

ALASBO News Link...



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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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*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

Jim Farrington, Anchorage School District

As we move closer to the end of another school year we are faced with a lot of potential changes in the coming year. One of the biggest impacts is what happened during the recently concluded legislative session.

I had the opportunity to participate in the ALASBO Legislative Fly-in on March 17-19 in Juneau. This was my first time as a participant at the Fly-in, and I have to admit that it was an enlightening experience that I believe had an impact on some of the changes we did see.

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I joined Amy Lujan (ALASBO E.D.), Dave Jones (Kenai), Mark Vink (Bering Strait) and David Means (Juneau) for a full slate of appointments to meet with Senators, Representatives and/or their staff to discuss the ALASBO talking points.



The first day we were in Juneau, the ALASBO group met at the Department of Education & Early Development to discuss and formulate our talking points based on information received from other member districts along with our own respective districts' wants and needs. Over the next two days, we divided up into groups of two or three and met in over 30 different legislative offices to discuss the needs of school districts across the state.

First and foremost, when speaking with the legislators we wanted to ensure that we expressed our gratitude for the things that we have received in prior years: Allotments for Energy, Updates in the Pupil Transportation Grant calculation, addition of the CTE formula adjustment, continuation of the PERS/TRS on-behalf payments, and this past year's inclusion of funds for Safety and Security Preparedness. Next, we discussed what we need going forward.

Since the governor had introduced it in his omnibus bill, we wanted to reiterate the need for an increase to the BSA. This is one of the biggest factors that districts need to know in order to plan and budget year-to-year. With rising costs in workers' comp, health care and wages, districts are faced with added pressures to balance their budgets, and increases in the BSA would help offset some of these increasing funding requirements.

Along with our BSA discussion, we had the opportunity to express support for several other bills that the group felt were important: implementation of cost controls on workers' compensation medical costs, the lump sum contribution to the PERS/TRS program proposed by the Governor, elimination of the PERS termination costs and support of the inclusion of the CIP Major Maintenance List in the capital budget.

Legislative Recap Resources

The ACSA position statements and ALASBO Fly-In Talking Points can be found on our website, www.alasbo.org, on the "news" page. The Department of Ed's session recap memo will also be posted here when available.

After five extra days of the legislative session and many meetings of the special committee on education were held, the committee came to agreed upon adjustments to the BSA with additional funding outside of the foundation formula. These changes were then sent on and approved by both the Senate and House and are now awaiting the Governor's signature. In addition, many other bills were passed on that affect education, including the worker's compensation fee schedules and the \$3 billion PERS/TRS lump sum payments.

As I mentioned earlier, it was an enlightening experience to be able to be a part of potential changes in the funding that all school districts receive. Thank you Amy, Dave, Mark and David for walking the floors of the capital and communicating the needs of our state's school districts, and thank you to all who have provided information and testimony in helping make change during this legislative session.

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.

Executive Director's Message

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

After the completion of the five-day extended session, the **legislators** finally did get out of town, just in time for springtime in Juneau!



As mentioned in President Jim Farrington's article, we were pleased to see additional funding for K-12, as well as passage of several worker's compensation bills we had advocated for and the funding to strengthen TRS/PERS. Please thank your legislators for their work on behalf of education!

The Department of Education and Early Development will be distributing a summary of legislative action affecting education soon. One issue that did not receive much attention this session was the health insurance study that ALASBO members contributed to. However,

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funding studies have been commissioned by the legislature to take place in the next 6-12 months that will likely reference this study.

ALASBO's next event is our **Summer Leadership Conference** being held again in Juneau, July 25-27! 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?? We had a blast in Juneau last year, and this year's event will include ziplining at Eaglecrest Ski Area, as well as a visit to Mendenhall Glacier for those who can stick around on Sunday afternoon and take evening or Monday morning flights out. **Register now** at our website, under "events-upcoming".

If you've never attended Summer Leadership before, please apply for one of up to FOUR **Richard Swarner "Shaping the Future" grants!** This grant will cover most of your out-of-pocket attendance costs (airfare, misc.) The deadline is June 6, 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 **Management Review** project. With the leadership of consultant Chad Stiteler, ALASBO member teams have made great progress on moving the Management Review template toward final draft. At Leadership, we plan to finalize this document and plan for next steps on use of this valuable tool. We'll also be planning for the December **annual conference**. We need ALASBO members from all types of districts and all levels of experience to help us with these projects. Please join us at Summer Leadership!

It's also time to start thinking about attending the **ASBO International Conference** in Kissimmee, FL, September 19-22! Registration is already open on the www.asbointl.org website and can also be accessed from our site. We'll have an ALASBO suite at the Gaylord 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.

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, or 907-500-9086. You'll also find useful information at: www.alasbo.org.

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 7-10, 2014 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), roundtables and longer pre/post-conference sessions. Present a project you've been working on, or perhaps a panel discussion with several colleagues. We need your input!

We also welcome vendor and agency presenters, so long as the presentations focus on best practices and are not a sales pitch. So please pass on this invitation!

The proposal form is available on the ALASBO website, www.alasbo.org under events-conferences-upcoming, and it's due July 18.

Do You Know ALICE?

Rebecca Wright, Mat-Su Borough School District

Like many of my peer school business officials, my job is not completely finance-centered. For the Mat-Su Borough School District (MSBSD), I also serve as the Risk Manager. It can be interesting and challenging, but it is also rewarding. I work with competent, caring people in my district, have great relationships with our vendors, and have learned a lot about risk management for the Mat-Su Borough School District.

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Recently, in response to the horrific and unspeakable increase in the number of school shootings, the MSBSD hosted ALICE, an active shooter training program, for all our school Administrators, attendees from the Anchorage and Kenai School Districts, and local law enforcement personnel.

School districts around the country will be hearing more about ALICE in the near future. It's a training program designed to empower school district personnel to assess the best course of action to protect students and staff in the unfortunate event that an active shooter is on the premises. ALICE is an acronym that stands for:

- Alert ~ make everyone aware of the presence of a shooter on premises
- Lockdown ~ get everyone behind locked doors until the location of the intruder is known
- Inform ~ announce **information** of the intruder's location instead of simply continuing to demand "Lockdown"
- Counter ~ if the shooter enters your area, surprise the intruder by throwing anything available at their head to distract them and interfere with their ability to effectively aim
- Evacuate ~ with information comes the power to make decisions that would allow students and staff to evacuate to a pre-established safe spot away from the danger on school grounds



In the past, many school districts would go into an immediate lockdown when a threat became known. Outside doors were quickly locked, students were hustled into classrooms, and classroom doors were locked. Everyone would try to find hiding places or go to the corners of the room furthest from doors and windows and then remain quiet in the hopes that intruders would not find them. Sadly, over the past couple of years, this response has proven to be ineffective when active shooters are on the premises.

- Stationary targets are much easier to hit than moving targets
- The concentration of students and teachers in close proximity increases the likelihood that each shot will find a target
- Students and staff are effectively "cornered" with limited cover or opportunity to escape

Information provided during ALICE training made a compelling case for counter strategies. Trained law enforcement shooters have an

average accuracy rate of 85-90% while training on stationary targets whereas most amateur shooters have a much lower accuracy rate. However, review of past violent shooting sprees has shown that the shooters have very high percentages of injuries and deaths because stationary, concentrated, cornered targets are so easy to hit.

The ALICE training provided a different perspective in how we should train personnel to react to an active shooter threat. Suggestions were provided on how, after the **alert and lockdown** has occurred, to think quickly and creatively to use the available surroundings to create effective barricades and prevent entry. The training included suggestions to throw objects at the shooter to distract and interfere with the shooter's aim. Also, rather than simply repeating "lockdown", ALICE training emphasizes the importance of providing **information** on the location of the shooter over the intercom system.

One of the demonstrations during some ALICE trainings has been to give an inexperienced volunteer shooter a Nerf dart gun to shoot at volunteers who use the common lockdown response of hiding in a corner. They then give the Nerf gun to a trained law officer and instruct the volunteers to move around and throw things at the officer while being shot at. The demonstrations show that the percentage of bullets finding a target are higher for the inexperienced shooter shooting at stationary targets than the percentage of hits of the experienced shooters trying to shoot at targets that are throwing things at them. The shooter's natural tendency will be to protect their eyes, face, and head. Every second bought by distracting the shooter is another second that someone can put distance between themselves and the shooter and get to safety. Throwing things and any attempts to disarm the shooter are part of the **counter** response of ALICE.

Districts are also encouraged to proactively plan potential rally points off-site if it is safe to remove students from the danger zone. Recommendations included taking students to this off-site location during drills to ensure they know the location and are comfortable with getting to it in case of an actual event. For example, if a teacher knew the shooter was at one end of the campus, that teacher may decide it is safe to give students the ok to quickly and quietly **evacuate** to the pre-established rally point off site.

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In order for this to work, students and staff need to know where the shooter is, so information sharing is critical to successfully responding to the potential threat. In fact, **information is emphasized as the most important component of an ALICE response.**

While this training may seem more appropriate for military combat missions, the recent increase in these horrible school shootings requires the attention of school systems around the country.

I appreciate the proactive role that the Mat-Su Borough School District is taking in seeking out expert training and working closely with our law enforcement agencies in the Mat-Su Valley to help keep our students and staff safe. I am happy to see that the interest in the ALICE program is growing and I expect you'll be hearing more about it in the coming months. This active shooter training is very relevant to school district safety and I would recommend ALICE training to every school district Risk Manager.



Experience on Management Review Team

Sue Jolin, Anchorage School District

A couple of months ago I had the opportunity to participate on two review panels for the Council of the Great City Schools' (CGCS) Award for Excellence in Financial Management. The concept of the CGCS program is not unlike the Management Review program that ALASBO is establishing. Granted, we may not be presenting an award, but we are looking to help our peer districts establish, validate or confirm that sound business processes and/or best practices can or do exist within their districts (which in my opinion is an award in and of itself). I would like to share my experience on the review panel with you in hopes that you would consider participating in ALASBO's program.

The CGCS award is presented to districts that achieve a high degree of performance in financial management within the areas of:

- General Financial Management (GL, Payroll, AP)
- Internal Control
- Budgeting and Strategic Planning
- Internal and External Auditing
- Treasury
- Capital Asset Management

- Debt Management
- Risk Management
- Purchasing

The review panels were made up of financial managers who had expertise in each of the areas listed above. I was selected for the General Financial Management and Internal Controls. Our teams were headed by seasoned CFO's and business managers with prior experience conducting district peer reviews. The review process was entirely on-line, which allowed people from across the country to participate. We accessed a web portal that housed documentation from the reviewed district, which was meant to be evidence of their meeting the standards of the review program.

After conducting an initial review of the documents provided, the review teams convened via teleconference to discuss our findings. In some cases we found that the district met or exceeded our measurement criteria, in other cases we needed additional information in order to make a conclusion. We sent back a series of requests for information which included requests for additional supporting documents as well as requests for clarification of written procedures. After the new documents were uploaded to the portal we were back at it again, reviewing the latest information provided. It was truly an iterative and cooperative process.

Participating on the panel allowed me as a reviewer to collaborate with my peers to share best practice ideas, identify areas in which the reviewed district needed to improve upon, as well as finding areas in which the district excelled. I took note of some of the sound and sometimes innovative business processes they had established, for possible integration into my district in the future.

As ALASBO moves along with our own Management Review program that Amy Lujan and Chad Stiteler are leading, I would encourage you to participate in developing the measurement standards, which will be a large component of our program. I will also add that a great time to join in on all this fun will be at Summer Leadership in Juneau!

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!



Power Lunch Schedule

*11 AM to noon, usually the 3rd Tuesday of
each month via teleconference;
call 267-507-0370, code 252726# (spells
ALASBO!)*

May 21	GASB 68 Update
Jun 17	CIP Administration
Jul 15	Time & Effort Reporting
Aug 19	Grants Administration
Sep 16	Legislative Issues
Oct 21	Impact Aid
Nov 18	Indirect Cost Proposal
Dec 7-10	ALASBO Annual Conference

ALASBO



Member Spotlight

Matt Groves, Ketchikan School District

Tell us about your school district

Ketchikan is a wonderful school district. Our staff and students excel because they are supported by our community and led by a great group of administrators.

How long have you been in school business?

Five years this May.

How did you get into this business?

Its very similar to one of my jobs in the Coast Guard, only I don't get a gun. I also filled a similar role in Oregon Public Health for two years.

What do you like best about your job?

I like the energy that comes from working around kids, and with teachers and principals who love what they are doing. I also enjoy seeing how accurate my budgets are at the end of the year and launching new programs, like the Nutrition Break at the high school.

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

Find out what your superintendent wants to get done and what needs to get done.

How have you benefited from membership in ALASBO?

It's been a great network to have access to. I'm pretty sure I ask someone a question about once a month.

What do you like to do for fun?

I enjoy craft beer and skiing.

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

I've never been to the Grand Canyon. I think that is where my next vacation will be.

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

I submitted my letter of resignation in early April and will be returning to my hometown of Denver Colorado, where I believe I'll be working for Denver Public Schools as their capital projects manager.

What is your proudest accomplishment?

Taking the School Lunch Program from losing money to solvency and nearly out of the hole without raising the cost of lunch in almost five years.

Upcoming Events

- **July 25-27, 2014 – ALASBO Summer Leadership – Juneau**
- **September 19-22, 2014 – ASBO International Annual Meeting & Expo – Kissimmee, Florida**
- **December 7-10, 2014 – ALASBO Annual Conference - Anchorage**



ASBO International Conference Report

Loreen Kramer, Copper River School District

I was fortunate to have been chosen as the recipient of the Lowell Thomas Freeman Professional Development grant, which allowed me to attend Boston ASBO International in October 2013. There were 27 Alaskans in attendance, including guests of the attendees and our Alaskan adopted Texan, Bill Fuller. We were well represented.

The conference schedule was packed with great information. I felt like I should attend every Affordable Health Care meeting that was offered and still left with many questions about this complicated subject. I'm sure it will take years for all of us to understand the Affordable Health Care Act. It is important to invest time in the ever changing topics of the education industry, such as; E-Rate, Food Service, Health Care, Audit requirements, Technology, and many more.

A very wise friend pointed out to me how important networking is with our fellow ALASBO members, while traveling to various cities attending ASBO conferences. We get to know each other on a more relaxed and informal basis and also have a little fun. This proves helpful when we get back to the office and need to rely on each other in an increasingly complex work environment.

Along with all the meetings, it certainly is a bonus to be able to get out and 'sight-see'. Most of us live in remote areas of Alaska and don't see much beyond the majestic mountains, wildlife, and miles of beauty. There are also a lot of interesting things to see in the "lower 48". A few of us went on a Trolley ride which eventually ended at Cheers, "Where Everybody Knows Your Name". Afterward, we even braved the subway and made it back to our hotel safely.

I would encourage anyone to attend ASBO to see what happens outside of Alaska and to learn what challenges other districts face outside of our state. You'll especially appreciate the information available at the ASBO conference that will help you remain diligent in your professional development and vision for the future.

Awards Committee Activity

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

- Samuel R.G. Ortiz, Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District
- Jessica K. Anderson, Unalaska City School District

The Mack Easton Student Scholarships were co-sponsored by National CooperativeRX and the Horace Mann Companies.

The Awards Committee has also selected **Karen Quitslund** of Petersburg City School District to receive this year's Lowell Thomas Freeman Grant to attend the ASBO International Conference in September 2014. Thanks to CORE, Inc. for on-going sponsorship of this grant program!

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

Applications are being accepted through June 6 for up to FOUR first-time Summer Leadership attendees to receive **\$500 Richard L. Swarner Shaping the Future Leadership Grants**. Summer Leadership will be held July 25-27 in Juneau! These grants are sponsored by the Swarner family and by National CooperativeRX.

ALASBO 2014 Liaison and Mentor Assignments

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

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ALASBO Changes Fiscal Year Period

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

Several years ago, the ALASBO Audit Committee recommended a change in our fiscal year period to better match ALASBO's business cycle. The January-December fiscal year resulted in numerous outstanding items at FY end, due to the timing of our annual conference in December.

Finally, the transition to a new fiscal year of March-April has been completed, but the transition wasn't easy! One result is that we have no financial statements for FY12, and our financial statements for FY13 comprise a 15-month period. These statements have been approved by the Audit Committee and the ALASBO Board and will be posted shortly on the "about ALASBO" page of our website.

Already, it is clear that the new fiscal year period will result in easier financial reporting and more meaningful financial statements, going forward. Many thanks to former Treasurer Robin Mullins and current Treasurer Lee Ann Andrew, as well as past and current Audit Committee Chairs Chad Stiteler and Sue Jolin for helping us get through this transition!

Health Care Reform – Free Rider Penalty Regulations

On Monday, February 10, the Internal Revenue Service released long-awaited final regulations implementing the Employer Shared Responsibility provision (the Free Rider Penalty or employer mandate) under Health Care Reform.

In addition to clarifying a number of open issues, the final regulations offer certain transition relief to employers for the 2015 plan year but will require full compliance with the law in 2016.

American Fidelity provides a number of helpful resources on their Health Care Reform Education website, including a white paper on the Free Rider penalty rules, clarifications, and unanswered questions:

www.HCReducation.com/FRPwhitepaper

How to Stay Fired Up, Pumped Up, and Inspired as a School Business Official

Matt Jones, Motivational Speaker

Education like a marathon can be an endurance event due to budget constraints,

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having do more with less, and constantly changing workplace. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." Everyday as a school business official you have the opportunity to help make a difference and impact in the lives of students. In order to do be your best you need to stay energized to cross the finish line. In this article you will learn how you can remain fired up, pumped up, and inspired.

On September 11, 2002 my life forever changed. At the age of 23 I was told by my doctor, "You have cancer." After spreading to the fluid in my brain, I slipped into an unconscious state. Doctors did not think I would live. Against all odds, I recovered and had a successful bone marrow transplant. Due to brain damage I had to relearn how to walk and from that went on to run five marathons on five continents. Below are three victory strategies that helped me and you can use to stay fired up, pumped up, and inspired in the marathon of education.

1. Visualize Your Victory

When it comes to your victory as a school business official, it's not the outside stuff that matters but the inside stuff that counts. It is easy to get discouraged by day-to-day stresses. To stay fired up, pumped up, and inspired it is essential to be clear on the victory you want to achieve. Once you can see it, believe it's possible, than you can do it. Lying in my hospital bed I visualized myself crossing the finish line of a marathon. The key is focus on the victory you are striving to achieve instead of focusing on all the challenges.

2. Take Action

How do you run a marathon? One-step at a time. In order to fulfill the vision you are visualizing, you must take action every single day. It does not matter how small it is. The key is to do something everyday that moves you closer to your vision. This builds momentum. Think back to science class and inertia. Objects at rest tend to stay at rest, while objects in motion stay in motion. Remember it is not enough to stare up the steps, you have step up the stairs.

3. Check Your Attitude

In order to complete a marathon I had to have the belief it was possible. Daily I had to check the negative self-talk and the self-defeating inner dialogue. The little voice that says it is impossible. Once you have the attitude that your vision is possible, you will take the necessary action.

Education like a marathon is an endurance event. It is a roller coaster with ups, downs, and surprising turns. Crossing the finish line was one of the greatest victories in my life. Through Visualizing your Victory, Taking Action, and Checking your Attitude you will be able to cross your finish line by staying fired up, pumped up, and inspired.

Matt Jones is considered the top leadership keynote motivational speaker in education. From three-time cancer conqueror to now, life changing inspirational speaker, audiences love Matt. Visit Matt at www.MatthewDJones.com.

Kidspeak

* While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"

* A little boy opened the big family bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages. "Mama, look what I found", the boy called out, "What have you got there, dear?" With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered, "I think it's Adam's underwear."