, sponsored by a Catholic relief organization. We didn't get to visit the school, but it was most amusing to watch the students rowing home. In each boat, several students rowed and several bailed with water bottles! At the suggestion of our guide, we had saved toiletries from our hotels, and they were eager to come alongside to receive these gifts! Sadly, we learned that 12% of youth in this village do not survive to age 5, due to the lack of sanitation and drinking water.



These school visits are a poignant reminder of the tremendous resources we have in the United States. We are also reminded that young students everywhere are eager to learn. What a waste if we do not do as much as we can to make sure that each student has the resources s/he needs and takes advantage of these opportunities to succeed.

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!

ALASBO 2013 Liaison and Mentor Assignments

Liaison/Mentor match-up's are a two-way street; contact your match today!

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*The Awards Committee is currently accepting applications for the **Mack Easton Student Scholarship**. This program honors Mack Easton, formerly with the Fairbanks Northstar School District, who was killed in an accident in 1988. Scholarships are available for HS Seniors, and this year's program is sponsored by Horace Mann.*

*Applications are now available on our website (opportunities-scholarship page) with a **deadline of March 22**. Note that an ALASBO member signature is required. ALASBO members CAN sign more than one application. Spread the word in your district!*

Excel Zen: A Couple of Tips for Selecting Ranges of Data

Susan Edwards, formerly of Lake and Pen School District

You probably know (or maybe not – Bonus tip!) about the [F5] key. When you press [F5], it opens the Go To dialog. You enter a range name or a cell reference, click OK, and Excel selects a range or cell, accordingly. It's a quick and easy way to get from one spot to another. But wait! There's more.... What you might not know is that you can use this feature to select a range, where no range exists. Excel uses the current cell as the top-left anchor cell and you enter the bottom-right anchor cell (or vice versa).

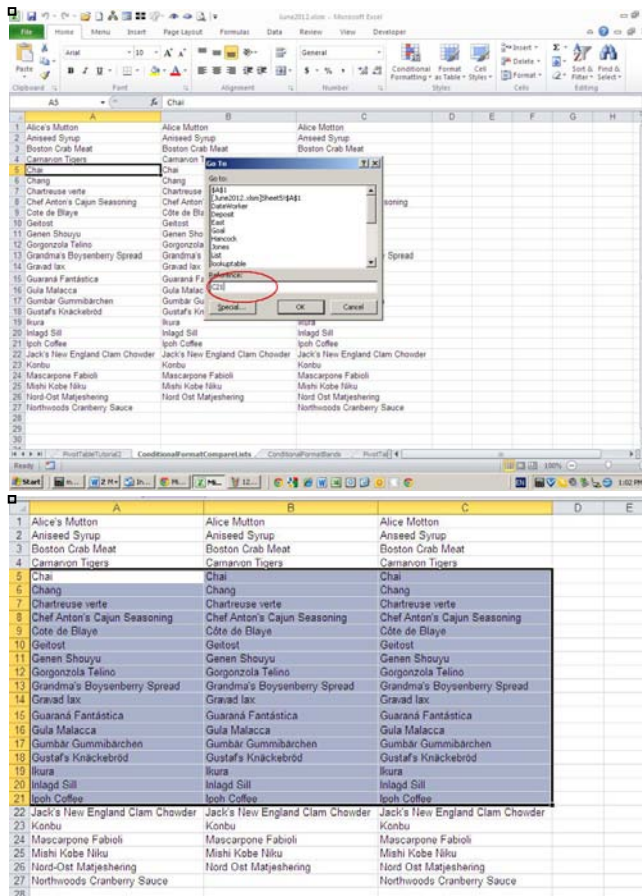
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Excel will select everything in between, including the two anchor cells. The trick is to hold down the [Shift] key.

Here is a simple example where we want to select all the data between A5:C21.

1. Select A5.
2. Press [F5].
3. Enter C21 in the Reference field, but don't click OK yet.
4. Press and hold the [Shift] key.
5. While holding down [Shift], click OK.



Easy, n'est-ce pas? With small ranges of data, selecting with the mouse with click and drag would be just as quick if not quicker, but for larger ranges that are beyond your screen's field of view, this is just the ticket. If you want to select an entire data range: simply press [Ctrl]+[Shift]+8 and all contiguous cells containing data will be selected.

"Kindness Every Time..."

By Zelig Pliskin

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Every time you act kindly, the world has more kindness.
Every time you are compassionate, the world has

more compassion. Every time you smile to someone, the world is a more cheerful place. Every time you help transform someone's worry into serenity, the world is a more serene place. Every time you calm someone who is angry, the world is a more pleasant place. Every time you give money to charity, the world is a more charitable place. Every time you encourage someone to do something for others, you are creating a partner to make a better world.

Some people spend way too much time complaining about the awful state the world is in. There is too much aggression and violence. There is too little kindness and compassion. There is too much anger and depression and too little serenity and joy.

If someone complains and complains, the world is still full of whatever it is the person is complaining about and now more complaining has been added. Conversely, if someone spreads compassion and kindness, the world improves. The ripple effect can spread these positive qualities. A little positive action is more beneficial than a mountain full of complaints.

Every time you visit someone who is ill, you are making the world a kinder place to live in. Every time you comfort a mourner, you are making the world a kinder place to live in. Every time you judge someone favorably, you are making the world a kinder place to live in. Every time you lend one of your possessions to someone, you are making the world a kinder place to live in. Every time you help a stranger find his way, you are making the world a kinder place to live in.

What comes out from all of this is that there is no such thing as an insignificant kind act. Because every time you do an act of kindness you are elevating the world we live in.

Mark Your Calendars!



Upcoming Events

- **March 22** - Easton Scholarship Application Deadline
- **July 26-28** - ALASBO Summer Leadership Conference - Location TBA
- **October 25-28** - ASBO International Annual Meeting & Expo – Boston
- **Dec 8-11** - ALASBO Annual Conference