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As Education in Alaska Changes, Who Do You Want Leading the Charge?

by Rod Morrison, AASSP President; Principal, Gilson Middle School

"The principal goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done – men who are creative, inventive, and discoverers." -Jean Piaget

I just returned from Juneau, where I had the opportunity to meet with state legislators and staff and spend time with many of our state's leaders in education. One of the things we know for sure is that the face of education in Alaska is changing—everything from funding to standards, evaluations, and all of the resources we will need to prepare our students to succeed. Over my 12 years as a principal in Alaska, I have seen several key initiatives come and go. The only thing that appears to be constant in our state's educational leadership is change. Having been a part of many hiring committees—for teachers, principals, superintendents, and executive directors of various educational organizations in the state—I have come to appreciate the intricacies of picking a good leader. As a father of two students in public schools, I embrace positive change, but I also sometimes fear that constant changes in education leadership could cause our school systems to move backward.

When choosing leaders to guide our children's future, we must always be careful to select those who hold educating people as their highest priority. Our children don't have time for us to decide to act on their behalf. Urgency should be a catalyst for the change needed in our schools. Our leaders have to assess what is truly urgent versus what can be done over time through partnering and collaboration. Also, not much will be accomplished if stakeholders are not part of the change process. Team-building is an essential skill for any school leader. More than once, I have seen leaders fail because they were unable to build a functional team. Without a broad base of support, any effort for change will be less likely to succeed.

Leaders have to be able both to vision and to effectively share their vision. In education, the process of visioning

itself should be a collaborative endeavor. The model of a heroic leader swooping in and saving a school diminishes any prior efforts made toward improvement. When a vision is developed collaboratively, it is more likely to be comprehensive. Once the vision is set, school leaders need to work to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of progress.

Data, whether student interest surveys, test results, or school climate feedback, have an important role to play in a school's fulfilling its vision. By tracking our progress on these fronts, we encounter occasions when we can celebrate the short-term gains, which are important in education, especially when they lead to long-term victories. Sometimes, celebration is the only positive our teachers and schools experience, particularly with the budget cuts and other challenges we are facing.

Education is a profession that renews itself every year. A new school year brings with it great hope. For schools with a clear long-term vision, the new school year also provides an opportunity to renew everyone's focus on key initiatives. If our schools are truly seeking to improve, our plans and strategies must center on enduring goals.

School leaders rarely stay in one place for very long. Is the change that you are fostering dependent on you? If you left your school today, would efforts to complete the work you started continue on? These are questions you should ask yourself every time you consider a new initiative. If the change you are seeking is dependent solely on your leadership, then it might not be as important as you think. Change for the sake of change undermines effective school reform efforts, whereas developing a culture of ongoing change and innovation leaves your school with a natural succession plan. Isn't that what leadership is all about?

"If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people." -Chinese proverb



ACSA Welcomes New Executive Director

by Lisa Parady, ACSA/AASA Incoming Executive Director

Let me begin my first column with a heartfelt thanks to our outgoing Executive Director, Bruce Johnson. Truly, it is worth recognizing the skills and experience he brought to us – state-wide knowledge, deep education experience, and an ability to bring people together. My plan is to continue to walk in his path while I get my feet on the ground!

For those who don't know me, I come to our association with a broad background. I am a recovering attorney, have a doctorate in Educational Leadership and have been with the North Slope Borough School District these past six years. Before moving to Alaska, I served as Chief of Staff in the Wyoming Department of Education and worked education policy issues while with the Governor's Office. A thumbnail sketch is that I am systems oriented, like to bring people together to work hard and get things

done, and love the interplay between the legislature, Governor, and the reality of where we all live in education – serving our students!

We need to look forward and keep our eyes on the horizon. We each experience tremendous challenges in delivering the fundamental promise of public education – an equal chance for every student to make the most of their lives, to learn how to learn, to engage with the world as it is. While we all recognize the need for continual improvement, we must also bring the naysayers into a broader conversation about what it takes to fulfill this fundamental promise.

I will open my service to you with a simple promise – to listen, work my hardest, and find ways to both tighten our circle (bring us together) while broadening it (reaching out to our allies – and others).

ACSA Welcomes New Executive Director *(continued)*

I look forward to serving you and learning from you. My cell phone is 907.903.1689, and I will be reaching out to you for input with a listening tour and by phone, text and email.

Let me close by thanking the ACSA Board for bringing me aboard. They have given me the unrivalled opportunity to bring our four associations, full of the best and the brightest

educational leaders, together in the service of all of the students across Alaska.

Anytime you are in Juneau please come by the office to get acquainted – and know that I intend to visit as many schools and districts as possible.



Leading the Way with Instructional Tours

by Mary McMahon, AASSP President Elect; Principal, Colony Middle School

How do we adapt to meet the challenges coming our way with the new teacher evaluation and standards? One answer we've found is through our monthly instructional tours. At Colony Middle School, we have been leading the way with instructional tours over the years by hosting them monthly and working with teachers to come up with a process that works best.

As with anything we do in our schools, principal leadership is key. Each year, it is my job to set monthly tours on the calendar and then prepare everything needed to limit any undue stress on teachers. The teacher's job is to show up during her or his session and spend time collaborating and learning as we tour classrooms together.

Why host instructional tours?

- Teachers deserve thoughtful feedback to support them in honing their craft.
- We observe teachers teaching and students learning because that's our #1 priority.
- Great teachers arrive at deliberate and thoughtful decisions as a result of reflection. As Charlotte Danielson reminds us, "Teaching is a thinking person's job; it is not simply a matter of following a script or carrying out other people's instructional designs."
- Observers and teachers being observed benefit in the feedback process.

Over the years, our observational focus has changed to meet our school's instructional goals. This year, we decided that we should take advantage of the time we have before fall of 2015 to best prepare teachers for the transition to the new teacher evaluation. Because MSBSD has adopted Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching, we chose to use her writings to frame our monthly instructional tours. For this year, we are observing for Domain 2: The Classroom Environment. Next year, we will transition to Domain 3: Instruction. These are the two observable domains of



Danielson's framework. By observing within this structure now, our teachers are learning to look for evidence and identify the components needed to be rated as an effective or highly effective teacher in each of the four domains. In some cases, teachers have assigned an "unsatisfactory" or "needs improvement/developing" rating when completing *The Four Domains Self-Assessment*.

What does the school get out of the instructional tours?

At Colony, instructional tours are helping to build a climate of trust and teamwork. When we go into classrooms, we always point out the positive in what we see; each of the observers leaves the teacher with genuine comments, which are collected and handed to the teacher by one of the observers as we leave the classroom. We do this because we've found that teachers appreciate immediate feedback, just like our students do. Authentic feedback is the breakfast of champions! While in classrooms, we record on forms observable evidence pertaining to each of the components we are observing for. We then take these forms back to our meeting location and discuss what we've observed. We spend the last bit of our time together learning from the collaborative discussions we engage in based on one another's observations. This is where the truest form of a professional learning community comes into being. It is so nice to be with one another discussing what we are all so passionate about – teaching and learning.

Our work can be physically, emotionally, and cognitively demanding. We are constantly changing and adapting to the challenges coming our way. Differentiated instruction expert Carol Ann Tomlinson says, "Plan to be better tomorrow than you are today, but don't ever plan to be finished." Our work is challenging, but with the challenges come some of the greatest rewards possible. Our instructional tours provide a solid foundation on which to work together to meet the challenges we face. The conversations generated by the tours remind us how complex and rewarding our profession really is. We continually strive to do better, but know that our work is never finished.



Photo credit: Tahnya Hursh, CMS Teacher

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Think Different

by John Pothast, President AAESP; Principal, Redoubt Elementary

I have a school full of misfits, rebels, and troublemakers. A number of my students are round pegs trying to fit into square holes, and some are not fond of our rules. I also have a school full of students who will change our world—who will be future politicians, scientists, lawyers, doctors, petroleum engineers, construction workers, and educators. No matter their career choices, all of our students carry in them vast untapped potential, and they stand poised to change the direction of our communities, state, nation, and even world. My question, then, is: What are we doing in our schools to encourage, or discourage, those hopes and dreams?

In 1997, Apple ran an ad campaign titled “Think Different,” embracing the vision and talent of “misfits,” “rebels” and “troublemakers”:

Here’s to the crazy ones.

The misfits.

The rebels.

The troublemakers.

The round pegs in the square holes.

The ones who see things differently.

They’re not fond of rules.

And they have no respect for the status quo.

You can praise them, disagree with them, quote them, disbelieve them, glorify them or vilify them.

About the only thing you can’t do is ignore them.

Because they change things.

They invent. They imagine. They heal.

They explore. They create. They inspire.

They push the human race forward.

Maybe they have to be crazy.

How else can you stare at an empty canvas and see a work of art?

Or sit in silence and hear a song that’s never been written?

Or gaze at a red planet and see a laboratory on wheels?

We make tools for these kind of people.

While some see them as the crazy ones, we see genius.

Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.

In my day-to-day busy-ness, it’s unfortunately all too easy to lose focus on what really matters in the principalship: our students! And no matter how long we serve them, whether they are just entering as kindergarteners or transferring into our high school as seniors, we have tremendous power and ability to shape their lives forever. Sometimes, that “power” comes from our direct contact with a student, through conversations in the hallway, interactions in the principal’s office, or attending or involving ourselves in co-curricular activities after school. Other times, our “power” in influencing our students is exerted indirectly, by the work we principals do with our teachers—holding high expectations so that the teaching and learning in each and every one of our classrooms is of high quality. By being engaged on-site, we can ensure that our students’ experiences in our schools encourage them to become confident learners. As we work with our students, we must continually ask ourselves if we are doing enough to empower them to go forth from our schools and be crazy enough to try and change our world for the better.

“Think Different” challenges my professional courage. Education in our country is at an unprecedented crossroads. Accountability, school choice, and innovation are the new norms. I am challenged by the words, inviting me to be a leader who is not afraid to “invent...imagine...create...inspire.” I am challenged to stare at the canvas I call “school” and, rather than see what is, imagine what could be. If we want our students to rise to achieve their full potential, we need to set the example for them to follow. I like to think I’m just crazy enough to be able to change our educational world for the better, and I hope you will join me on that journey!



Proud to be a Principal

by Jennifer Schmitz, AAESP President Elect; Principal, Scenic Park Elementary

This past week, it was my privilege and honor to attend the annual “Principal Fly-in” in Juneau as a representative of both the Anchorage Principals Association (APA) and the Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals (AAESP).

Together with the Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals (AASSP), we gathered a strong team of principals from around the state. In three whirlwind days, we met with Commissioner Hanley, attended legislative committee meetings, and met and conversed with over 30 individual senators and representatives from around the state.

This year, as in recent years, the main message we carried pertained to adequate and sustainable funding for education. Over our days in Juneau, we met with individual senators and representatives in small groups, so I had a chance to spend time with many different colleagues. While we know better than to expect we’ll get everything we asked for, every superintendent, fellow principal, teacher, parent, and student should be proud of the effort we put forward during the Fly-in to advocate for statewide education funding.

As I sat listening to my colleagues, I was repeatedly amazed at the extent to which they understood and were able to communicate about the many complex education-related

issues before the legislature. These professionals are true champions for students. We are principals and we run schools; but the administrators I was with on the Fly-in represented so much more. They compelled our elected officials to listen, to think, and to respond. Many talked about the need for early childhood education, explaining how that small investment early on can save the state later in reduced prison costs. Others raised questions about what could be done to strengthen our foster care system so that each of our students may return home to a stable and caring environment every day. Their strong voices encouraged lawmakers and others to pursue ways to identify and address mental health issues early on and begin treating individuals before something tragic happens.

Emphasis was repeatedly placed on the importance of ensuring all of our students leave high school ready for the job market. We need additional career and technology education programs to make this happen. If properly funded, many districts would be doing more to make these programs accessible to more students. We also shared information about the effort our national organizations are making to secure more Title II funding for administrators’ professional development. Effective leadership is one of the most critical aspects of school success, and we are often left out of districts’ plans.

Proud to be a Principal *(continued)*

by Jennifer Schmitz, AAESP President Elect; Principal, Scenic Park Elementary

Another issue we talked with lawmakers about concerned the fact that we live and work in the only state with an undefined retirement plan for our teachers. This, along with other flat funding issues, is causing us to lose some of our best teachers and discouraging young people from wanting to teach here someday.

Yes! We “lobbied” for adequate and sustainable funding. We shared our stories and told of the difficulties we are having

and will continue to have if we are not adequately funded. Emotions ran high at times, and, while we might not see immediate legislative action based on our conversations, I know people were listening. Every day of the Fly-in, I watched in awe as my colleagues advocated in every possible way for each and every child, teacher, and administrator in our state. By the time I boarded our flight home, I felt prouder than ever to be a principal in Alaska.

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Stay the Course

by Todd Poage, AASA President; Superintendent, Alaska Gateway School District

As the 2014 legislative session begins winding down, a few of the approximately 60 education bills that were introduced may begin moving rapidly. With all but five legislators up for reelection, as well as the Governor, an opportunity is before us that may not present itself for another eight years. This demands that we be vigilant in monitoring the daily activities of the Senate and House as legislation works its way through the committee process, sometimes with limited public notice. As the session approaches adjournment, please recall that only 24-hour notice is required for a bill to be considered, resulting in legislation moving quickly as supporting votes are calculated.

In regard to the 60 education bills presented during this session, the AASA board attempted to target our legislative efforts by identifying the six major bills “most” in play at the time of the AASA Legislative Fly-in. Focusing on these pre-selected bills, like-type districts discussed and prioritized the importance of each. From these discussions, the prevailing priority was the adoption of a multi-year foundation funding plan that would positively affect education—from the largest school districts with thousands of students to the smallest school districts with limited enrollments. The groups discussed the funds needed to adequately support education for the next three years versus the increase required to maintain the status-quo. A Base Student Allocation (BSA) increase of \$250 was determined by the majority as a bare minimum to assist districts in curbing budget deficits and minimize reductions in staff, instructional programs, and co-curricular activities. Overall, AASA legislative fly-in participants generally supported the Governor’s Education Bill (HB278/SB139), Internet Services (HB179), Residential School Stipends (HB291/SB113), and Incentive Grants (SSSB100). Conversely, little or no support was voiced for

Charter School Conversions (HB321/SB185) or a Constitutional Amendment allowing Public Funding for Private & Religious Schools (HJR1 and SJR9).

We applaud the efforts of both the Senate and House to address the funding needs of PreK-12 public education. As of this report, the Senate Finance Committee has added \$100 million to the education budget for FY15 and FY16 distributed through the foundation formula. This represents an increase in education funding of \$54 million as compared to last year, taking into account the \$25 million for energy and \$21 million for school security received in FY14. Since each \$25 million added to education funding equates to a BSA increase of roughly \$100, the foundation formula would receive a one-time increase of just over \$200 for FY15 and FY16. This allocation presents an incredible opportunity, even if not permanently tied to the foundation formula, and is significantly greater than other funds currently targeted for education. We need to support these funds while continuing to calibrate our efforts and expectations for a clean BSA increase.

On Monday, April 7, the House passed a CS for HB278 that provides BSA increases for FY15 @ \$5,865, FY16 @ \$5,923 and FY17 @ \$5,981 as well as \$30 million onetime funding distributed through the formula. AASA extends its appreciation to House members for reconsidering the proposed adjustment to the school size formula multiplier that would have shifted funds, without a comprehensive study, and potentially diminish the overall goal of providing financial parity across all districts. AASA remains committed to education funding based on the true cost of doing business and creating equity for all students.

In closing, a heartfelt “Thank You” to the Champions for Children for sponsoring meetings and other events, such as

Stay the Course *(continued)*



Left to right: Champions for Children- Sheryl Weinberg, SERRC; Jerry Covey, JSC Consulting; Steve Asay & Jason Hoopes, School Improvement Network; Grady Fisher, AML/JIA; Cole Saxton, Saxton Bradley, Inc.; Kevin Smith, AML/JIA

By staying involved, AASA can continue to focus the course of the 28th Legislature towards the needs of public education. Best wishes to each of you for your efforts on behalf of children through the remainder of the school year.



Left to Right: Todd Poage, AASA President; Bruce Johnson, outgoing ACSA/AASA Executive Director; Rob Thomason, ASAA Past President; Dave Herbert, ACSA Past President

the recent AASA Legislative Fly-in, that allowed our membership an opportunity to work together in the interest of all kids in Alaska. On behalf of AASA, we offer our sincere appreciation to our retiring superintendents and executive director for their tireless dedication and service as advocates for a strong and evolving public education system in Alaska. From the numerous remarks provided by fellow colleagues during the AASA Legislative Fly-in, your leadership unquestionably made a real difference.



The Final Lap—28th Legislature

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

As billed, the Second Session of the 28th Legislature has lived up to the projection that PreK-12 education would be a major focus. With less than ten days prior to the scheduled adjournment on April 20, legislators will be enduring long days and intense conversation regarding many issues. We are fortunate that education will be among the major issues being addressed prior to adjournment. I am confident that I share the sentiments of the entire ACSA membership in offering our sincere appreciation for the attention PreK-12 education received this session. The needs of PreK-12 education are real and we remain steadfast in our effort to influence the outcome in a manner that helps meet the needs of all of Alaska's children.

I would submit that now is not the time to keep your head down, so be bold and respectfully lend a hand in solving these complex issues facing the 28th Legislature in the remaining few days of this session.

Several big issues remain on the legislative docket that are critical for PreK-12 education and the children and families represented by decisions being made in the upcoming days. These include:

- **Unfunded PERS/TRS Retirement Liability** – Governor Parnell, along with the Senate and House members, have been earnest in their commitment to address the unfunded liability. The “policy call” related to this complex issue has generated a variety of potential solutions and, despite some differences, the Governor and legislators are maintaining their resolve to advance a solution that is good for Alaska and protects future generations from having to shoulder this burden. Let’s all encourage them to work together to secure the best outcome possible.
- **PreK-12 Funding** – No issue is of greater prominence than the need for an infusion of additional funds to carry out the mission of our 53 school districts. Many districts, due to ever-rising costs and obligations, are making deep cuts in program and the staff that create opportunities for Alaska’s

children attending our schools. Currently the Senate has offered a proposal for funds outside the foundation program that would include \$100 million each of the next two years. These funds represent a net gain of \$54 million when considering that districts currently receive one-time funds—\$25 million for energy related costs and \$21 million for school safety upgrades. The House, has affirmed the \$85.00 addition to the BSA proposed by Governor Parnell and added another \$100.00 to the BSA to cover ever increasing costs. On top of the BSA increase, the House has added \$30 million in one-time funds. No doubt, the two bodies will find middle ground in the coming days and coalesce around a plan to address education funding.

- **Teacher Tenure** – The current proposal would have teachers acquiring tenure after five years of consecutive employment in the same district and signing of their sixth contract. Districts located within an REAA, small borough or a first class city with a population of less than 5,500 would have tenure acquisition reduced by two years.
- **Charter Schools** – Legislators have been active in their support for charter schools and have increased opportunities for charters by creating an appeal route if a local school board denies a charter application. In addition, the current proposal provides charter schools with the first refusal of available school district lease space, all funds generated by special needs students and secondary vocational and technical instruction, and any state aid generated for the construction or major maintenance of a charter school facility. More recently, a one-time grant of \$500 per student during the initial year of operation has been included to support charter schools.
- **Reports and Studies** – The House has proposed an addition to EED’s report to the legislature that includes recommendations to change the method of education

The Final Lap- 28th Legislature *(continued)*

spending by the state and school districts that result in improved efficiencies in the administration of public education in the state. In addition, a Department of Administration written proposal to implement a salary and benefit schedule for school districts no later than January 1, 2016, has also been offered by the House.

Clearly, the issues outlined above are of great importance to all district and school leaders. You are terribly busy, but I would urge you to find the time necessary to connect with legislators. I would submit that now is not the time to keep

your head down, so be bold and respectfully lend a hand in solving these complex issues facing the 28th Legislature in the remaining few days of this session.

And to each of you, a fond farewell as I enter my final lap as an active public school administrator and advocate for PreK-12 education. I have been touched by many outstanding leaders over the past 40+ years and appreciate all the support I have received and the kindred spirits that I have encountered. Best wishes.

Dr. Martin Laster Named AASA 2014 Honorary Member



The Association of Alaska School Administrators (AASA) is honored to recognize Dr. Martin Laster with the 2014 AASA Honorary Member Award in recognition of his long-term service to Alaska public education.

During his notable career, Dr. Laster served with distinction as superintendent in several Alaska school districts, including Mat-Su, North Slope, Craig, and Kuspuk. He also served on

the American Association of School Administrators governing board as one of two Alaska representatives.

In addition to being the recipient of several major educational leadership awards, Dr. Laster was previously honored by AASA as the Alaska Superintendent of the Year in 1996.

Currently, he serves as a University of Alaska Southeast assistant professor responsible for the development of principals.

Presented To:

DR. MARTIN LASTER

**HONORARY MEMBER
ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

*With appreciation from his Alaskan
colleagues for exemplary service as*

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EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP.**

*His contribution to public education in Alaska
will long be remembered.*

*Bestowed this date
March 3, 2014*



**Dr. Pam Lloyd, Senior Director,
GCI School Access**



GCI School Access Donates VTC Equipment to ACSA

ACSA/AASA would like to thank GCI School Access for their generous donation of Video Teleconferencing (VTC) equipment.

GCI SchoolAccess provides broadband access, video conferencing, and state-of-the-art digital tools used for high-quality content to schools and libraries in rural and underserved regions of the United States.

ACSA is deeply appreciative of GCI School Access and its continued support of our membership events as well as our Champions for Children scholarship program.

Thank you!



**Polycom VTC equipment generously
donated to ACSA by GCI School Access**

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District Budgets: Make Every Dollar Count!

by Jim Farrington, Treasurer, Anchorage School District; President, ALASBO

As we move closer to the end of another school year, we find ourselves facing many potential changes in the coming year. One of the biggest factors affecting our future work will be what happens during this legislative session. On March 17-19, I had the opportunity to participate in the ALASBO Legislative Fly-in in Juneau. This was my first time as a participant at the Fly-in, and I have to admit it was an enlightening experience that I am hopeful made a difference. I, along with Amy Lujan (ALASBO Executive Director), Dave Jones (Kenai), Mark Vink (Bering Strait) and David Means (Juneau), set up a full slate of appointments with Senators, Representatives, and staff to discuss issues important to ALASBO members.

The first day we were in Juneau, the ALASBO group met at the Department of Education and Early Development to discuss and formulate our Talking Points, putting requests we'd received from other member districts together with our own respective districts' wants and needs. Over the next two days, we divided up into groups of two or three and visited over 30 different legislative offices to discuss the needs of school districts across the state. When speaking with legislators, first and foremost we wanted to take time to express our gratitude for the things that we have received in prior years: special funding for energy costs, updates in the Pupil Transportation Grant calculation, the addition of the CTE formula adjustment, continuation of the PERS/TRS on-behalf payments, and this past year's allocation of funds for Safety and Security Preparedness.

Next, we discussed our needs going forward. Since the Governor had included the BSA in his omnibus bill, we wanted to reiterate the need for increases. This is one of the biggest unknowns that districts are waiting to have resolved in order to plan and budget for the years ahead. With costs for workers' comp, health care, and wages rising, districts are facing additional pressures to balance their budgets. Increases in the BSA would help immensely to lighten some of these increasing funding demands. Along with the issue of the BSA, we took the opportunity of our visit to express concerns over several other bills the group considered 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 for funding the CIP Major Maintenance List.

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 to Amy, Dave, Mark, and David for walking the floors of the Capitol to convey the needs of our state's school districts. And thank you to all who have provided information and testimony in an effort to make a difference during this important legislative session. If you have never been involved in this process before, I encourage you to take the time to do what you can to make your voice heard. Talking Points from this year's ALASBO Fly-in can be found on the ALASBO website: <http://alasbo.org/news/>.



School District Purchasing Options to Save Time and Money

by Amy Lujan, ALASBO Executive Director

At this time of year, school districts typically face a busy purchasing season for summer projects and as everyone begins to gear up for the new school year. A number of purchasing opportunities are available to help save districts time in the procurement process and to ensure competitive pricing.

State Contracts – Public entities around the state are able to take advantage of contracts negotiated by the State of Alaska. These contracts have been established by the state in accordance with the State Procurement Code. A list of the available contracts and more information can be found at <http://polisubs.alaska.gov>.

Cooperative Purchasing – A number of purchasing cooperatives are available to Alaska's school districts. Cooperatives consolidate the buying power of diverse entities, such as school districts, government agencies, and nonprofits, to provide benefits in pricing, product quality, and contract efficiencies.

As with state contracts, the cooperative has typically completed the competitive bidding process and makes the negotiated contract available to member entities. In most cases, membership is free or very low cost. Participation can be as simple as making a note on a purchase order for a participating vendor, e.g., "Apply XXX Cooperative Member Pricing."

As in all purchasing transactions, it is important to ensure the school district's own purchasing policies and procedures are

followed. Questions about contract compliance may be directed to the state contract manager or cooperative staff.

In addition, it is important to make sure that shipping costs are well-understood in advance of placing an order. This element can be tricky for contracts negotiated with less complex and expensive shipping issues than those encountered in Alaska. A contract might indicate low cost or even free shipping, but it is necessary to ensure that the shipping rate applies to Alaska and not just the continental US.

Purchasing cooperatives interested in working with Alaska's school districts include the following:

- *U.S. Communities* – Free registration; members include over 55,000 government agencies, education institutions and nonprofits – www.uscommunities.org
- *KCDA Purchasing* – Free registration; owned and operated by Washington state public school districts and open to Alaskan and other member districts; volume purchasing managed through centralized warehouse – www.kcda.org



- *TCPN* – Free registration; nationwide cooperative providing contracts used by over 35,000 public entities – www.tcpn.org.

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**ALASKA ARTS EDUCATION CONSORTIUM
ADMINISTRATORS RETREAT
ANCHORAGE APRIL 30-MAY 1, 2014**



This program is provided under a contract with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Alaska Arts Education Consortium is supported, in part, by a grant from the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Integrating 21st Century Skills through the Arts



WHAT TO EXPECT?

This program is provided under a contract with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Alaska Arts Education Consortium is supported, in part, by a grant from the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Register online now at www.akartsed.org

Contact MK MacNaughton with questions ~ aaec@akartsed.org ~ 907-957-2061

- Learn why the arts are important for ALL students
- Focus on working with students with disabilities
- Learn how to integrate the arts with the Common Core and Alaska Standards
- Gain statewide and national arts and special education perspectives
- Assess your school's arts health
- Hear about state programs, resources and training opportunities
- Experience live student arts performances
- Collaborate with art leaders across the state
- Leave the retreat ready to increase the arts in your district!

Keynote Speaker
Mary Liniger
Executive Director of Art Enables has designed and implemented professional development workshops for inclusive arts programs and worked extensively within the D.C. arts community as both the Arts Education and ADA/504 Accessibility Coordinator for the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities.



SEARHC Raven's Way Program Moves to Open Enrollment

Raven's Way, the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium's (SEARHC's) residential teen substance abuse treatment program, has made a few changes recently. The most important is a shift from scheduled enrollment, where students were only able to participate in the program during specific sessions, to "open enrollment", which allows referral agents, school counselors, or parents the flexibility to enroll a child in need of treatment for substance abuse any time throughout the year.

This is just one important change Raven's Way has made to better meet the needs of its students over the past 20 years. The average length of stay within the program has become six to eight weeks, allowing some extra time within the program for those who need more strategies for their success. The additional time spent in the program is yet another way the staff has been able to refine the experience and give each student the optimal opportunity for success.

There are things the program has definitely not changed. It is still a cultural and adventure-based program, and it is still open to all Alaska teens, both Alaska Native and non-Native. The Raven's Way focus remains on developing each young person's physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual strengths, as well as his or her communication and problem-solving

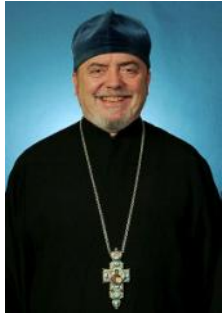
skills. Those skills are the tools necessary to choose a healthy, substance-free lifestyle after graduation from the program.

Additionally, and as always, the program's services are provided by licensed/certified staff, including psychologists and therapists, alcohol/drug counselors (including expedition specialists), and a secondary education teacher. While in the program, students engage in school, and are able to earn up to two credits, focusing on Alaska History and Health credits. Raven's Way also provides medical and psychiatric support through Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital.



The program currently has availability and is accepting students. Raven's Way takes referrals from parents, community service providers, health councils, probation officers, schools, and others. If you'd like to refer a teen age 13 – 18 from anywhere in the state of Alaska, or to get more information, please contact Jeremiah Craig, jcraig@searhc.org, (907) 966-8716 or visit Raven's Way on the SEARHC website under Behavioral Health Services, <http://www.searhc.org/services/behavioral-health/yeil-jeeyax-ravens-way>.

Alaska Staff Development Network Offers Alaska Studies and Multicultural Classes This Summer



Summer Classes with Father Oleksa

➤ **Communicating Across Cultures**

Tuition and technology fees (Tier 1/Tier 2) \$420 / \$445
EDUC 59207 • 3 credits • Alaska Pacific University, Materials: \$50

What's a culture? What's your culture? Do you have a culture? Everyone does. The best definition of culture is "the way you see the world." But you can't SEE the way you see the world. Your own culture is always invisible to you. We can look at other people's cultures, but we can't articulate our own very well. Rev. Dr. Michael Oleksa's presentations are devoted to a discussion of cultures and how they affect us as educators. This course is the product of many years of experience in rural communities as well as years of research. It is especially designed to give the participant grounding in the cultural differences that often create miscommunication among Alaskans.

➤ **Alaska Alive! with Father Oleksa**

Tuition and technology fees (Tier 1/Tier 2) \$420 / \$445
EDUC 59501 • 3 credits • Alaska Pacific University, Materials: \$20

In *Alaska Alive!* you will learn about Alaska's history and the history of education in the state from one of Alaska's most dynamic presenters. Explore the culture of the Native peoples of Alaska and the connections between the environment and emigrations.

Both *Communicating Across Cultures* and *Alaska Alive!* will be offered in Anchorage in June. Both classes will be offered again in August.

- The June sessions will be offered June 2-6.
- The August sessions will take place August 4-8.

Summer sessions are blended learning courses that begin with two-and-a-half days of instruction from Father Michael at the BP Energy Center and are completed online with instructor Sharon Bandle. *Alaska Alive!* Includes a guided field trip to the Anchorage Museum of History and Art. Participants in *Communicating Across Cultures* spend a half-day touring the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

Self-Paced Online Alaska Studies and Multicultural Classes – Start Anytime!

➤ **Alaska Alive! Online**

APU EDUC 59500, 3 Credits / Graded A-F, **Online - Self-paced, start anytime**
Tuition (Tier 1 /Tier 2 Member Districts): \$410 / \$435, Materials: \$110

Alaska Alive! is an online graduate course specifically designed for educators. *Alaska Alive!* is a survey course, designed to give you an overview of the incredible history of Alaska. The themes of Education, Land and People provide a simple framework for learning activities. This course provides many materials and resources for Alaskan exploration and discovery, on foot, online and in your community. This course has been developed to meet the intent of the legislature in terms of content so that it fulfills the Alaska History course requirement for teacher certification. Beyond certification, however, the course offers an abundance of updated information, resources and application of ideas to standards based instruction.

Instructor: Sharon Bandle

➤ **Creating Culturally Responsive Schools**

APU EDUC 59600, 3 Credits / Graded A-F, **Online - Self-paced, start anytime**
Tuition (Tier 1 /Tier 2 Member Districts): \$410 / \$435, Materials: \$105

Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools were developed by Alaska Native educators throughout the state. This important work examines how educators, curriculum, schools, and communities must work together to address the unique learning needs of Alaska's diverse students. A holistic approach to learning and quality education that honors Alaska's past, present and future is critical for both rural and urban students. The goal of this online course is to introduce you to the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools which guide you through a process of introspection and investigation of key questions: How effectively do I teach my students? How might I improve my classroom or school to increase student engagement?

Instructors: Doug Penn and Laurie Van Huis

These courses meet Alaska Department of Education and Early Development requirements for teacher certification and re-certification and have been approved in the Anchorage School District's MLP system.

**Alaska Staff Development Network: 907-364-3809 or e-mail asdn@alaskaacsa.org
Register online at: asdn.org**

**Alaska Council of
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NSBA 74th Annual Conference – New Orleans, LA
April 5-7, 2014

ASDN Annual Spring Leadership Conf. & Membership Meeting – Anchorage, AK
April 8-11, 2014

ATP Job Fair – Anchorage, AK
April 11-12, 2014

28th Alaska Legislative Session Ends
April 20, 2014

ACSA Quarterly Board Meeting –Teleconference
May 22, 2014

State School Board Meeting – Fairbanks, AK
June 5-6, 2014

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

ALASBO Summer Leadership – Juneau, AK
July 25-27, 2014

AASA/EED Summer Meeting – Juneau, AK
July 27-28, 2014

AASA Fall Conference – Fairbanks, AK
October 2-4, 2014

AAESP/AASSP Principals' Conference – Anchorage, AK
October 19-21, 2014

ALASBO Conference – Anchorage, AK
December 7-10, 2014

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