

# ALASBO News Link...



May 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*

I've heard that the best time to plant a tree is 30 years ago and the second best time is today. There have been times I've wished I had planted that tree 10 or 20 years ago, or even just last summer! But thinking about "woulda coulda shoulda" is counterproductive and frustrating. So, I'd like to offer you an alternative to consider for THIS summer that will make a positive difference for you going forward.

The Summer Leadership Conference will be in Juneau this year. I must say, that as tough as it can be to schedule one more thing in the busy summer months, Summer Leadership is some-

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thing that's worth doing. When the idea first came up about 10 years ago, I thought, "Good grief, a meeting during the summer? Are they crazy?" But I've found that it's worth the time and effort to attend.

I haven't been at every Summer Leadership Conference, but I've participated in helping to re-write the mission statement, organize the School Business Academy and change the structure of our organization from volunteer-only to having a part-time, paid Executive Director. These changes have made ALASBO a better organization and I'm proud that I've contributed to the work that has moved us forward.



Another aspect that I've appreciated is the additional time to meet and work with fellow ALASBO members and to get to know them better. Some of the people I've come to know best in ALASBO were participants in Summer Leadership Conferences too. It's a smaller group than the December conference, so it's easier to get to know other members of the group. And travelling to parts of the state that I've never seen is an added bonus.

The first few summer meetings were held in Soldotna, which made the travel part easy! However, they occurred when I was a committee member (as opposed to a board member), so I wasn't sure I should attend. If this kind of thinking is holding you back, don't let it hinder you any longer! The more people who participate and bring new ideas to the group, the stronger we are and the better ALASBO becomes.

Registration is open now and vendor support makes it possible to participate for the cost of your travel to Juneau. The Dick Swarner scholarship is available for first-time attendees, also. I hope you'll consider attending – we can never have too many leaders that count!

## Executive Director's Message

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

The legislators have left town, and the first cruise ship of the year has arrived in Juneau as I write this (May 2!) signaling the change in season, lingering snowflakes notwithstanding...

The **legislative session** was a challenging one, with lots of newcomers to meet, a focus on oil taxes and very little interest in even talking about a BSA increase. ALASBO members did provide support to several successful bills that support funding in various ways, including SB57, which increases pupil transportation reimbursements.

The Department of Education and Early Development has prepared an excellent summary of bills passed during the session, which was sent out to Superintendents and Business Managers and is also available on our website, on the "news" tab. More recently, they've distributed a memo outlining the distribution of \$21 million in one-time funding for student safety and security enhancements. This memo is also posted on our website. Note that the Governor still may veto some items!

Since this was the first of a two-year legislative session, bills that did not pass this session remain active in 2014. One of the most interesting to watch will be SB90, which would mandate that all school districts join a state-administered health insurance plan. Study of this proposal will likely continue over the interim, and it may be a hot topic again in the legislature next January.

Thanks to Bruce Johnson of ACSA for his excellent collaboration on tracking this year's session, to ALASBO members who participated in our Fly-In, and to all those who provided testimony and contacted their legislators about specific issues. We must continue to challenge ourselves to find the best way to make our voices heard, even when our messaging often seems to fall on deaf ears!

ALASBO's next event is our **Summer Leadership Conference** being held for the

first time here in Juneau, July 26-28! I would like to emphasize that ALL MEMBERS are invited and encouraged to attend this event. Thanks to our sponsors, meals and lodging are covered, so it's really a low-cost way to enjoy networking with your colleagues in Juneau and help plan for ALASBO's future! Alaska Airlines has even provided a airfare discount. Don't you KNOW we'll have fun too?? **Register now** at our website, under "events-upcoming".



If you've never attended Summer Leadership before, please apply for one of the **THREE Richard Swarner "Shaping the Future"**

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**grants!** This grant will cover most of your out-of-pocket attendance costs (airfare, misc.) The deadline is June 7, and this grant application can be found on our site under “opportunities-grants”. The grants are sponsored by the Swarner family and by National CooperativeRx!



At this year's Summer Leadership, we'll be focusing on ALASBO's new **Management Review** proposal. The Board assigned an ad hoc committee to review this idea about a year ago. After surveying

ALASBO members and Superintendents, and reaching out to ALASBO members in various ways for feedback, the committee presented a business plan to the Board in March.

The next steps at Summer Leadership will involve customizing a Management Review template, which includes best practice elements in each area of the business office. What a great starting point for discussions with our colleagues! We need ALASBO members from all types of districts and all levels of experience to help us with this project. Please join us at Summer Leadership!

It's also time to start thinking about attending the **ASBO International Conference** in Boston, October 25-28! Registration is already open on the [www.asbointl.org](http://www.asbointl.org) website and can also be accessed from our site. We'll have an ALASBO suite at the Sheraton and are planning a special Alaskan event, so you can network with your statewide colleagues as well as school business officials from around the world.

If you have been in school business 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. Several ALASBO members have been awarded this grant in the past!



I wish 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).

## 2012 Summer Leadership Experience

Teri Dierick, SERRC

It is that time again – time to start making your plans to attend the ALASBO Summer Leadership Conference! If you are like me your first thought might be that you need to be a member of the ALASBO board of directors to attend this professional development opportunity – but that is not the case at all.

Last spring when Amy sent the email to announce the dates for the Summer Leadership Conference in Homer, I decided I wanted to get more involved with ALASBO. I then realized that I could apply for the generous Swarner Shaping the Future Leadership grant because I was a first time attendee.

The Leadership Conference was very informative. The first day included professional assistance from Dennis McMillan of the Foraker group to review ALASBO's Strategic Plan and to discuss the major issues facing school business officials. We also began planning the annual conference that would be held in Anchorage in December.

The second day started bright and early, putting the finishing touches on the items that would be included in the schedule for the ALASBO annual conference.

The group in Homer was small – there were 15 attendees compared to the Annual Conference that is held in Anchorage, which normally has over 100 participants. Among the 15 attendees, we had a wide variety of expertise – several very seasoned school business officials and one who had actually just started her position a few weeks before she arrived in Homer. It was a good mixture of new and 'old', to gain perspective on issues that would be important for the annual conference agenda.

Of course this was an ALASBO group and we try very hard to have some fun after an intense day of work. Amy coordinated a great dinner at Land's End Chart House on the famous Homer Spit one evening and a chartered halibut fishing trip the next afternoon! No one caught a giant fish but we certainly had fun trying.



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If you have the opportunity, I encourage you to attend the ALASBO Summer Leadership Conference that will be held in Juneau in July. Generous ALASBO sponsors pay for the lodging and meals for this conference and there is no registration fee. Plus, if you are a first time attendee you can apply for the \$500 Swarner Shaping the Future Leadership grant, which will cover most airfare costs. This makes the out of pocket costs for your district very minimal.

The Summer Leadership Conference is a great professional development opportunity that I would highly recommend. See you in Juneau!

### **Awards Committee Activity**

There were 36 applications for the Mack Easton Student Scholarship and two \$1,000 award recipients were chosen:

- Monica Chenier, Anchorage School District
- Alexander Konev, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

*Congratulations to these students, and thanks to the Awards Committee for making the difficult selections!*

## **Power Lunch Teleconference Schedule**

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

May 7	Health Reform (repeat)
May 21	Facilities
June 18	Food Service
July 16	Grants Administration
August 20	FMLA
Sept 17	Unemployment
October 15	Digital Grant Reimb
Nov 19	Indirect Cost Proposal
Dec 17	1099's and W-2's

## **Site Visit: An Innovative Vocational Center**

*Amy Lujan, ALASBO Executive Director*

Over the past three years, the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International has reformatted its Executive Leadership Forum, held in February each year, to offer the highest quality leadership training available. I've had the privilege of attending several of these events with my ALASBO colleagues.

This year's event included a site visit to St. Charles Parish Schools in Luling, Louisiana, just outside of New Orleans. The Assistant Superintendent of this district is a long-time member of ASBO International, and he organized a fantastic visit as a way to "give back" for all the excellent training he's received over the years.

Our visit focused on an innovative facility in the district called the Satellite Center, which opened in 2001. This facility is located between the district's two high schools. Students from both high schools are selected to participate in Satellite Center programs for 1-2 years, attending the Satellite Center for half of the school day. The students focus on just one of the programs.

The programs offered are: Advanced Television Broadcasting, Culinary Arts, Digital Media, Engineering Design, Health Care Exploration, Hotel/Restaurant/Tourism, Interactive Media, Patient Care, Processing Technology, and Student Teaching. Each program has a large, well-equipped resource center where students can truly explore these vocational areas with hands-on activities. We were impressed by the real-world projects students engage in to apply their learning; for example:

- cable news coverage of local sports events, including pre-game interviews
- regular restaurant-style dinners to practice culinary skills
- participation in New Orleans Superbowl preparations to accommodate tourists
- digital media design packages for local companies (website, stationary, etc.)
- national competition for interactive media, with well-known judges
- classroom internships for student teachers

As we toured the facility, students were our tour guides. They were clearly enthusiastic about

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the programs offered. For some, participation in a vocational program helps a student identify what s/he does NOT want to do! For others, life-long passions are discovered, which can lead directly to advanced studies or to jobs available in the region.

Development of the Satellite Center is an example of district administrators thinking “out-of-the-box” to maximize resources. The ability to locate the center mid-way between the two high schools made it possible to provide top-notch facilities to the entire district high school population. Some were initially worried about the strong rivalry between the high schools; however, it turned out that the students enjoyed mingling, and the rivalries might linger more with the adults than with the students themselves!



In Alaska, we have also begun to develop innovate vocational programs to maximize our resources. This trend must continue, to prepare our students for 21<sup>st</sup> century careers.

### ***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 8-11, 2013 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, discussion groups (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 19.*

# ALASBO



## ***Member Spotlight***

***Jim Farrington, Anchorage School District***

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

Anchorage School District is the largest of the Alaskan school districts, with over 48,000 students and 6,000 employees. We operate 63 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, eight comprehensive high schools, and 16 charter and alternative schools. These schools are located from Girdwood in the South to Eagle River and Chugiak to the North. ASD is ranked in the top 100 in size among US school districts. Minority students comprise more than 50% of the student population and there are 91 different languages spoken at home. Of our students, 46% are economically disadvantaged and qualify for free or reduced lunch.

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

Eight years ago, I started in school business with the Department of Education and Early Development, and I moved to the Anchorage School District in 2010.

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

After taking an early out after 16 years working for Alaska Airlines, I looked into several positions at the state and took a position in the Division of Retirement and Benefits. Then one evening I was speaking with a friend who happened to work for DEED and was told they had an opening I might be interested in. He told me that since I had a math degree they would probably be interested in me. So I did some research on the position and it sound right up my alley. I applied and eventually was offered the job.

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

Working in the Finance Department, I have an opportunity to make a difference to many people throughout the district. Every day can present

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something different. From the time I walk in, I may be busy all day and feel like I got nothing done, but the reality is that I probably did more for more people than I realize.

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

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Reach out to others within your district and/or the ALASBO community.

There are many people who have been through the situations that may arise, so don't hesitate to ask the question. Someone once told me: before you can get the answer, you have to ask the question.

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

Meeting people through ALASBO over the past eight years has proven to be very beneficial in more ways than one. I have met some great colleagues who have helped me in my current and past positions to better understand the nuances of school business. I have also had some great learning opportunities at the annual conference, the summer leadership conference and most recently at the ASBO leadership conference this year.

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

In the past year I have had the honor of a new addition to my home. That is my one-year old Rhodesian Ridgeback, Lucie. She has been a handful at times but has been an overall blessing.

Also, I will be going into my 18th season of officiating high school wrestling. Oh, and on occasion I play a little poker (some might say it is more than a little).

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

I have visited a lot of places over the years, but one place I have yet to visit is Europe. I would love to see England, France, Greece and Italy, to name a few. I can only imagine seeing a lot of the history in those places. One day I know I will make it there.

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

I spent a summer in Japan on an exchange program as a Judo Sensei (teacher/coach) with a team of 11 students. The students were split up and sent to different parts of Japan upon our arrival at Narita Airport. I spent most of my time

in Chiba and Yokohama with some time in Ishikawa, and my last week in Tokyo I stayed at the Kodokon.

**What is your proudest accomplishment?**

One of the things that I am most proud of occurred during my years as a high school wrestling coach in Washington. It didn't involve any winning streak or titles won, but the impact that, I was told, I made on one student, who amazingly never wrestled a match.

Each year I always told the students who turned out that they had to earn the right to represent their school as a member of this team, and they did that by performing in the classroom. Well, one of those students took that advice to heart and did just that. I found this out when one day while at practice a parent walked in and asked if I was the coach. I replied that I was, and to my shock he said he wanted to come in and shake my hand. Of course I asked "why?" This is when he broke down and told me about what his son had been up to over the past several weeks. He said his son had been staying after school, not to attend practice but to study, meeting with his teachers to catch up on class work. He told me that he had never seen that side of his son before and wanted to say thank you to the person his son said told him what he needed to do to compete. That is one conversation I still remember 20 years later and probably always will.

Send us your pictures – anytime you're traveling around the district this spring, take a photo for ALASBO! Send them to [yodean.armour@klawockschool.com](mailto:yodean.armour@klawockschool.com).

The ALASBO website, [www.alasbo.org](http://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!

## ***Funding for Intervention is Money Well Spent***

*Laurie Olson, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District*

Providing students with the help they need to succeed is the goal of all school districts. Acquiring literacy skills is our school's most important task for our primary students. No other educational success can compensate for failure to teach reading early and well. Our emphasis on collaboration between classroom teachers and specially trained interventionists is making a difference for students in our district.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) has developed a Three-Tiered System of Interventions to provide all students with high quality instruction and, when necessary, additional academic support. Students in Tier 1 receive high quality core instruction provided by the classroom teacher. Tier 2 provides additional academic support from the classroom teacher or from an interventionist for students who are not successful at Tier 1. For students who continue to struggle after Tier 1 and Tier 2 support, Tier 3 provides more intensive academic support from interventionists.



Students are tested to identify sub-skill deficiencies and determine what type intervention will be most effective.

Tier structures specify daily time allotments, depending on student data and deficits. The goal of intervention is always to bring the student back to grade level performance. In order to do that, students receive targeted supplemental instruction individually or in small groups, in addition to classroom interventions. This additional daily instructional time and subsequent progress monitoring has proven effective in providing students with the support they need to make enough academic growth to bring them up to grade level.

Currently, 13.5 FTE Interventionists are working with students in 17 of the KPBSD elementary and middle schools. While this is a substantial investment of funds, the results for students are worth the investment. In the six years that this intervention strategy has been used in KPBSD, the number of students identified as Learning Disabled has dropped by about 10%. More students are catching up before the gap is too great to make adequate gains, because they are receiving targeted instruction based on their individual deficits.

KPBSD is committed to ensuring that each child makes significant academic progress. Providing the additional support for K-2 students who are learning to read is the best way to help those students be successful for the rest of their lives. KPBSD's continued use of intervention teams and interventionists to work with students who need help is the most effective way to continue to increase student achievement.

## ***2012 Summer Leadership Experience***

*Ricardo Tejada, Yakutat School District*

Last year's Summer Leadership was an amazing learning experience that I strongly recommend for anyone interested in learning from it and/or wanting to meet and convene with other business officials from school districts around the state.

For me, being from Yakutat, I hardly ever get to interact with any of my colleagues in my field of work. Thus, Summer Leadership in Homer was great all around – including the nice weather and a great dining experience.

Just like at the ALASBO Annual Conference, Summer Leadership is full of knowledge and interesting, intelligent discussions on any relevant topic.

The Summer Leadership is a contrast to the annual conference, and at the same time both are essential for ALASBO members to attend.

Summer Leadership should be attended by every ALASBO member at least once. I wasn't sure if I should attend last year. My concern was monetary, but the Swarner grant helped me attend, and I am glad I did because it was worth it. My only regret is that I did not attend the fishing charter activity on Sunday!

The Awards Committee is now accepting applications for the **Swarner Shaping the Future Grant**, sponsored by the Swarner family and National CooperativeRx. Three first-time attendees to Summer Leadership will receive \$500 to support their travel costs. Download the application at [www.alasbo.org](http://www.alasbo.org), under opportunities-grants, apply by June 7!

## Mark Your Calendars!



### Upcoming Events

- **July 26-28** - ALASBO Summer Leadership Conference - Juneau
- **October 25-28** - ASBO International Annual Meeting & Expo - Boston
- **Dec 8-11** - ALASBO Annual Conference - Anchorage

## ALASBO 2013 Liaison and Mentor Assignments

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

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### Thoughts to Ponder

"Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself." – *George Bernard Shaw*

"Now is the right time." – *Lotus Sutra*

"Life is an ever shifting kaleidoscope: A slight change and all patterns alter." –  
*Sharon Salzberg*

"Don't be pushed by your problems, be led by your dreams." – *Proverbs*

"Never, never, never give up." –  
*Winston Churchill*