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## Sharing Your Story

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

Many years ago, in Mr. Sanford's seventh grade math class, another student made an inappropriate comment. Before I realized what I was doing, I chimed in and made a comment of my own, and we both landed in the principal's office. I was your typical middle school (MS) student who dreaded school and felt uncomfortable about everything—my clothes, my height, pimples, bad haircut, family situation, lack of athletic ability, you name it. I often felt like everyone was staring at me. Just about everything seemed terrible in my MS years. Because my whole goal was to go unnoticed, a call home from a teacher or principal made everything worse. I'm not certain if the call home ever happened that day, but, after that, I made sure not to behave in a way that might draw any attention to myself.

Many years later, hiding out in the back row of an early morning history class in community college, I encountered an instructor who truly loves his job and who would inspire me to become a teacher. Mr. James Newbill was my double shot of coffee in the morning. He truly had a gift for communicating with his students; through his love of teaching, he made history come to life. He not only was able to keep me engaged in my education, but he took the time to get to know me as a person, inspiring me to move outside of my comfort zone. Each day, he made some sort of connection with his students. I clearly remember one conversation we shared one day after class in which he encouraged me to become a teacher, telling me that I possessed natural leadership abilities.

I wonder how many other students have been inspired by Mr. James Newbill during their school years. I'm sure that all of us involved in education might have a similar story about a parent, friend, or former teacher. Make sure that you take time to reflect and share your inspiring stories with your students, colleagues, or others who might be encouraged. It might lead to a connection with a student whom you have not been able to motivate or reach.

*"Kids know when you care. They also know when you don't. Kids aren't stupid."*  
- Jim Burgett

As educators, we face innumerable challenges each and every day: school budgets, enrollments, student achievement, new state testing, ASPI ratings, teacher evaluations, collaboration, climate, technology, instructional leadership, and balancing

home life with school. Where is the best place to begin? I asked several of my students to give me their opinions about what they saw as the most important role of the school teacher or principal. They responded, "Knowing your students and caring about them."

Most of us can remember when we made the commitment to be an educator, fully understanding we would not become rich or famous in this profession. While the specific reasons for becoming an educator vary with each individual, I am positive we all did it to assist students along the road to success. Our roles as school administrators have been compared to that of being an emergency room doctor—making many decisions "on the fly" that will have an impact on our students and schools, both in the short and long terms. Many times, we make judgment calls that are unpopular with students, staff, school boards, or parents. We are asked to support district and state policies and



standards and other mandates we might not always agree with.

So, how do we perform all of these "duties" on a daily basis and still keep "caring about students" our number one goal? Wouldn't it be great if each student in our schools knew that an adult cared enough to at least know her or

his name? We meet students in the hallways, shake their hands, and welcome them to our school every day, not just on the first day of school. We acknowledge students by their names and make a positive effort to learn the names we don't know. Visit each classroom and get to know every student by name. Even if your position resides in the district office, take the opportunity to visit each of your schools and get to know the students. It matters to them. Make a concerted effort to positively recognize every student individually in some way, and then check them off the list so that no student falls through the cracks. School budgets, federal mandates, enrollment, and all of those other details of our jobs become that much easier to overcome when we get back to the basics of caring about kids and making a difference in their lives. Showing patience and kindness, building confidence, maintaining high expectations, and putting students first can work wonders when establishing a successful environment for learning.

Considering the terrifying challenges I faced as a middle school student, some of you might ask why I have chosen to work the past 22 years with MS students—as a coach and teacher and now as a principal.

**Continued on next page**

## Sharing Your Story *(continued)*

For me, it all began with the positive influence of my former instructor, Mr. James Newbill. He cared, loved his job, and had the incredible ability to motivate and inspire me to help students achieve, especially in those difficult MS years.

I challenge all of you to share your inspiring stories with others, and especially those around you who matter the most. I have made a commitment to make MS an enjoyable learning opportunity for all students.

*"If you don't love kids, love your job, and love the field of education, quit. Liking isn't enough when it comes to children's lives." – Jim Burgett*



*Photos courtesy of Gilson Middle School*



## JPS: The Foundation of Our Legislative Work

by Dr. Lisa Skiles Parady, ACSA Executive Director

The Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA) is a professional organization committed to providing leadership and a collective professional voice in setting the educational agenda for Alaska. We are the umbrella of Alaska's four premier educational leadership organizations: elementary and secondary principals, superintendents, and school business officials. ACSA's unifying purpose is to support educational leaders through professional forums, be a voice that champions possibilities for all students, and provide purposeful advocacy for public education. ACSA is also proud to administer the Alaska Staff Development Network (ASDN), Alaska's premier long-standing and highly regarded staff development resource.

Joint Position Statements (JPS) serve as our collective vehicle for our advocacy efforts. Under the leadership of AAESP President-Elect Jennifer Schmitz, the JPS Committee (with representatives from all ACSA affiliates) has been collaborating for the last three months to revise and refine the statements. The JPS Committee completed their work by September 24<sup>th</sup> and then sent a draft to each affiliate for review. Final comments were submitted by Tuesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>. The JPS went before the Alaska Superintendents Association (ASA) on October 4<sup>th</sup>, and were voted on and approved. They will now go before

each affiliate for review and adoption as follows: AAESP and AASSP on October 19-21 and ALASBO on December 7-10. A brochure with the final JPS will then be published and made available for ACSA members to use when engaging with policy makers.

As Alaska's election cycle heads to the finish line, we at ACSA want to step back and reflect on where our schools are and the challenges we face in coming years. To start, we have much to be thankful for – our schools are generally well-maintained and safe, our teachers and staffs are dedicated to students, and our progress in improving student achievement and readying students for the global economy is measurable. As we near Election Day and the campaign rhetoric continues to overheat, let's not get wound up in it but, rather, step back and focus on real next steps we can take to give our students what they need.

Now is the time to share our stories of what **is** working. The footprint of possible legislation is best developed before the legislature actually begins, by making contact with your representatives before they head to Juneau.

We urge you, as educators, to advocate our collective Joint Positions Statements, consider candidates carefully, and make a decision based on where those candidates stand in support of the best public education possible.



## ASDN Upcoming Events

by Kelly Tonsmeire, Director ASDN

Join us for the fourth annual Alaska RTI Conference, Advancing Implementation: A Deeper Dive Into RTI, January 24-25 at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage. Explore how to scale up your implementation of RTI. How do you move beyond the basics to improve core instruction, provide effective supplemental interventions, and ensure intensive academic and behavioral interventions when needed?



Nationally-recognized invited presenters include: Anita Archer, Douglas Fisher, Austin Buffum, Catlin Tucker, Lexie Domaradzki, Gary Whiteley, Sharon Azar, Tricia McKale Skyles, Howard Muscott, and Margaret Heritage.

The conference will take place on Saturday and Sunday. Full day strands will be offered on Saturday. A wide variety of special half-day topical sessions will be offered on Sunday so that participants have a chance to explore one or two interest areas in depth. Lunch is provided on site both days so that you have opportunities to meet and network with your colleagues.

**Target Audience:** site administrators and central office administrators, teachers and early childhood educators, special education teachers and paraprofessionals, school psychologists and counselors.

Our fourth annual RTI Preconference on January 23, will focus on implementing RTI in small schools and rural districts.

**Continued on next page**

## ASDN (continued)

This Fall, ASDN will sponsor sixteen webinars with expert authors and presenters from 3:45-5:45 pm AKST:

- Enhancing RTI with Dr. Doug Fisher, October 27, November 17 and December 8
- Engagement Strategies to Enhance Student Achievement with Eric Jensen, November 5, 6, 12 and 13
- Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences: A Trauma-Informed Approach for Schools with Dr. Linda Chamberlain, December 4, 11 and January 15
- The Marzano Educator Evaluation Model: A Comprehensive Aligned System with Gerry Briscoe, SERRC and Marilyn Davidson and Kodiak team, October 9, 16, 23, 30, November 10 and December 1

Visit our website [asdn.org](http://asdn.org) for complete details.



### Making a Difference, Principal Leadership Matters

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

This isn't just a job, it's a calling. We have the power to make a difference every single day.

As the new school year begins, I find myself asking the question, "How do I inspire the teachers who I work with to realize they are the 'great gift' and have the power each day to make a positive difference in the lives of young people?"

After 17 years in this honorable profession, here are the top 10 things that have come to matter most to me:

1. We treat students with respect at all times.
2. We model respect to students by treating one another with respect at all times. We work with young people; therefore, we can't afford to have a bad day.
3. We work as a team; everyone pitches in.
4. We give our very best every day, no matter what.
5. We keep success within reach for all students at all times.
6. We are here each day to make GOOD THINGS happen for young people. We have the power to change lives every single day. Let's use that power.
7. When we don't know what to do, we ask for support, and we are supported in taking risks to serve the hard-to-reach kids.
8. We are positive and solution-centered.
9. We celebrate one another, point positive on our colleagues and school.
10. We have fun!

As a school leader, I know how important it is that I set the tone on day one and carry the torch all year long. So I share this list with the adults I work with on the morning of our first day together. I also share

my commitment statement for the school year. "I will give my very best to this school and the people in it. I will be the positive change I wish to see. I will listen. I will smile. I will support. I will serve. I will look for the good in others. I will spend my time on solutions. I will lead with purpose and passion. I will make someone's list. I will make good things happen for other people." I then ask each teacher (every adult in our school) to write a commitment statement. This is when we begin our

journey as a team, together listening to one another's commitment statements. We weave our rich and complex tapestry by sharing a common theme of giving our best to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

I've come to the realization that if we slow down and are truly present and listening we can capture the small moments that may have been missed if we had been too busy to pay attention. It's in the small daily interactions with others that we can make the biggest difference. Some days are easier to keep the torch lit, but every day is a new day and a chance to really make a difference. So each morning I put on a smile and think about how grateful I am to be a school leader, knowing the power we have to change lives and make our school, community, and world a better place for everyone!

As I was writing this piece and sharing my Top 10 list with school leaders throughout the state, I decided to check and see how my list measures up to the qualities of great leaders, so I did a little research and found a *Forbes* article on the "Top 10 Qualities That Make A Great Leader," wherein Tanya Prive lists the following: Honesty, Ability to Delegate, Communication, Sense of Humor, Confidence, Commitment, Positive Attitude, Creativity, Intuition, and Ability to Inspire. In reflecting on these qualities, I realize I definitely strive to possess them, as well as influence those in leadership positions

to strive for them, too—knowing that we (humans and organizations) perform at our highest levels under great leadership.

I am committed to being the best principal I can be, while supporting a great principal in every school for each student in Alaska. In an effort to share this commitment, I will need to do

something more than talk about it—so, I will be facilitating a course for principals this year based on Todd Whitaker's *What Great Principals Do Differently: 18 Things That Matter Most*. If you are interested in learning more about how you can take this course or facilitate one in your area, contact me, and I'll support you in any way that I can.

Principal leadership matters. We were born to make a difference!

*Photo courtesy of Colony Middle School*



## Alaska Principal Named One of Six Finalists for 2015 National Principal of the Year



Adam Mokolke of Burchell High School in Wasilla, AK is one of six exceptional school leaders selected as a finalist for 2015 NASSP National Principal of the Year.

Empowered with a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant, Mokolke has led the alternative Burchell High School to raise student achievement, reduce suspensions, and recover dropouts. A new blended learning model individualizes instruction and provides flexibility for at-risk youth, freeing students from traditional time-bound constraints of school. As a result, enrollment has nearly doubled in one year for a population that might have otherwise given up on their education. Mokolke holds a principal certification, superintendent certification and a master's in educational leadership, all from the University of Alaska at Anchorage.

"NASSP is delighted to recognize so accomplished a principal as Adam Mokolke, who has dedicated such extraordinary effort to advance student learning," said NASSP Executive Director JoAnn Bartoletti. "Schools cannot succeed without great leaders committed to the success of each student, and Adam clearly models the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that constitute great leadership."

The 2015 national winner will be announced during National Principals Month in October.

### 2014 Alaska Principals' Conference

October 19-21, 2014



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*Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals  
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## Great Things Surround Us

by John Pothast, President AAESP; Principal, Redoubt Elementary

In 2007, writer Gene Weingarten conducted an experiment to gauge our ability, or inability, to recognize the beauty that surrounds us amidst our hectic lives. In his April, 2007, *Washington Post* article titled “Pearls before Breakfast,” Weingarten writes that he developed the idea “as an experiment in context, perception and priorities—as well as an unblinking assessment of public taste: In a banal setting, at an inconvenient time, would beauty transcend?”

A number of emails have circulated about this story over the years. The following paragraphs, found on Snopes.com, summarize the event well:

A man sat at a metro station in Washington DC and started to play the violin; it was a cold January morning. He played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes. During that time, since it was rush hour, it was calculated that thousands of people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

Three minutes went by and a middle aged man noticed there was musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds and then hurried up to meet his schedule. A minute later, the violinist received his first dollar tip: a woman threw the money in the till and without stopping continued to walk. A few minutes later, someone leaned against the wall to listen to him, but the man looked at his watch and started to walk again. Clearly he was late for work.

The one who paid the most attention was a 3 year old boy. His mother tagged him along, hurried but the kid stopped to look at the violinist. Finally the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk turning his head all the time. This action was repeated by several other children. All the parents, without exception, forced them to move on.

In the 45 minutes the musician played, only 6 people stopped and stayed for a while. About 20 gave him money but continued to walk their normal pace. He collected \$32. When he finished playing and silence took over, no one noticed it. No one applauded, nor was there any recognition.

No one knew this but the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the best musicians in the world. He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written with a violin worth 3.5 million dollars.

Two days before his playing in the subway, Joshua Bell sold out at a theater in Boston and the seats average \$100.

This is a real story. Joshua Bell playing incognito in the metro station was organized by the Washington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and priorities of people. The outlines were: in a commonplace environment at an inappropriate hour: Do we perceive beauty? Do we stop to appreciate it? Do we recognize the talent in an unexpected context?<sup>1</sup>

Like the thousands of commuters that morning, how many times in our lives have we been so busy with what we were doing that we failed to stop and appreciate the music, or beauty, or talent that surrounds us? As we bustle through our hallways and meetings every day, how many times have we passed by great teaching or great student work without recognizing it for the beauty it is? Like the beautiful music playing in the subway that morning, great things are out there every day in our schools: outstanding teaching; hard-working students; successful sports and activities. They surround us, but our busy schedules tug us away all too often.

My challenge to us all is to find the time and make the time! In the midst of our busy schedules and seemingly endless meetings, take the time to seek out greatness. Take the time to go into your superstar teachers' classrooms and simply enjoy the “music”! Attend the chess club meeting, Battle of the Books practice, or the robotics club—some activity you’ve not attended before—and watch the students’ joy and excitement at being engaged in something they love and choose to be a part of. Make it a practice to get out and witness all of the great things happening in our schools—all of the time. Because greatness surrounds us every day—we just need to make sure we’re looking for it!

<sup>1</sup>Read more at <http://www.snopes.com/music/artists/bell.asp#VkEMU61XFtJRebZp.99>



## At the Forefront: student mental health

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

Over the past few months, I have had the privilege of working on the ACSA Joint Position Statements Committee. If you have never been a part of this process, I encourage you to get involved. It was more than empowering to spend time with educational professionals from the different ACSA affiliates as we came together to identify hot topics worthy of our attention and support during

the upcoming year. There are many issues, like adequate funding and early childhood education, that we have supported and will continue to fight for. We also discussed statements to support both rural and urban schools, as we remain united and committed as an organization to addressing the needs of all of Alaska’s students.

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## Student Mental Health *(continued)*

In the next couple of months, we will be presenting a draft of the Joint Position Statements to each of our affiliate groups. This year, you will see a new statement in the area of mental health. Following the tragic events in Sandy Hook, Connecticut, the topic of mentally ill young people moved to the forefront of educators' discussions in many places across our country. Unfortunately, Alaska is no stranger to the effects of mental illness on our children, families, and schools. We have all read reports about our state's crisis-level statistics on suicide, high school drop-out rates, sexual assault, alcoholism, and more. We were the victims of a school shooting tragedy in 1997, and, as educators around Alaska know well, we, perhaps more than other states, have a problem.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), four million children and adolescents in the U.S. suffer from some kind of serious mental disorder that impairs their success at home, in school, and in their peer relationships. In any given year, only 20 percent of these children are identified and receive treatment. These numbers do not include our students who suffer mentally due to childhood trauma. The consequences of these children remaining untreated include but are not limited to suicide, failure in school, criminal justice involvement, and higher health care

utilization.<sup>1</sup>

NAMI, along with other mental health and educational organizations, is working to address this problem, as efforts to get School-Based Mental Health Programs (SBMH) put in place across our country continue. These programs, which seek to offer a wide range of comprehensive mental health support services at the school level, are showing success by providing services that are easily accessible and sensitive to students' families and cultures and that allow students to stay in school more and teachers to spend more time teaching.

While there are many times that, as an Alaskan educator, I feel our state is on the forefront, leading the way with educational ideas and programs, I realize we are behind when it comes to offering our teachers training and our students help in the area of mental health. Rather than leading in this area, in recent years we have had to watch as budget cuts have resulted in positions like counselors and psychologists disappearing from our schools.

It is time for our elected officials to put energy and funding into school-based mental health initiatives. I hope you will join me in encouraging them to do so.

<sup>1</sup> [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

### AAESP National Distinguished Principal of the Year



The Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals is proud to announce our National Distinguished Principal for 2014. David Kingsland is the principal of William H. Seward Elementary School in Seward, Alaska. The 2014 NDP Celebration marks the 31st year that the National Association of Elementary School Principals has presented this prestigious award.

Principal Kingsland was nominated and selected by his fellow principals through a statewide search process conducted by the Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals.

Kingsland has previously held the position of Assistant Principal in Shishmaref. He was a teacher at Davis-Ramoth School in Selawik as well as at Head Start in Fairbanks and Circle School in Circle, Alaska. He has served as principal at Seward Elementary for fourteen years.

Kingsland will travel to Washington DC in October for two days of activities planned to honor and bring well-deserved recognition to the elementary educators selected by their respective states.

AAESP believes that David Kingsland is worthy of the National Distinguished Principal's award and appreciates his commitment to Alaska's children.

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## Identifying Savings from Outdated Laws and Regulations: Transformation of Special Education Related Services

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

**W**elcome back! As a new school year begins in Alaska and we celebrate many accomplishments with an enthusiastic and proactive attitude as well as look forward to developing exciting new initiatives, let's remember to continue to share with our communities the great things kids are accomplishing in public school classrooms every day and keep working to strengthen important relationships with stakeholders. As a group of superintendents whose districts span the entire state, who is in a better position to herald Alaska's educational achievements? If we don't promote the successes of our districts, who will?

While principals promote school accomplishments by "Telling Our Story," Alaska Society for Technology in Education (ASTE) advances technology integration through "Game On! Games-Based Learning," Alaska Association of School Boards (AASB) spreads the word through "Stand and Speak and Let Your Message Soar," Alaska's Learning Network (AKLN) strives to "improve student achievement through online learning," South East Regional Resource Center (SERRC) highlights "quality educational services throughout Alaska," Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children (CEAAC) targets "at-risk students and struggling schools," Alaska School Activity Association (ASAA) advocates for "participation in co-curricular activities," Alaska Superintendents Association (ASA) expands partnerships through "Unifying Success" and explores Career and College Readiness, and teachers work to elevate student achievement in the classroom, all superintendents have the capability to enhance these endeavors by continuing to amplify our state's educational successes at the districtwide and statewide levels.

At the ASA 2013 Fall Conference, Senator Dunleavy spoke to our organization about identifying outdated laws and regulations that we feel are in need of changing. Two outdated Alaska Administrative Code (AAC) sections of concern to the Alaska Gateway School District are 4 AAC 52.250, section (d), concerning Special Education Aides, and 4 AAC 52.252, section (b), relating to Program Supervision. Both of these AAC sections require special education "related service" providers, such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and psychologists, to supervise teacher aides or teachers "on-site." This supervision must occur, at the very least, once every three months—and only at that longer interval if agreed to in the Individual Education Plan (IEP). Otherwise, the above-cited AAC sections require monthly "on-site" supervision through a certified service provider. Discussions are currently underway regarding how best to define the term "on-site," since these codes do not distinguish between a provider being physically present and delivering the services via a real-time synchronous

(provider/patient interactive) presence. The following paragraphs briefly discuss telepractice and potential cost saving from incorporating these services into our programs and also offers a real-life illustration of how special education telepractice for speech-language services can work in our state.

### Telepractice generally

Telepractice is currently recognized as a suitable mode for providing standard speech-language therapy services. As the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) states, "Research and reports to date confirm that appropriately delivered telepractice services are comparable to those delivered face to face. That is, the services provided must be equivalent to the quality of services delivered face to face." The medical field commonly utilizes telepractice for diagnosis and treatment of illness and injury and supervision of care. Colleges, schools, DEED, AKLN, SESA, ASTE, ASDN, and other Alaska organizations utilize telepractice, which includes videoconferencing technologies, to deliver instruction, in-services and other trainings.

### Cost savings

Delivery of speech-language services by a licensed Alaskan therapist via telepractice promises numerous benefits, especially to a tech-savvy generation. With the integration of telepractice for speech-language services, variables such as travel, weather, and safety are no longer potential obstacles. Telepractice also enhances the pool and quality of licensed candidates available to deliver speech-language services, since only a limited number of certified therapists are willing to travel to some of the remote areas of Alaska. By utilizing telepractice to deliver services through an Alaskan licensed speech-language therapist, districts stand to save thousands of dollars each year on expenses such as airfare, car rental, gas, hotel, per diem, travel days, in-district travel time, office days, and weather days.

### Our district's experience

During the 2011-2012 school year, the Special Education Coordinator and I met on several occasions to discuss related service providers in light of budget constraints and instructional time needed with our students. From these conversations, the topic of telepractice surfaced and evolved into a research project. Our investigation indicated this could be a viable means to provide speech-language therapy. The District then contracted with an Alaskan licensed related service provider for synchronous (client/patient interactive) telepractice speech-language therapy for the 2012-2013 school year. Including the one-time purchase of computers with oversized screens and high quality microphones for each school, we saved 55% compared to the previous year. As travel costs continue to increase, this savings will exponentially increase as well.

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## Identifying Savings from Outdated Laws and Regulations *(continued)*

Students in our district now receive speech-language services delivered through telepractice every week by an Alaskan qualified pathologist. This amounts to an increase in student contact time with a certified therapist of almost 90%. Previously, these services were delivered once a quarter by a certified speech pathologist physically on-site. Another advantage is that special education aides now have the opportunity to work directly with and be trained by a certified speech-language pathologist once a week instead of once a quarter. Parents are able to log into their child's session to monitor and/or learn therapeutic techniques. Sessions can be provided while families are traveling and during summer vacations wherever an Internet connection is available. This program has been so successful that the District now provides certified speech-language services once or twice a week to meet each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) requirements and once a week as a Response To Intervention (RTI) strategy. All feedback from parents, students, and staff has been positive.

Assuming the quality of the services being provided are equal, is telepractice better than having a certified speech-language pathologist on-site every week to provide these services? Of course not. However, for our district, utilizing telepractice to provide related services by a licensed speech-language pathologist every week is much more effective than having the provider physically on-site only once a quarter.

The two administrative code sections referenced above, which were written at a time when telepractice was not

commonly in use, are now outdated. The sections inhibit quality care and cost savings opportunities that technology has made possible in today's world. Now that synchronous videoconferencing allows for speech-language therapists to effectively provide therapeutic services, it makes little sense for the regulations to ignore a real-time interactive visual interface that is now available and already providing services to students while deeming remote services inadequate for the task of providing aides with proper instruction and supervision.

Synchronous telepractice enables the aide and speech language pathologist to see and hear each other in real time, allowing for a verbal conversation and visual contact that not only enables the speech pathologist to model for the aide but also allows the pathologist to observe and evaluate the aide's performance and techniques.

As the State promotes the evolution of technology, such as the new web-based and high stakes student-testing endeavor, E-learning modules, Digital Teaching Initiative, Teaching Academies, STEM Pilot Projects, and increasing school bandwidth, these two administrative codes should be updated to reflect today's educational needs. As districts charged with providing educational services within a designated budget, our paramount goal is to enhance instructional opportunities through the most efficient and effective means as possible. Providing speech-language services through telepractice is definitely achieving this goal in our district.

## Dr. David Herbert Named Alaska's 2015 Superintendent of the Year



The Alaska Superintendents Association (ASA) is honored to announce that St. Mary's School District Superintendent, Dr. David Herbert, has been selected by his peers as Alaska's 2015 Superintendent of the Year. The Superintendent of the Year program, now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year, pays tribute to a school system's top leader who exemplifies effectiveness, knowledge, leadership,

ethics, and commitment.

Dr. Herbert became the superintendent for the St. Mary's School District on July 1, 2005, and has successfully served for nine years as the School District superintendent, making him one of the longest continually serving superintendents in the State of Alaska.

Dr. Herbert has been an energetic, professional, and fully involved member of ASA. He has been very active at the state policy level and in legislative/policy issues. During this time he has been an Executive Board member of ASA, President of ASA, an Executive Board

member of ACSA, President of ACSA, a member of the Mt. Edgecumbe Board as a representative for ASA, a member of the Superintendent of the Year Selection Committee for ASA, facilitator of the ASA Executive Director Selection Committee, and served as a member of the AASB/ASA Legislative Initiative Forum.

A colleague commended his statewide leadership expertise by sharing, "While president of ASA and continuing to the most recent legislative session, Dave Herbert was a consistent and positive voice for the needs of education in Alaska. His testimony is always accurate and thoughtful. He is solely responsible for reinvigorating the 'superintendent voice' at the legislative level during his presidential tenure." Another nominator commented, "Dave is a respected, reasoned, and strong voice within the organization. He consistently provides the motivation, energy, focus, and vision for development of ASA positions on issues that affect education in Alaska."

ASA will advance Dr. Herbert's candidacy to the 2015 National Superintendent of the Year program. All State Superintendents of the Year will be honored in February at the 2015 AASA National Conference on Education in San Diego, California.





## Taking CTE to a New Level

by Dr. Lisa Skiles Parady, ASA Executive Director

The Alaska Superintendents Association (ASA) branch of our ACSA family just wrapped up its annual conference in Fairbanks. Close to 90 attendees heard presentations focused on the interface between education and career readiness in support of our students being prepared for the workforce. Presentations from and dialogue with United States Senators Murkowski and Begich, Governor Parnell, Commissioners Hanley, Bell, and Blumer, state Senators Coghill, Kelly, Bishop, and many others made for a full two days.

Governor Parnell spoke to new jobs that have been created or are on the horizon, associated workforce needs, and how to prepare our students for the workforce. At the meeting, the Governor introduced his Alaska's Career-Ready Education Initiative, which he plans to introduce in the upcoming legislature. If passed, it will bring more vocational training opportunities to Alaska's students—notably, by expanding students' ability to obtain a dual high school diploma and skills certification or a dual high school diploma and associate's degree. As the Governor told conference attendees, "Alaska's Career-Ready Education Initiative will help prepare students for careers that are relevant in their region, whether it's health care, mechanics, welding, or aviation."

Participants were treated to a pre-conference tour of Fairbanks North Star Borough School District's Hutchison High School, a premier career and technical high school. Conference presentations highlighted areas of excellence in districts that are demonstrating best practice in career technical education, including the Northwest Arctic, Chugach, and Lower Kuskokwim school districts. Each of these CTE centers-of-excellence boasts a strong academic program complete with required math, science, and language arts credits. They also provide their students with opportunities to

learn about and work with exciting new technologies and careers that are transforming our world.

As we look at next steps to take to help move education forward, it is clear that we need to capitalize on the opportunity that the Governor has presented to us with his Career-Ready Education Initiative. We can do this by encouraging the legislature to support the initiative, providing examples of how the proposed changes would benefit our districts—beginning with the advantages our students stand to gain through the new dual credit opportunities. All of us in education need to think about what else can be done to prepare students for the workplace.

The 90 people at the ASA conference (which included superintendents and district administrators, participants from DEED, University of Alaska Teacher Education Preparation, representatives from the state Board of Education, UA Regents and other representatives of higher education, officials from departments in state government and the Governor's office, AASB, and industry) had a chance to begin this conversation. Let's reflect on our current CTE work and what is being proposed—then continue these discussions with each other and with state policymakers to move our state forward by preparing our students to best meet tomorrow's workforce demands.



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## Making Every Dollar Count: Cash Collecting Procedures

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

Now that we are entering another school year and settling back into our everyday work groove, I wanted to take a few moments to share some insightful knowledge I recently had the opportunity to hear again.

This past month, I had the privilege of attending the ASBO International conference in Florida, a yearly event that brings together school business officials from around the globe for a week of professional learning opportunities. When reading through the conference program, I was pleased to see many sectionals and discussion groups related to cash handling and controls for school and district funds. As school business officials, managing the cash flow needs of our respective districts is something that we engage in daily.

Even though school business officials have ultimate responsibility for managing the district's cash flow, every district employee should be aware of daily cash flow and know how to handle cash. This could include the teacher collecting money for a field trip, a custodian ordering supplies, a class fundraiser, a principal wanting a new chair, or a coach wanting another assistant. Where do the funds come from? Who makes a deposit to the bank and when? Who authorizes an expense, and who signs for the receipt of the goods? These are just a few examples of the items

that could come up every day in any school or other district facility. Do you know the answers to these questions? Or do you care?

Here are a few of the takeaways I picked up from a session I attended in Florida on how to strengthen internal controls, improve efficiency, and reduce fraud risk in student activity funds. The suggestions included:

- Cash collection procedures for teachers: Do you have them? If so, when was the last time they were updated?
- Do you have a district/board policy on fundraisers? If so, is it being followed?
- Do you occasionally have someone observe the cash collection process at games and/or events?
- At the conclusion of the game/event do you have someone escort the person with the cash box to the safe to secure it?
- If you give out pre-numbered tickets, do you reconcile the total tickets issued with the deposit?

As simple as these concepts may be, the fact is that most of us probably have not implemented or reviewed them recently. I go back to our ALASBO theme for this year: Make Every Dollar Count!! By taking the time to review at least one of the processes above, you can strengthen your district's bottom line by adopting better internal controls that may reduce the risk of fraudulent activity. This is just one way that we can all make every dollar count.



## School Administrators Welcome at ALASBO Annual Conference

by Amy Lujan, ALASBO Executive Director

The Alaska Association of School Business Officials (ALASBO) is busy preparing for our December annual conference! This year's dates are December 7-10 at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage.

ALASBO welcomes all school business administrators to attend this conference! With the proliferation of "hats" that school administrators need to wear these days, there are many business topics that are of relevance to superintendents and other central office administrators who may have focused more exclusively on instruction in the past.

Superintendents and assistant superintendents who've attended the ALASBO conference in recent years have thought it well worth their time. In particular, the School Business Academy (SBA) pre-conference session can help new superintendents, or those simply new to Alaska, to gain a better understanding of critical topics.

The SBA will once again be an all-day session on

Sunday, December 7. The Academy is taught by some of our most experienced Alaska school business officials. The critical topics covered are: Alaska School Business Annual Timeline; State Foundation Funding Program; State Chart of Accounts; Budget Projections; and Resources/Contacts.

The SBA is limited to 15 students. Enrollment preference is given to those who register for the entire annual conference. In the event that a participant wants to attend the SBA only, the request will be considered on a space-available basis.

Years ago when I was a Business Manager in several school districts, I decided that attendance at the ALASBO Annual Conference was truly critical for my job. If my request to attend had been questioned, I would have asked how I was expected to do my job without the information sharing and network building that occurs at the ALASBO Conference.

I encourage all ACSA members to make sure the appropriate people in your district are planning to attend the ALASBO Annual Conference.

## P-Card Update

by Amy Lujan, ALASBO Executive Director

**In May 2014, the IASBO P-card program distributed \$2.9 million in rebates. Nearly \$250,000 of that went to the fifteen participating Alaska school districts!**

Rebate amounts to five participants topped \$25,000 each: Fairbanks - \$54,482; Kenai - \$48,482; Matsu - \$38,513; NW Arctic - \$27,971; and Lower Yukon - \$26,913. It should be noted that Fairbanks School District participated in the program for only part of the year, and they got off to a fantastic start! Six 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. Use of p-cards is increasingly being recognized as a best practice in the school business industry. In this program, the p-cards are Mastercards 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. IASBO provides assistance with setting up the program and with issues that arise. 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 a much larger group of districts. The rebates are larger than districts could receive on 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 districts' purchasing volume grows.

District p-card 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 user 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 alleviate 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 other large-volume vendors with the p-card can generate large rebates quickly, with even a limited program.

### How Can I Sign Up?

Further information and links are at [www.alasbo.org](http://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 Annual Conference in December for those interested in starting a p-card program.

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

State Board of Education Meeting –Teleconference  
October 29, 2014

ACSA Board Meeting – Anchorage, AK  
November 5, 2014

AASB Annual Conference – Anchorage, AK  
November 6-9, 2014

State Board of Education Meeting – Anchorage, AK  
December 4-5, 2014

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

AASB Executive Admin Workshop – Anchorage, AK  
December 11-12

AASB Winter Boardsmanship Academy – Anchorage,  
AK  
December 12-13, 2014

Alaska RTI Conference – Anchorage, AK  
January 23-25, 2015

AASA National Conference on Education – San Diego,  
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February 26-28, 2015

ASA Legislative Fly-In – Juneau, AK  
March 8-10, 2015

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