

[Alaska Council of School Administrators](#)

[Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals](#)

[Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals](#)

[Alaska Association of School Administrators](#)

[Alaska Association of School Business Officials](#)

[Alaska Staff Development Network](#)

ACSA [1, 10-11](#)

AAESP [2-3](#)

AASSP [3, 4-5](#)

AASA [6-7](#)

ALASBO [8-9](#)

ASDN [11](#)

INSIDE



The Times, They Are A Changing

by Dr. Dave Herbert, ACSA President; Superintendent, St. Mary's Schools

Over the past decade, Alaska's educators have been fortunate to receive adequate funding to provide quality educational opportunities for students. Nevertheless, depending on the particular year, we have had to be creative with our budgets by making difficult reductions, sometimes at the expense of programs valued by many constituencies. We have also successfully sought additional funding through painstaking grant writing in an effort to keep our programs and services vibrant. Despite these challenges, Alaska's financial well-being has been much more stable than in other states where Pre-K education has experienced significant reductions in funding levels. We are appreciative that our Legislature and Governor have made education funding a priority, resulting in continued increases over the past decade.

Recently, the State Senate Finance Education Subcommittee has been meeting to gather information on the status of education in Alaska. In doing so, they have examined the fiscal status of our state, and the economic outlook is clearly not as bright as it has been in the recent past. We can no longer deny that Alaska's oil production is in decline. Despite the past efforts of the Legislature and the Governor, it is apparent that sustaining current levels of education funding in the future will become more and more difficult, and securing needed increases will be extremely challenging.

Given the fiscal outlook for our state, our associations must now, more than ever, impress

upon the Legislature and the Governor how vital it is to continue to prioritize education funding. Together, we must advocate for the children we serve by helping all parties involved to understand the importance of adequate funding for PreK-12 education. While doing so, we must ensure that we are frugal and responsible stewards of the funding we do receive and offer a clear focus and solid rationale for all additional funds we seek.

Within the projected economic environment, Alaska's school districts are being required to undertake huge program modifications, including full implementation of newly adopted Alaska Content Standards in reading, writing, and math, implementation of new assessments that align with the more rigorous standards, and development and implementation of new teacher and principal evaluation processes with stringent guidelines. These monumental changes, if done well, stand to have profound positive effects on students, and education in general, across Alaska. Yet to do all this right will require tools and training—and that will necessitate funding.

Collectively, we need to examine our financial situation and determine what is needed to enable us to fully implement the significant new requirements. Once we have carefully defined our needs, we can advocate for them based on clear, concise, and factual evidence. If Alaska's education community can collectively justify and fairly communicate our needs, the Legislature and the Governor will have a greater tendency to support our identified initiatives.

Life Long Learning

by Dr. Deena Paramo, Superintendent, Mat-Su Borough School District

While the title of the present article expresses a cliché commonly heard in our field, it does ring true for administrators in many ways. It is we, administrators, who must keep abreast of all the many changing facets of education, from teaching and learning to budgets and finance—not to mention the most talked-about topic at the latest superintendent meeting: unfunded mandates. It is true that we are all in the school business. As superintendents, it seems we have never left this "business." At age five, most of us began our journey in public education as kindergarteners, and we are currently still engaged with public education (age reference purposefully omitted).

Recently, I had an opportunity, through the National AASA, to participate in the first session of the newly accredited "National Superintendent Certification Program." This was an opportunity to continue my lifelong learning. In all honesty, the "opportunity" was not jumped at immediately by this educator. Having completed a doctoral program from the University of Oregon in 2006, I can honestly say I had sworn off "coursework" for a while. Nonetheless, what with all the advertising, the top ranked presenters—and a little push from leadership at home—I decided to jump in and apply.



Continued on page 7

234 Gold Street, Juneau, AK 99801

Ph 907-586-9702 • Fax 907-586-5879 • alaskaacsa.org



AAESP Board of Directors

John Pothast
President
Redoubt Elementary
School

Erica-Kludt Painter
Vice President
Rea C. Stedman
Elementary

Jennifer Schmitz
Secretary
Scenic Park Elementary

Marcus Wilson
Treasurer
North Star Elementary
School

John Kito
State Representative
Tyson Elementary
School

Jennifer Litera
Member At Large
Inalook Elementary
School

Audra Finkenbinder
Member At Large
Aleknagik School

AAESP Staff

John Pile
Executive Director
North Pole



Hard Work Requires Passion

by John Pothast, AAESP President; Principal, Redoubt Elementary School

The Alaska Department of Education recently hosted the Teaching & Learning Support Institute where educators from across the state learned more about the implementation of the new Alaska State Standards for Math and Language Arts, the new Smarter Balanced Assessment, and the new Educator Evaluation Regulations. During the Institute, the North Slope Borough, Fairbanks North Star Borough, and Bering Strait school districts shared their plans, and steps their districts have already taken, to implement the new math and language arts standards in their schools and classrooms. Likewise, the Kenai Peninsula Borough and Kodiak Island Borough school districts presented the evaluation processes they have put in place to help meet the new state regulations for teacher evaluations. All in all, it was quality time, and I was impressed with my colleagues around the state and the work many have already done to prepare their districts and schools for the new standards, assessments, and evaluations.

However, as the Institute progressed, I was struck by the thought that the success of these changes within our state will not come about simply by following some cookie cutter implementation regime. Change of this magnitude will require more than just going through the motions of teaching new standards, or checking boxes on a teacher evaluation. This type of change will require hard work and passion. Further, it will require our commitment to the long term, as this is certainly a multi-year endeavor. Several times during the Institute, my mind kept going back to a comment

Steve Jobs made about his success at Apple Inc. In a joint interview with Bill Gates, back in 2007 ([source video](#)), Jobs talked about the “secret” to his success:

“People say you have to have a lot of passion for what you’re doing, and it’s totally true. And the reason is . . . because it’s so hard, that, if you don’t, any rational person would give up. It’s really hard. And you have to do it over a sustained period of time. So, if...you’re not having fun and you don’t really love it, you’re going to give up. And that’s what happens to most people, actually. If you really look at the ones that ended up, you know, being “successful” in the eyes of society, and the ones who didn’t, oftentimes the ones that are successful loved what they did, so they could persevere, you know, when it got really tough. And the ones that didn’t love it quit—because they’re sane! Who would want to put up with this stuff if you don’t love it?”

Jobs’ words resonated in my mind throughout the Institute, because the challenge we face in our state and nation is monumental. What we are undertaking, I believe, is unprecedented in its scope and complexity. Over the next few years, wrestling with new standards, assessments, and evaluation tools will undoubtedly require our attention and hard work “over a sustained period of time.” However, our success will depend not only on our perseverance and commitment, but also on our attitude: our passion for our work, our love for what we do, and our love for our students. Indeed, our passion for providing the best for Alaska’s students needs to be the bedrock of all we do. Thank you for all you do and have a great year!



Elementary Principals as Leaders

by John Kito, AAESP State Representative; Principal, William Tyson Elementary School

I have been involved in education for over 40 years. I started as a teacher and coach then moved into administration as a principal. Education is an ongoing process that involves the entire community. The process begins at home with parents who provide for the child’s basic needs and encourage the value of education. Educators provide the curricula and teaching methods that nurture, challenge, and empower the student to develop skills and strategies for success in school and in life.

The central purpose of our work is and has been to provide every child with an opportunity to develop a lifelong passion for learning and reasoning.

In pursuit of this goal, we have developed a noteworthy capacity to lead through empowering others, instilling trust and ensuring that every party to the educational process is heard.

Like the Alaska schools many of us manage, William Tyson Elementary operates in an environment of restricted financial resources, requiring leaders to plan and implement budgets, make personnel decisions, and monitor building upkeep, equipment, and supplies. Over the years, we have mastered these skills and have placed a great emphasis on staff development that uses limited resources to produce a quality product.

Continued on page 3



AASSP Board of Directors

Adam Mokolke
President
Burchell High School

Alan Fields
Past President
Kenai Central High School

Mario Gatto
Region VII State Coordinator
Ben Eielson Jr./Sr. High School

Roxie Quick
Region I Director
Wales-Kingikmiut School

LeAnn Young
Region II Director
Alaska Gateway Correspondence School

Rod Morrison
Region III Director
George H. Gilson Jr. High School

Cheryl Guyett
Region IV Director
Dimond High School

Josh Andrews
Region V Director
Craig High School

Patrick Mayer
Region VI Director
Delta High School

Ed Lester
Region VII Director
Newhalen School

Kelly Parsons
AP At-Large Director
Gruening Middle School

AASSP Staff

Denise Greene-Wilkinson
Executive Director
Eagle River



Promoting the Role of the Principal

by Denise Greene-Wilkinson, Executive Director, AASSP

It is such a privilege to be promoting the critical role of the principal and all school leaders.

Over more than 30 years as an educator and during my recently completed year as president of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, I have seen first-hand the importance of the school leader. I know how principals and other school leaders influence the climate and tenor of our schools but, more importantly, how we influence the futures of our students. Few of us will ever know how many lives we have influenced, and the effects those lives will have over time—on our communities, our state, and our world.

As the president of NASSP, my goal was to “take back the conversation” on education—the conversation that says that schools are pulling themselves out of the muck and mire of poor quality education. I believe that our schools are not moving from bad to good, but from good to great. And that great schools are the result of great school leaders—leaders like you!

It is the school leader who creates a culture

wherein teachers and students feel challenged, engaged, and empowered. One thing is true the world over: every morning, children wake up and go to school—eager to learn. They are depending on us to provide the education they so deeply crave.

As we enter October and recognize National Principal’s Month, I want to thank each of you for being a part of your statewide organization. I know that, as school leaders, we take every opportunity to promote the importance of education to our government officials and elected leaders, school administrators, and the general public. The future for public education in Alaska, both rural and urban, is bright and promising. Principals, superintendents, school board members, and the communities we serve all stand together to support education for every Alaska child.

I look forward to meeting with you at our October principals’ conference and hearing from each of you what YOU expect from your state and national organizations.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve.



National Principals Month

October 2013



Join NASSP and NAESP as we honor the hard work and dedication of America’s principals all month long.

National Principals Month is your opportunity to say “thank you” to principals everywhere and to share with the community all the great things that principals do.

As you plan your National Principals Month activities, be sure to check out our Ideas for Celebrating and our interactive National Principals Month wall, where you can read about and post activities happening in schools and communities nationwide.

The key to student success is a great school, and the key to a great school is a great principal.

Elementary Principals as Leaders

Continued from page 2

We have learned that creating a caring, supportive school environment where teachers, students, and families work together saves money, makes the most of our resources, and results in the greatest academic progress. Programs dedicated to this end include various parent nights and family support meetings. These meetings allow parental and community input on both content and delivery of curriculum. This is important in the very diverse communities and schools we serve. We all maintain

an open door policy that encourages trust and respect.

We are dedicated and enthusiastic in promoting staff development, parent and community participation, and open and positive staff-student relationships, and in solving difficult personnel problems tactfully and leading our schools through positive example. We believe students and staff will reach to meet our high expectations when treated with dignity and respect.



The 21st Century Student

Adapted from <http://www.21stcenturyschools.com/What is 21st Century Education.htm>
by Rod Morrison, AASSP President-Elect; Principal, Gilson Junior High School

Today's kindergarteners will be retiring in the year 2067. We have no idea what the world will look like in five years, much less 60 years, yet we are charged with preparing our students for life in that world. Our students are facing many emerging issues that point to a need for them to be able to communicate, function, and create change personally, socially, economically, and politically, on the local, national, and global levels.

21st Century Skills

21st Century Schools recognize the critical need for developing 21st century skills, believing that authentic education addresses the "whole child," the "whole person," and does not limit professional development and curriculum design to workplace readiness.

21st century skills received through the 21st Century Schools interdisciplinary and integrated curriculum are learned in project-based settings, utilizing the seven survival skills advocated by Tony Wagner in his book, *The Global Achievement Gap*:

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Collaboration across Networks and Leading by Influence
- Agility and Adaptability
- Initiative and Entrepreneurialism
- Effective Oral and Written Communication
- Accessing and Analyzing Information
- Curiosity and Imagination

In many countries, today's students are referred to as "digital natives," and today's educators as "digital immigrants." Teachers are working with students whose entire lives have been immersed in 21st century media culture. Today's students are digital learners—they literally take in the world through the filter of computing devices—the cellular phones, handheld gaming devices, PDAs, and laptops they take everywhere. Plus the computers, TVs, and game consoles at home. A survey by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation found that young people (ages 8-18) mainline electronic media for more than six hours a day on average. Many are multitasking—listening to music while surfing the Web or instant-messaging friends while playing a video game.

Redefining "School," "Teacher," "Learner," and "Curriculum" for the 21st Century

How should education be structured to meet the needs of students in this 21st century world? How do we now define "School," "Teacher," "Learner," and "Curriculum"? 21st Century Schools curriculum aims to engage students in addressing real-world problems, issues important to humanity, and questions that matter.

This is a dramatic departure from the factory-model education of the past. It is abandonment, finally, of textbook-driven,

teacher-centered, pencil-on-paper schooling, and promotes a new way of understanding the concept of "knowledge" and a new definition of the "educated person"—all of which mandates new ways of designing and delivering curriculum.

21st Century Schools suggests the following redefinition/recasting of "School," "Teacher," and "Learner" for the 21st century:

Schools will go from 'buildings' to 'nerve centers,' with walls that are porous and transparent, connecting teachers, students, and the community to the wealth of knowledge that exists in the world."

Teachers, whose role has been as dispensers of information, will become orchestrators of learning, helping students turn information into knowledge and knowledge into wisdom. In the 21st century, will need to create a "culture of inquiry."

The learner who in the past has been thought of as a young person who went to school, spent a specified amount of time in certain courses, received passing grades, will be seen in a new context:



First, we must maintain student interest by contextualizing learning, helping students to grasp the ways in which the things they are learning will prepare them for life in the real world.

Second, we must instill curiosity, which is fundamental to lifelong learning.

Third, we must be flexible in how we teach.

Fourth, we must excite learners to become even more resourceful so that they will continue to learn outside of the formal school day.

So what will schools look like, exactly? What will the curriculum look like? How will this 21st century curriculum be organized, and how will it influence the ways in which we design and build schools, assess student learning, purchase

Continued on page 5



The 21st Century Student

Continued from page 4

resources, and acquire and utilize new technologies? And what does all of this mean for us in this era of standardized testing and accountability?

It is possible. It has happened, and is happening, in schools across the country. There is growing evidence of schools everywhere having consistent results when implementing the 21st Century Schools curriculum.

20th Century Classroom vs. 21st Century Classroom



USA 1960s typical classroom – teacher-centered, fragmented curriculum, students working in isolation, memorizing facts.



A classroom at the School of Environmental Studies, aka the Zoo School, in Minneapolis. A perfect example of real-life, relevant, project-based 21st century education.

Time-based	Outcome-based
Focus: memorization of discrete facts	Focus: what students know, can do, and are like after all the details are forgotten.
Lessons focus on the lower level of Bloom’s Taxonomy—knowledge, comprehension, and application.	Learning is designed on upper levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy—synthesis, analysis, and evaluation (and include lower levels as curriculum is designed down from the top).
Textbook driven	Research driven
Passive learning	Active learning
Learners work in isolation—classroom within four walls	Learners work collaboratively with classmates and others around the world—the global classroom.
Teacher centered: teacher is center of attention and provider of information.	Student centered: teacher is facilitator/coach.
Little to no student freedom	Great deal of student freedom
“Discipline problems”—educators do not trust students and vice versa. No student motivation.	No “discipline problems”—students and teaches have mutually respectful relationships as co-learners; students are highly motivated.
Fragmented curriculum	Integrated and interdisciplinary curriculum
Grades averaged	Grades based on what was learned
Low expectations	High expectations—“If it isn’t good, it isn’t done.” We expect, and ensure, that all students succeed in learning at high levels. Some may go higher—we get out of their way to let them do that.
Teacher is judge. No one else sees student work.	Self, peer, and other assessments. Public audience, authentic assessments.
Curriculum/school is irrelevant and meaningless to the students.	Curriculum is connected to students’ interests, experiences, talents, and the real world.
Print is the primary vehicle of learning and assessment.	Performances, projects, and multiple forms of media are used for learning and assessment.
Diversity in students is ignored.	Curriculum and instruction address student diversity.
Literacy is the 3 Rs – reading, writing and math	Multiple literacies of the 21 st century—aligned to living and working in a globalized new millennium.
Factory model, based upon the needs of employers for the Industrial Age of the 19th century. Scientific management.	Global model, based upon the needs of a globalized, high-tech society.
Driven by the NCLB and standardized testing mania.	Standardized testing has its place. Education is not driven by the NCLB and standardized testing mania.



AASA Board of Directors

Todd Poage
President
Alaska Gateway Schools

Robert Thomason
Past President
Petersburg Schools

Duncan Ware
President-Elect
Delta/Greely Schools

Kerry Boyd
Secretary/Treasurer
Yukon Koyukuk Schools

Chris Reitan
Director, Seat A
Galena City Schools

Theresa Keel
Director, Seat B
Cordova City Schools

Alex Russin
Director, Seat C
Lower Yukon Schools

Scott Butterfield
Director, Seat D
Chatham Schools

Glenn Gelbrich
Director, Seat E
Juneau Borough Schools

AASA Staff

Bruce Johnson
Executive Director
Juneau

Laurie Miller
Office & Membership
Services Manager
Juneau



Schools or Society? Which is Failing?

by Dr. Robert Thomason, AASA Past President; Superintendent, Petersburg School District

Alaska's educational system, as with many public school systems in the nation, is under extreme scrutiny—even attack. Although many local communities are known for their support of local schools, Alaska's schools and Alaskan educators are told by state-level elected officials that the job being done is not good enough.

The state's rhetoric would have us believe that superintendents, principals, and teachers are not meeting the needs of Alaska's students. We are told there is a lack of rigor, standards are low, the system is broken. State foundation funding has remained flat for the last four years because elected leaders do not want to increase funding of a "failing system."

Diane Ravitch, a former U.S. Department of Education Assistant Secretary of Education and Counselor to the Secretary of Education, and, at one time, an unapologetic proponent of testing and accountability, challenges the notion of failing schools and the benefits of privatization that is sweeping the nation. Her latest book, *Reign of Error*, targets the privatization movement as a "danger" that has fed the myth that schools are failing. In her book, Ravitch points out that levels of achievement have actually been on the rise, with both test scores and graduation rates at their highest. More high school graduates are entering college than ever before.

Nationally, Black and Hispanic children continue to lag. In Alaska, Alaska Native youngsters continue to underperform. Those of us "on the ground and in the schools" decry increasing poverty (23% in the U.S. vs. 5% in Finland), the breakdown of family

supports, poor eating habits, and a general decline in personal responsibility. These declines in our moral fiber manifest in reduced school attendance, unhealthy children, and parents' abdication of their role in parent/school teams. Is this the case with every family, in every school, in every community? No, absolutely not. The rhetoric, however, would have us believe that every school in every community is subpar.

Ravitch proposes several socially responsible actions. As a state and as a nation, we should vastly expand prekindergarten programs that introduce children to "the joyful pursuit of play and learning." In order to help children become and remain healthy, we should integrate comprehensive medical and mental health resources into our schools, making sure each child has access to a school nurse, a psychologist, and a guidance counselor.

Where large classes now exist, class size should be reduced (to a size found in costly private schools). Appropriate use of diagnostic testing must be expanded to show us exactly where a child needs specific help. Diagnostic testing (unlike standardized testing) is nonjudgmental and does not label one as a failure. Physicians use diagnostic tests all the time. After studying the results, the patient is given a diet and/or exercise regimen, often combined with appropriate medication, to assist in improving the identified deficiency.

In her book, Ravitch asserts that public schooling in itself is "in a crisis only so far as society is and only so far as this new narrative of crisis has destabilized it."

Continued on page 7

Dr. Shirley Holloway-- 2013 AASA Honorary Member

Dr. Shirley Holloway has provided exemplary service to education in the state of Alaska in many capacities including serving as a speech pathologist, teacher, principal, superintendent, university professor, college president and twice Alaska Commissioner of Education and Early Development.

Among other accomplishments, Dr. Holloway was one of Alaska's pioneering female superintendents, the first female finalist for the National Superintendent of the Year honor and the first female Alaska Commissioner of Education.

The Association of Alaska School Administrators is honored to recognize Dr. Holloway with the 2013 AASA Honorary Member Award in recognition of her illustrious career and her many contributions to Alaska public education.



Dr. Shirley Holloway, 2013 AASA Honorary Member, is presented with an ivory carving by Kathy Ahgeak, North Slope Borough.

Also pictured: Peggy Cowan, Superintendent, North Slope Borough School District



Schools or Society? Which is Failing?

Continued from page 6

As Jonathan Kozol notes in his review of the book, “In her zeal to deconstruct that narrative, Ravitch takes on almost all the well-known private-sector leaders and political officials—among them Arne Duncan, Joel Klein, Bill Gates, Wendy Kopp, and Michelle Rhee who have given their encouragement, or barrels of money, to the privatization drive.”

In response to the national and state rhetoric, schools and

teachers have been thrown into a state of uncertain anxiety and unproductive activity. Ravitch’s book is fearless. It is a call to battle in support of all that is right with public education and public schools.

References:

Reign of Error by Diane Ravitch, published by Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.
“This Is Only a Test” by Jonathan Kozol, *New York Times*, September 26, 2013.



Dr. Robert Thomason-- 2014 Alaska Superintendent of the Year

The Alaska Association of School Administrators (AASA) is honored to announce that Petersburg School District Superintendent, Dr. Robert Thomason, has been selected as Alaska's 2014 Superintendent of the Year.

In nominating Dr. Thomason, colleagues, community members and board members identified Dr. Thomason's many attributes including being supportive, thorough, forward thinking, flexible, confident, extremely knowledgeable and reliable.

AASA will advance Dr. Thomason's candidacy to the 2014 National Superintendent of the Year program. All State Superintendents of the Year will be honored in February at the 2014 AASA National Conference on Education in Nashville, Tennessee.

Life Long Learning

Continued from page 1

I began the National Certification Program with 26 other fairly new superintendents (all had under five years’ superintendent experience) in July, at a training center in Oceanside, California. To my happy surprise, I instantly engaged with leaders from around our country in conversations similar to those that we have right here at home. Sure, we spoke of our humility as leaders yet our fierce resolve when it comes to seeking positive outcomes; we spoke of that 360 degree leadership that characterizes all aspects of our lives, professional, personal, and spiritual; and we spoke of the many new curriculum matters coming up in our common future as well. I was surprised to learn that we—superintendents from California and Texas to Illinois and Rhode Island—are more similar in our public education plight than we are different.

When the superintendent from a Chicago district spoke of his poorest kids struggling to meet his state’s standards due to a language barrier, I thought, *Alaska has that, too*. In North Carolina, districts are consolidating to save funds on expenses, due to increased costs in benefits for teachers. I thought, *Alaska has that, too*. When John Deasy, superintendent of the second largest school district in the nation, the Los Angeles Unified District (750,000 students), personally shared that he struggles with the politics of his school board and spoke of his efforts to do the right things for students, I thought, *Alaska has that, too*.

While the presenters and professors of the courses, from Houston, Texas, to the City of New York, were top-notch in their fields, my takeaway from the first of what will be four training sessions was quite simple—Alaska’s educational leaders are not facing the current struggles in public education alone. While we in the

Interior may be 3,000 miles away from our peers in the Lower 48, the work we do each day for kids is very similar to the work being done by our counterparts across the country.

Superintendents care that all students learn. Superintendents want students to gain the skills and knowledge needed for the technological world we may know so little about. Superintendents desire that our students love to learn and have the best experiences we can offer for a lifetime of happiness. While in our great state we superintendents often talk about how different our positions are in Bush and Urban Alaska, from my experience in the National Certificate Program, I choose our likenesses as much more a source of strength from which we can build the best educational system Alaska can provide for the state’s families and students—no matter where they live.

In summary, lifelong learning is not only warranted, but it is essential in our field. The job of the superintendent is a great one—full of challenges as well as successes. Recently, AASA’s Fall Conference charged our districts’ educational leaders to think of unity as we move into the new school year. That unity has a whole new meaning, as I work with educators from across the country on the same challenges in public education that we are facing at home. Nevertheless, it is a job in which we superintendents together have influence to make the most positive impact on the children of our state.

The National Superintendent Certification Program is a two-year national AASA program offered in partnership with The SUPES Academy. More information can be found at www.aasa.org/superintendent-certification.aspx



ALASBO Board of Directors

Laurie Olson

President
Kenai Peninsula
Borough School District

Jenny Martens

Past President
Lower Yukon School
District

Jim Farrington

President-Elect
Anchorage School
District

Robin Mullins

Secretary
Fairbanks North Star
Borough School District

Lee Ann Andrew

Treasurer (Ex-Officio)
Southwest Region
Schools

Holly Holman

Director, Seat A
Unalaska City School
District

Mark Vink

Director, Seat B
Bering Strait School
District

Martha Morgan

Director, Seat C
Kuspuk School District

Jimmy Love

Director, Seat D
Kenai Peninsula
Borough School District

Heidi Reichl

Director, Seat E
Alaska Department of
Education & Early
Development

Susan Jolin

Director, Seat F
Anchorage School
District

ALASBO Staff

Amy Lujan

Executive Director
Juneau



New Year

by Laurie Olson, ALASBO President; Director of Finance, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

Happy New Year! When I was a student, the new year started for me on the first day of school. Nowadays, I celebrate the new fiscal year on July 1st with my Business Office colleagues. Although most of the work with students happens from August through May, the business of the district keeps us finance types hard at work during the summer months, too. As we process newly hired employees into our district and report our upcoming budget to the state, we're also working with auditors to review the prior year's transactions and put together our financial report. In the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, we create the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (or CAFR, as we lovingly refer to it) to report revenues and expenditures and use as a basis for subsequent budgets.

In Alaska, independent auditors are engaged each year to review financial statements, test for evidence supporting the amounts reported, ensure compliance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and proper use of the State of Alaska Chart of Accounts and reporting requirements, verify use of grant funds in the required manner, examine internal tests of controls, and provide an opinion on the financial dealings of the district.

While our contact with them may be limited to only a few weeks out of the year, the auditors are always in the backs of our minds as we work through the district's business transactions. Thinking about the proper account code to use and making sure we

have authorization to spend certain funds is only the beginning—knowing that something is correct is but the first step; being able to prove it is equally important.

In the same way, student achievement and engagement are goals that require measurement to prove educators are heading in the right direction. Auditors evaluate our financial statement against regulations and calculations in a way more cut and dried than measuring student success, but accountability marks the final measure of both.

The process of creating our budget for the fiscal year that begins every July 1 actually starts the preceding October. We are now beginning to prepare projections of next year's enrollment and staffing needs based on the current year's actual enrollment. Each cycle, we use insights gained throughout the year to modify and refine our estimates in an ongoing effort to narrow the gap between budgeted expenditures and actual spending across all categories.

We continually look for ways to move our predictions closer to reality. Best practices are always the goal, and we see continuous improvement as the path to that goal. We recently gathered cross-functional teams to collaborate on solutions for various district-wide issues, including how to improve our budget review procedures. This kind of collaborative process improvement assists us in examining current methods and identifying ways to streamline in order to support each school's efficiency and effectiveness. We appreciate everyone's input. And wish you all a great new year!



P-Card Update

by Amy Lujan, Executive Director, ALASBO

In June 2013, the Illinois ASBO P-card program distributed over \$2 million in rebates, and \$138,000 of that went to the ten participating Alaska school districts!

Rebate amounts for the top three participants were: Kenai - \$45,067; Matsu - \$34,825 and NW Arctic - \$25,072. Four other districts received rebates of \$4,000 or more. *This is not small change.* Why should your district miss out?

What's a P-Card?

P-card stands for procurement or purchasing 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. This program is designed with school districts in mind, and it gives the program administrator much more control and many more options than a standard credit card program.

How is the Program Set Up?

Illinois ASBO (IASBO) originated this program and has allowed other state affiliates such as ALASBO to become involved. Illinois ASBO (IASBO) provides assistance with setting up the program and with issues that arise.



School Business Official of the Year Nomination

The nomination form for the prestigious School Business Official of the Year award will be available on the ALASBO website, www.alasbo.org, on the opportunities-awards page. **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.

Nominations are accepted from ALASBO members, immediate supervisors and local school boards. A list of past winners is posted on the above-referenced website.

The award recipient is announced at the ALASBO Annual Conference in December. Penair has agreed to sponsor the award for the 15th year! The recipient will receive:

- two roundtrip tickets on PenAir
- \$500 check
- engraved plaque
- well-deserved accolades from ALASBO colleagues and the general public

Please consider supporting the nomination of a deserving colleague for this award.

Contact ALASBO Executive Director, Amy Lujan (alasbo@gci.net, 907-500-9086) if you have any questions!

P-Card Update

Continued from page 8

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 their own. There are NO annual fees!

Rebates come through IASBO annually, in the spring. They're currently 1.1% 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's purchasing volume grows. During last year's cycle, for a district to receive a \$5,000 rebate, it would have had to charge about \$600,000 to the card, an average of just \$50,000/month. This is entirely possible for most Alaskan districts, particularly if they are able to charge some of their utility bills to the p-card.



District administrators are trained in Details Online, a system that enables them to monitor card activity in real time. Since we've continued to grow our ALASBO use group, we're able to support training in Details Online during our annual conference, as well as a helpful Discussion Group session and sharing among our members to maximize the program.

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. Some districts use credit cards to accrue mileage; but isn't cash even more useful than mileage?

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 ALASBO Annual Conference in December and at the ASBO International Conference in October for those interested in starting a p-card program.



ACSA Board of Directors

Dave Herbert
President, ACSA
St. Mary's Schools

John Pothast
Past President, ACSA
President, AAESP
Redoubt Elementary School

Erica Kludt-Painter
Vice President, AAESP
Rea C. Stedman
Elementary School

Todd Poage
President AASA
Alaska Gateway Schools

Robert Thomason
Past President, AASA
Petersburg Schools

Adam Mokolke
President, AASSP
Burchell High School

Rod Morrison
President-elect, AASSP
Gilson Junior High School

Mario Gatto
Alaska State Coordinator,
AASSP
Ben Eielson Jr./Sr. High School

Laurie Olson
President, ALASBO
Kenai Peninsula Borough
School District

Jim Farrington
President-elect, ALASBO
Anchorage School District

ACSA Staff

Bruce Johnson
Executive Director, ACSA/
AASA

Denise Greene-Wilkinson
Executive Director, AASSP

John Pile
Executive Director, AAESP

Amy Lujan
Executive Director, ALASBO

Kelly Tonsmeire
Executive Director, ASDN

Laurie Miller
Office & Membership
Services Manager



Declining State Revenue: Is Alaska Entering a New Chapter?

by Dr. Bruce Johnson, Executive Director, ACSA/AASA

Let me begin by confessing that there have been many times during the past three decades when I've been as guilty as the next person of thinking our state's economic base was deteriorating to the point that we were about to begin a new chapter of limited resources for state programs, including PreK-12 education. Is it possible that Alaska is facing a new chapter with significantly reduced resources?

Over the past several months, evidence is surfacing that Alaska's financial future is growing less optimistic and doing so rapidly. Yes, we have nearly \$48B in our permanent fund and another \$17B in our constitutional budget and statutory budget reserves, yet one need not look further than the actual and projected Department of Revenue unrestricted general fund revenue actual and forecasts from 2012 - 2014 to realize it won't be long before we find ourselves in a difficult predicament:

2012 Revenue: \$9.5B
2013 Revenue: \$7.5B
2014 Revenue: \$6.7B

A nearly \$3B drop in revenue in a three-year time span marks a dramatic decline by anyone's measure and sheds light on why the 28th Legislature and Governor have struggled mightily to incentivize oil production, which has decreased from over one million barrels per day in 2000 to approximately 600,000 per day in 2012. How will the state address its financial needs without additional oil production? For Alaskans, this is the central question of our time. And as hard as it is to think about, we all know the short-term answers—cost-containment and reductions. It is no surprise that the core interim discussions in both the Senate Finance Education Subcommittee and the House Task Force on Sustainable Education include an examination of PreK-12 public education costs and overall effectiveness.

On the Senate side, Senator Mike Dunleavy is heading a committee of five senators—Senators Dunleavy, Kelly, Fairclough, Stevens, and Gardner. This committee has held four days of public comment and committee discussion and has another two-day meeting scheduled for late October. For the most part, discussions to date have centered on overall costs of public education, identifying cost drivers, and examining potential

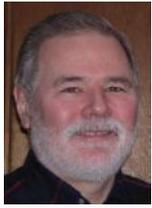
cost containment opportunities. Eleven school districts have already presented before the committee, along with several professional PreK-12 education organizations, including EED, PTA, NEA, AASA, AASB, RurAL Cap and Best Beginnings, to name a few. At the last meeting, the committee also heard from parents home schooling children, the Alaska Military Youth Academy, and parents engaged with their children in Alaska's network of state correspondence schools.

“How will the state address its financial needs without additional oil production?”

It is important to recognize that these senators have been listening intently, asking probing questions and trying to understand PreK-12 education and the overall price tag of \$2B when including expenses related to school construction, debt retirement, and the PERS/TRS unfunded liability. How the Senate Finance Subcommittee and the House Task Force, co-chaired by Representatives Lynn Gattis and Tammy Wilson (currently visiting school districts prior to deliberating), react to what they are discovering remains to be seen. Yet it is clear that these legislators are continually confronted with the reality that it is going to be difficult to sustain the ever-growing education budget for Alaska's PreK-12 programs given current revenue forecasts.

As PreK-12 public school officials, we must remain vigilant in our advocacy for a vibrant and equitable public school education system for all of Alaska. Under this mandate, we must engage legislators proactively, responding professionally to their requests and being active partners in investigations into ways of doing PreK-12 education differently. One recent investigation that all Alaska school districts were asked to support involved completing a detailed survey requesting employee health insurance costs and benefits to assist the Senate's deliberations on the option of a statewide insurance consortium. The survey came at the beginning of the school year with a short turnaround deadline. Yet, we can all be proud that every school district responded and did so in a timely manner. A hearty congratulations to all of our members who were directly involved in the data reporting. Whether these survey data will lead to cost-containment through a state-sponsored health insurance consortium remains to be seen. And remember, senators have promised that if the consortium does not contain or decrease the cost of school district and state employee health insurance, it will not be implemented.

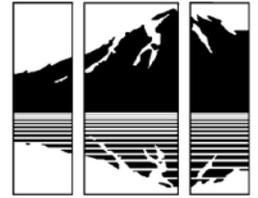
Continued on page **11**



ASDN Offers a Full Slate of Fall Programs

by John Kelly Tonsmeire, Executive Director, ASDN

For more program information please visit www.asdn.org



Webinar Series

Implementing CHAMPS: A Proactive Approach to Classroom Management

with Randy Sprick & Karl Schleich

October 7, 14, 21 & 28, 2013

Effective classroom-based behavior management is vital for academic achievement, high motivation, and instilling social-emotional health in students. CHAMPS is a framework for creating a continuous improvement cycle regarding your classroom climate and student behavior. In this four-part webinar, Randy Sprick and Karl Schleich will present the fundamentals of the CHAMPS approach and the essentials of continuous improvement. For those new to CHAMPS this will be an informative introduction. For those already experienced with CHAMPS, the first two sessions will serve as a quick review and the last two sessions will help you solidify the concept of continuous and collegial improvement.

Simplifying Response to Intervention

with Austin Buffum

October 9, November 18, December 9, 2013 & January 13, 2014

In *Simplifying Response to Intervention*, the authors of *Pyramid Response to Intervention* pick up where they left off—advocating that RTI is not a series of implementation steps to cross off on a list, but a way of thinking about how educators can ensure each child receives the time and support needed to achieve success. They go on to submit that for RTI to be effective, work must be divided between collaborative teacher teams and two schoolwide teams (a leadership team and an intervention team). Together, the entire school assumes responsibility for the learning of every student.



Effective Instruction Using the New English/Language Arts Standards

with Lexie Domaradzki & Dean Richards

October 15, 29, November 13 & 19, 2013

The Alaska State Board of Education adopted new English/Language Arts Standards in June of 2013. In these webinars educators will have the opportunity to learn about the new standards and how they can adjust instruction to implement them. These sessions will examine the structure and major shifts in the standards as well as practical applications for use in the classroom. The four sessions will include an overview, and a focus

on each shift in the ELA. The content will be relevant to all K-12 educators as well as content area teachers.



RTI and the New Standards

with Mark Shinn

October 17, November 14, December 5, 2013 and January 9, 2014

New standards have been adopted in Alaska, and similar standards have been adopted nationwide with the Common Core State Standards. What are the implications for assessment and intervention within a Multi-Tier System of Support/RTI system? Join Mark Shinn for a discussion about aligning the new standards with evidence-based interventions. One webinar will be reserved as a problem-solving session for participants.

Change: Making It Happen in Your School and District

with Michael Fullan

November 21, December 12 & December 16, 2013

Achieving excellence begins with hard work at the ground level. There is no question that the stakes have been raised and that school leaders have more pressure—and more opportunity—to make a bigger difference than ever before. Award-winning author and educational reform expert Michael Fullan takes leadership to the next level by showing how to put change into practice at the local and systemic levels.



Third Annual Alaska RTI Conference

January 25 & 26, 2014

Preconference for Rural Schools on January 24

with Lexie Domaradzki and Shelby Skaanes

New standards have been adopted in Alaska, and similar standards have been adopted nationwide with the Common Core State Standards. What are the implications within a RTI system? How do you align the new standards with evidence-based interventions? Join us for the third annual Alaska RTI conference for a discussion of how to move forward with RTI and the new standards in your classroom, school or district. This year's conference features a number of nationally recognized and Alaskan presenters.

Declining State Revenue: Is Alaska Entering a New Chapter?

Continued from page 10

This employee insurance endeavor will likely prove to be but one of several investigations undertaken to examine PreK-12 costs and explore new means of cost-containment. Additional areas have advanced to the discussion forefront as superintendents and business officials have examined other cost-drivers, including employee salaries and benefits

(particularly health insurance and workers' compensation) and energy-related expenses. These drivers sit atop every district's list—rural and urban. It is likely to be a busy fall, as cost-containment investigations and exploration of novel ways of delivering PreK-12 education continue. So stay tuned—and keep an eye on Alaska's revenue outlook.



BUSINESSES ARE CHAMPIONS FOR ALASKA'S CHILDREN!

The Alaska Association of School Administrators is grateful for the sponsorship and financial support of the businesses that provide goods and services to public schools across Alaska.



2013/2014 Educational Association Events

AAESP/AASSP Annual Conference—Anchorage
October 13–15, 2013

ASBO International Annual Meeting & Expo - Boston, MA
October 25–28, 2013

AASB Annual Conference—Anchorage, AK
November 7–10, 2013

ACSA Annual Face-to-Face Board Meeting—Anchorage, AK
November 11, 2013

ALASBO Annual Conference—Anchorage
December 8–11, 2013

28th Alaska Legislative Session—Juneau, AK
January 21, 2014

Third Annual Alaska RTI Conference—Anchorage, AK
Jan. 25–26, 2014

NASSP National Conference—Dallas, TX
February 6–8, 2014

AASB Leadership/Legislative Fly-in—Juneau, AK
February 8–11, 2014

AASA National Education Conference – Nashville, TN
February 13–15, 2014

AASA Legislative Fly-in—Juneau, AK
March 2–4, 2014

AASB Legislative Fly-in—Juneau, AK
March 22–25, 2014

28th Alaska Legislative Session Ends—Juneau, AK
April 14, 2014

NAESP National Conference—Nashville, TN
July 10–12, 2014