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The Best & Worst of Times

By Michael Johnson; ACSA & ASA President; Copper River School District



"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." These familiar words open Charles Dickens' novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. Though, at the time he wrote them, they referred to the period surrounding the French Revolution, were Dickens here today, he might say the same about Alaska's current economic situation.

Consumers may be enjoying the best of times, with lower prices for heating fuel and gasoline, while the state suffers the worst of times because of low oil revenue. Suddenly, Alaska's leaders find themselves struggling to fund government services, including education. While, as education leaders, this may feel like the worst of times, if we pull together, we may find inside this challenge and inside ourselves the best of times for finding new solutions to longstanding obstacles to student success.

Though the funding challenge is huge, opportunities still await us. As Alaska's education leaders, we must communicate optimism in the face of what may feel to many like overwhelming odds. Our willingness to work together to move the rock of the current financial crisis even a few inches away from the hard place of our schools' needs will mark the first step in charting a new path forward. I am confident that if we seize and maximize the new opportunities presented by the current crisis, when 2016 is over, we and our students may remember this year for many successes beyond the achievement of the budget compromise currently being hammered out in Juneau.

As we go through the next few months together, including whatever remains of an extended legislative session, we need to assess our needs realistically, see the opportunities before us realistically, and understand the role of leadership realistically.

ASSESSING OUR NEEDS REALISTICALLY

The reality is that the needs of our state and its communities reach far beyond the budget's line items. Oil revenue is not the only low number we need to recognize. Even in times of more abundant resources, Alaska's students have been performing near the bottom when compared to other states. Health statistics are dismal. Local economies, especially in rural Alaska, have been in crisis for a long time now--well before the price of oil began to drop.

As we assess our needs, we must do so holistically, recognizing that the budget deficit is not the only high number we must seek to lower. Far too many of

Alaska's students drop out of school. We have some of the highest teen suicide rates in the country. The rate of violence against women is also among the very highest among the states. While it is true that it is always possible to do more with more money, it is equally true that, among the complex of challenges facing our schools and students, lack of revenue is only one.

SEEING THE OPPORTUNITIES REALISTICALLY

As we realistically assess the needs of our communities, it is up to education leaders to recognize and maximize opportunity wherever it arises. Because of the disruption that the dropping price of oil has caused, we find ourselves exploring opportunities to address issues and regulations that may not have been possible in a more static context. With everyone looking for answers, we can put issues on the table that we may not have considered before. We can highlight the cost of support services and student travel. We can talk more urgently about retire/rehire, local control, modernization, innovative ways to attract talented educators, and how to craft regulations that will foster new partnerships between the public and private sectors.

We have this window of opportunity, when the narrative has taken a dramatic turn and the scene has changed. Alaskans await a new script that shows opportunity climbing over the fiscal barrier on ladders of innovation. The reality is we can expect interesting opportunities to present themselves precisely because our circumstances are what they are.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP REALISTICALLY

Twice now, Governor Walker has referred publicly to a picture given to him by Lt. Governor Mallott. It is an image of a community literally pulling together--an entire village tugging on a rope to accomplish a task. The image conveys a timely message.

What we make of our current situation will depend on how we manage the realities we face. When future generations look back, I hope they see that in this time of challenge we managed to broaden the discussion beyond the BSA to how we can deliver quality education for all of Alaska's students; that we talked about the issues administrators, teachers, and students face every day, whether in lean or robust budget times. I hope history will laud us for our ability to sustain our optimism even in the face of calamity--that future leaders will take inspiration from the way today's leaders took hold of the rope and pulled together to open a path to long-term sustainable education in our state and, in the process, discovered in these worst of times the best in ourselves.



Be the Voice...

Dr. Lisa Skiles Parady, ACSA/ASA/AASSP Executive Director

We must be the voice for students, schools, districts and for education

to our peers, our school board members, our policy makers and our community!

Legislative Update

Here is a session snapshot:

The regular session end date (May 19th) is looming and movement is

minimal. Until oil and gas tax credits (HB 247) are resolved, most issues are on hold. Once the tax credits issue is cleared, we can expect a rush to adjournment, including the final budget compromise. As long as the regular session continues all other bills remain alive and some may pass as final deals are made.

A 10 day extension is allowed, but planning is underway for the Governor to call a 30 day special session. Many believe it will take two special sessions. Most also think they will stay in Juneau (far distant from the LIO). So hunker down for the long haul.

HB 156 passed, and is a good lesson in the craft of legislating. Many remain opposed due to the original inclusion of onerous limitations on sex education. It is worth noting that the bill was significantly amended, and as passed had some useful language in it.

The best summary of what HB 156 does is the [sectional analysis](#) by Legislative Legal Services.

The only section not correctly reflected in the sectional analysis (because it was amended in the Senate Finance Committee after the analysis was written) is Section 18. Below is a summary of Section 18:

* Sec. 18. AS 14.30 is amended by adding a new section to read:

Sec. 14.30.361. Sex education, human reproductive education, and human sexuality education.

(a) A person may only teach a class or program in sex education, human reproduction education, or human sexuality education if the person

(1) possesses a valid teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20 and is employed under a contract with the school; or

(2) is supervised by a person who meets the requirements under (1) of this subsection.

(b) Before curriculum, literature, or materials related to sex education, human reproduction education, or human sexuality education maybe used in a class or program or distributed in a school, the curriculum, literature, or

materials must be

(1) approved by the school board; and

(2) available for parents to review.

(c) Before a person teaches a class or program under (a) (2) of this section,

(1) the person must be approved by the school board; and

(2) the person's credentials must be available for parents to review.

The bill also has four components that impact districts:

1. The bill repeals the "opt-in" provision for surveys and questionnaires and returns it to an "opt-out". This affects the School Climate and Connectedness Survey utilized by Districts to improve school climate. This change will protect the rights of parents to determine what is best for their children and yet still allow an important tool, SCCS, to be available to districts.

2. The 70/30 provision is repealed. It is near impossible for rural school districts to meet the provision requiring 70% of the district foundation funding to be expended on direct classroom instruction. In rural Alaska the high cost of transportation, shipping and especially fuel, all fixed costs, require numerous districts to spend considerable time and effort submitting a request for a waiver each year. The State Board of Education also passed a resolution supporting the repeal.

3. It would allow DEED to bypass some of the more onerous provisions of the state procurement process as they solicit proposals for a new statewide assessment. This process is on a "fast track" due to last years less than timely release of data and this year's inability to even take the test due to a host of reasons resulting in an invalid assessment. Accurate, timely and relevant assessments are critical to not only assessing students but also to validate the effectiveness of curricular material and instructional practices. We need an assessment in place as soon as possible and this allows the solicitation to move quickly.

4. Finally, the bill changes the requirement for training of school personnel in restraint and seclusion. Currently the statute requires all personnel to be trained. This will save districts considerable time and money by restricting the training to only those who will need it.

Assessment Update

DEED has continued to work with The United States Education Department (USED) and AAI (the assessment vendor) to determine what caused a variety of technical issues with AMP. At this time, AAI has not provided conclusive information explaining the technical anomalies which include issues unrelated to the severed fiber optic cable. USED has not informed DEED of a formal response to the decision to discontinue testing, nor a timeline for doing so.

In the meantime, DEED continues to move forward in identifying the future assessment required by federal and state law for Alaska.

ESSA Update

Alaska

From DEED: The planning team has been meeting these past few weeks to discuss the data results from the DEED/ ASDN Spring Leadership Conference and the next steps for the work of the Alaska ESSA Advisory Committee.

Continued...

DEED is excited to be able to carry on the partnership with the Advisory Committee in the months ahead as DEED continues to collect stakeholder feedback on Alaska's ESSA State Plan through focus groups and the soon-to-be-built ESSA webpage, and further unpack and delve into the three State Plan sections through the formation of work groups.

Federal

Here is an updated [ESSA FAQ](#) just released by the United States Education Department for your reference.

NASSP Policy Update

ESSA Implementation

Department of Education Regulations moving forward; Guidance and Technical Assistance will happen after Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) is released <http://www.ed.gov/essa>

AASA Policy Update

Also included below is **The Advocate** - a monthly column by the AASA advocacy team. It is shared with state affiliate executive directors so I can share it with you - our membership. This month's article is about negotiated rulemaking. Although we are through negotiated rulemaking I hope you will find the background helpful.

Negotiated Rulemaking: The Sausage Making Stage of ESSA Legislation

Permanent link

Four months ago, Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as the latest iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). While the bill is more than 1,000 pages in length, it lacks the level of detail necessary to fully support successful implementation at the local level, and that is where the regulatory process comes in.

Negotiated rulemaking—the specific version of regulation playing out right now—is the in-person version of regulation. A committee of approximately 25 stakeholders representing the education, civil rights, disabilities and other related communities convene to review specified topics in the hopes of reaching consensus on what shape the regulations should take. In this round, negotiated rulemaking (“neg reg”) is focused on assessments and supplement/supplant, with the broader assessments bucket capturing computer adaptive assessment, assessment for English learners, alternate assessment, exception for advanced mathematics assessments in 8th grade and the high school assessment flexibility pilot.

AASA joined eight other national organizations in a letter to Secretary King encouraging the U.S. Department of Education to ensure that the final product be consistent with the scope and spirit of ESSA and represent, to the extent possible, broad support from the neg reg committee. In partic-

ular, the groups encourage USED to refrain from defining terms and aspects of the new law that Congress designed to empower communities.

Mr. Alvin Wilbanks, superintendent of Gwinnett County Schools in Georgia and an AASA member, is a member of the committee, appointed to represent the voice of school board and district leaders. AASA's advocacy team has covered the first six days of neg reg (Mar 21-23 and Apr 6-8), and the group will convene one final time, April 18-19. As much as I would like to be wrong, it seems unlikely that the group will be able to reach consensus. What are some of the sticking points?

Alternate Assessment: You'll recall that AASA advocated very intensely to ensure students can take tests that are developmentally appropriate. The set of items under consideration would limit the flexibility at both the state and local level, should the rate of identification for alternate assessments exceed 1 percent. Further, there is a push for a national definition of 'students with the most severe cognitive disabilities.' AASA opposes the attempt to change the carefully negotiated statute and believes that the intent is clear, for state and local education agencies to have some flexibility in how they place students for alternate assessments. Further, to the extent that ESSA did not create a definition, it is not something that should be created through regulation.

Supplement, Not Supplant (SNS): This is one of three fiscal tests that districts and states have to meet to ensure the integrity of Title I dollars. The three tests are maintenance of effort, supplement/supplant and comparability. ESSA made changes to SNS, but not the other two tests. AASA is concerned that the proposed regulations blur the lines between the two distinct tests of SNS and comparability. AASA believes that the new reporting requirements around teacher salary need time to play out before unnecessarily tying them into an SNS proposal that has 'mission creep' into the equity function of comparability.

Computer Adaptive Assessment: Under the proposal, computer-adaptive tests used for accountability would have to be able to determine whether a student is on grade level.

Eighth Grade Assessments: Under the proposal, students who take a higher-level math test for accountability purposes (i.e. an Algebra test, usually given to high schoolers) must be given access to accommodations if they are English language learners, or students in special education.

Local High School Assessment: The debate is circling on how to define 'nationally recognized.'

English Learner Assessment: The proposed regulations say states need to come up with a common test to measure English-language proficiency.

Continued...

For purposes of moving forward, the committee will have two considerations: SNS will be considered on its own, and the assessment pieces will be considered in one joint bucket, with all five items to be voted on collectively, an 'up' or 'down' vote.

As a point of reference, we are regularly asked some of our go-to resources for education policy news. They're listed here:

AASA Leading Edge Blog www.aasa.org/aasablog.aspx

Politics K12 (EdWeek) <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/>

RealClearEducation <http://www.realcleareducation.com/>

Cabinet Report <http://cabinetreport.com/>

Morning Education <http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-education>

Commissioner Update

State Board Chairman James Fields said board members selected four finalists from a pool of 14 candidates for Commissioner of the Department of Education & Early Development. The State Board intends to interview the finalists in executive session on June 15 in Juneau, prior to the board's regular meeting on June 16-17.

The board's appointment of a Commissioner is subject to approval by Governor Walker. Fields said the board's "tentative plan" is to announce the next commissioner June 17.

Meet the Finalists: Alaska DEED Commissioner



Pictured above in alphabetical order: Bob Boyle, Superintendent Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Dr. Michael Johnson, Superintendent Copper River School District, Dr. Susan McCauley, Acting DEED Commissioner, and Stewart McDonald, Superintendent Kodiak Island Borough School District.

Robert Boyle, of Ketchikan, holds a bachelor of science degree from Bowling Green State University in Ohio and a master's degree from the University of Alaska Southeast. He has served as a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent in Alaska, and as an educator in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and Kazakhstan.

Dr. Johnson, of Glennallen, holds a bachelor of arts degree and a master of arts in teaching degree from Columbia International University in South Carolina; educational leadership credentials as principal and superintendent from the University of Alaska Anchorage; and a doctorate of philosophy in education and intercultural studies from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In the Copper River School District, he has taught and served as principal; director of curriculum, instruction and staff development; and superintendent.

Dr. McCauley, of Juneau, holds a bachelor of science degree in elementary education from Pennsylvania State University, a master of science degree in educational administration from Western Maryland College; and a doctorate in education leadership and policy from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She has served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, school district director of education, adjunct college professor, facilitator of a statewide curriculum alignment institute, coach in the state system of support for schools, director of teaching and learning support at the department, and Interim Commissioner of the department.

Stewart McDonald, of Kodiak, holds a bachelor of arts degree in education from the University of North Florida and a master of education degree from the University of Alaska Anchorage. He has served as a special education teacher; director of a demonstration project in learning, a formative assessment demonstration project, federal programs, and assessment; and assistant superintendent and superintendent in the Kodiak Island Borough School District.

Upcoming Alaska Staff Development Network Events

The mission of the Alaska Staff Development Network (ASDN) is to improve student achievement by providing researched-based distance learning and face-to-face professional development programs for Alaska's teachers and school administrators.

Alaska School Leadership Institute (ASLI)

ASDN is hosting the 8th Annual Alaska School Leadership Institute on May 25-27 this year. This professional learning conference is designed for teacher, school and district leaders from rural school districts and small schools. Our theme this year is *Building Instructional Leadership Capacity in Classrooms, Schools and Districts*. The program will focus on building instructional leadership capacity to lead the high quality implementation of the Alaska ELA and Math standards; exploring successful strategies for recruitment, retention and the development of educational professionals; and the building and sustaining our statewide professional learning community for rural school leaders. District leaders will be identifying building blocks to modernize education in Alaska.

Save the Date! 2017 Alaska RTI / Effective Instruction Conference

Our 6th Annual RTI Conference will take place January 28 and 29 at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage. Join educators from around the state for one of Alaska's largest and most popular professional learning opportunities, and learn from nationally recognized experts without the time and expense of out-of-state travel. A preconference for rural school educators will take place on Friday, January 27, 2017.

ASDN Fall Webinar Series

Join us for interactive webinars with Joanne Quinn, Catlin Tucker, Doug Fisher, and Linda Chamberlain this fall!

- Joanne Quinn, Michael Fullan's colleague and co-author of *Coherence* and several other publications, will investigate student engagement and deeper learning in a series for school and teacher leaders.
- Practicing high school teacher, author, trainer and frequent Edtech speaker Catlin Tucker will present a series on leveraging the power of technology for blended learning and personalized instruction.
- Linda Chamberlain will be back with the latest information on best practices from trauma-informed schools that are succeeding with brain-based teaching and learning.

Lastly, Doug Fisher will discuss the findings from his latest book: *Visible Learning for Literacy* (with John Hattie and Nancy Fischer), the newest book in John Hattie's Visible Learning series.

Be current on your CEU's! Check asdn.org for a complete list of all of our courses and events.

Alaska Staff Development Network Grants Update

By Kelly Tonsmeire; ASDN/ACSA Grant Director

ASDN is directing four large U.S. Department of Education Alaska Native Education grant projects, in partnership with Lower Kuskokwim School District and Bering Strait School District.

Kelly Tonsmeire ASDN Grant Director, Dan Walker, LKSD Superintendent, Carlton Kuhns, LKSD Assistant Superintendent, and Carolyn Heflin, BSSD Curriculum Director, made a keynote presentation at the National Forum on Dropout Prevention for Native and Tribal Youth in Oklahoma City in March. They shared their work in improving reading and math instruction, student behavior, RTI core instruction and interventions and cultural connections. Most importantly, they shared the dramatic improvements in Native high school graduation rates in both districts.



Pictured left to right: LKSD Superintendent Dan Walker, Carolyn Heflin, and Kelly Tonsmeire at the National Dropout Prevention Forum. Photo Credit, Pedro Flores

Annual Performance Reports for all grant projects were submitted recently to the U.S. Department of Education. All projects are on target to meet project goals and objectives.

Building a Stronger Community through School-Business Partnerships

By Mary McMahon, AASSP President, ACSA President-Elect, MSBSD Principal



How do we connect public education with our community in a deeper and more meaningful way? I believe that our public education systems need to provide an education that directly connects with employment and productivity for the overall growth of our communities and state. We need to show our students that they stand to benefit directly from the things they

are learning in school and make clear the connection between the curriculum and a successful future work life. Likewise, we need to show those outside of public education that we are innovating and growing students in ways that directly strengthen our communities in new and sustainable ways.

We are in the midst of a digital revolution. The world we are preparing our students for is advancing at such a rapid pace that we are destined to fall behind if we hold on to the idea that the traditional model of education is going to get the job done. Examples abound to illustrate how the world we now live in is changing quickly: Uber owns no cars, yet it is putting taxi companies out of business around the world; Amazon owns no stores, yet consumers increasingly do a majority of their shopping on this site. Technology is advancing so fast that we now regularly experience the impact of inventions on our lives before we have had a chance to anticipate them, much less develop courses to prepare our students to work with and benefit from them. We can't say for certain where we will be in the coming years; we can only predict based on what we know. Paradoxically, it is the unknowns about our advancing technological world that lead us to this known fact. Those destined to thrive in this new environment are the creative risk takers who possess a growth mindset and an ability to embrace the notion of failing forward—that is, an understanding that mistakes often lead to growth and opportunity.

At our recent annual principals' conference, John Hope Bryant shared with us the idea of Financial Literacy for Equitable Access, a program designed to educate youth in financial literacy by providing students an opportunity

to engage in entrepreneurial endeavors by creating a business plan and engaging with local businesses while in school. The school provides a platform and student peers serve as an audience for students to pitch their plans to in a timed format. Those who are successful in pitching their plans to the audience are then provided a small grant to start their businesses. With these start-up funds they may purchase business cards, supplies, business attire, etc. Each is connected with a volunteer business mentor who works with the student for six weeks in an internship/externship. During this time, the students learn about what it takes to be successful in business and finance. Each builds a relationship with a business leader in the community, with the goal that the experience will motivate the student to put his or her creative ideas to work. This concept is designed to connect a community's private business sector with its public education system in a way that will benefit the entire community. It's time for us to point positive on our schools and support them in deeper and more meaningful ways, in order to be a part of the positive change that is necessary to best prepare our students for success in life outside of school.

A recent Gallup study finds that students surveyed in grades 5-12 have an economic vision and entrepreneurial spirit. In the lower grades, there are more children who dream of owning their own business or inventing something that will change the world. But as grade levels increase, students are less likely to maintain the same level of entrepreneurship, as a loss of hope begins to set in. We need to keep hope alive for our students by believing in their dreams and supporting them in making their dreams a reality. It's time for us to pull together in a way that directly supports the growth and development of our greatest resource, our youth.

We are facing some knowns and unknowns that point to more challenge and change. During times of challenge, we tend to be forced to think outside the box and find new ways of doing things. I believe together we can and will continue to find new strategies to produce quality outcomes for our schools and the communities that we live in and all care so much about. The best is yet to come.

Digital Principal of the Year Program Application Now Open

The 2017 NASSP Digital Principal of the Year (DPOY) program application is now available. The DPOY program honors three NASSP-member principals who exhibit bold, creative leadership in their drive to harness the potential of new technologies to further learning goals.

Applications are due no later than August 1, 2016. The application, rubric, and eligibility guidelines can be accessed by visiting www.nassp.org/digitalprincipals.Three winners will be selected and announced during National Principals Month in October, 2016.

Benefits provided to the DPOYs include:

- Attendance to the National Principals Conference, July 9–11, 2017 in Philadelphia, PA
- Complimentary travel, hotel, and registration
- Opportunity to give a presentation
- Opportunity to attend and present at conferences on behalf of NASSP
- Featured on the cover of a *Principal Leadership* issue

Let's Collaborate and Find Creative Solutions

Dan Carstens, AASSP President-Elect, Principal Nikiski Middle High School



Let's take a moment to reflect and be creative on the current state of education funding in Alaska by finishing the prompt: "Education funding in Alaska is like..." Are your comments similar to the ones I heard at a recent Learning and the Brain conference consisting of "...an elevator, it keeps going up and down while someone else is pushing the buttons" or "...a jigsaw puzzle, only it has no picture associated with it and there are a few pieces missing"? If your thoughts are as creative as the previous comments, you have what it takes to be successful in this ever evolving world of ESSA, funding, and how it all fits into education: creativity and innovation.

Whether we think so or not, everyone has the opportunity to be creative in their thoughts; creativity is not restricted to only being for writers and artists, but for anyone who has an idea that is novel in nature and useful to others. Obviously, in this day and age, we will need to be creative with the resources that are allocated to us. Ask yourself: "What do I currently have for my school or district that I can modify to better meet the needs of kids?" Think divergently on this, bringing everything into the discussion and put it on the table. Once it is all out there, think convergently to narrow down into realistic thoughts and ideas. It is not an easy task, but when eve-

rything is on the table and we are surrounded with people we trust and value, creative solutions to our fiscal worries will start flowing and opportunities will present themselves.

As I listened to a talk given by Todd Kashdan, a common misperception is that many negative emotions like guilt and anger inhibit creativity. He used the analogy of how weather effects a farm to overcome this myth. If it's always 75 and sunny, as nice as that may sound right about now, we will never be able to have a thriving crop. Among other things we need the rain for irrigation and the wind for pollination. Liken this to anger. Anger over losing positions and money is, assuming you're as normal as I am, quite natural. However, there are ways to use this to move forward in a positive direction. We can use the negative emotion to assist us in growing together and pushing to find a solution, even when it seems like things are too tough to overcome. Guilt is another one of those emotions that manifest when we have to let go of someone who we know is the best person for a job. But like anger, guilt can benefit our creative side and motivate us to continue to utilize our resources in the best possible way for kids.

In short, we have all sorts of opportunities to collaborate and find creative solutions. Take some time to lead others through processes and utilize all of our energy, whether it is positive or negative, to resolve our challenges and do what is best for kids.

Shaun Kraska Named as Alaska Principal of the Year



Shaun Kraska, principal of West Valley High School in Fairbanks, has been selected as the Alaska Secondary School Principal of the Year by the Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals. Principal Kraska has served as principal at West Valley High School for eight years.

Principal Kraska will be honored during the 2016 Alaska Principals Conference. The Alaska Principals conference will be held at the Anchorage Sheraton Hotel October 23-25, 2016. This year is the 50th anniversary of the conference and will feature keynote speakers Jimmy Casas and Christopher Kai. For more information visit the Alaska

Association of Secondary Principals website at <http://www.alaskaprincipal.org>.

Congratulations Principal Kraska!

2016 BP Alaska Principals Scholarship Awards Announced

BP has partnered with the Alaska Principals Foundation to award 25 graduating seniors across Alaska each with a one-time \$4,000 scholarship to get them started in the next phase of their educational journey. Since the BP Principals Scholarship began 30 years ago, BP has contributed over \$3.5 million to support the continuing education of deserving students. This year we received over 55 nominations. We want to thank the principals and students who took the time and made the effort to participate.

Congratulations to this year's BP APF Scholarship recipients!

Salina Alsworth	Tanalian School
Caleb Beauvais	Burchell High School
Eva Bingham	Palmer High School
Sigfred Brown	White Mountain School
Halbe Brown	Tri-Valley School
Jordyn Bruce	Eagle River High School
Nathan Carstens	Nikiski Middle High School
Elizabeth Coggins	Bethel Regional High School
Brittany Colcord	Klawock High School
Noelle Coniglio	West Anchorage High School
Julie DuClos	A.J. Dimond High School
Miranda Eakin	Kotzebue Middle/High School
Laura Erb	Chugiak High School
Nick Gregg	PACE Correspondence School
Kacy Grundhauser	King Career Center
Catelynn Hettick	Seward High School
John Koeneman	Huston High School
Kiera O'Brien	Ketchikan High School
Kelley Olson	Thunder Mountain High School
Agustin Pineda	North Pole High School
Nathanael Salima	Grace Christian School
Mikaela Salzetti	Kenai Central High School
Taylor Vollman	Kenny Lake
Martina Worden	Juneau Douglas High School
Autumn Young	Bartlett High School



The scholarship nomination period begins January 15 and closes March 20 of each year. Please support this program by sharing information about the BP Alaska Principal's Scholarship with teachers and students in your community. For more information please visit: <http://www.alaskaprincipal.org/scholarships/> or contact Ceann Murphy ACSA/ASDN/APF Program Coordinator.

ALASBO Update

Mark Vink, ALASBO President, Bering Strait School District



It has been interesting watching the legislative session and we are all waiting to see how the session wraps up, and when. Based on some of the proposed bills, it appears that districts around the state will be watching the dollars even closer than they have in the past. The proposed increase to TRS rates would have a significant impact of the operations of districts. Fortunately this bill is off the table for now.

In February, Amy Lujan, Holly Holman and I attended the ASBO Executive Leadership Forum. During the preconference session, we focused on Board governance. Joining us for the main conference were ALASBO members Tammy White, Rodger Studley, and David Arp. During these sessions we were given management insights into various

aspects of the operations of Caesars Entertainment and Zappos. The management philosophy of Zappos could be compared to the Quality Schools model.

We are in the process of finalizing plans for our summer leadership in Kenai, July 21-23. At our leadership conference, we will have Dr. Mike Jacoby, Executive Director of Illinois ASBO focus our training on building trust and managing change. Dr. Jacoby is a former superintendent and chief school business official. Dr. Jacoby is also one of the developers for the curriculum for the IASBO Leadership Institute.

We will also be spending time working on the planning for our 2016 Annual Conference, December 4-7 in Anchorage. Please consider attending. We'll have sessions covering a wide variety of topics. The School Business Academy all-day preconference on Sunday, December 4 is particularly helpful for new and aspiring superintendents, as well as school business officials.

Improved Performance through Positive Thinking

Amy Lujan, ALASBO Executive Director



We all have to wear “unflattering hats” sometimes. How can adopting a “Success Mindset” help us to work through these challenges and inspire others?

Research in the field of positive thinking shows that small shifts in the way we think and communicate contribute to:

greater performance ratings, higher productivity, higher graduation rates, higher sales, more correct medical diagnoses, faster block-building (pre-schoolers!), better sleep, lower stress

Michelle Gielan of the Institute for Applied Positive Research did an excellent job providing tips from this research at the fall 2015 ASBO International conference. Gielan has written for the “Harvard Business Review,” among other top publications, and appeared with Oprah and Arianna Huffington to promote her ideas.

What is a Success Mindset? Research shows that 75% of job success is predicted by these three elements:

Work optimism describes a belief that your work matters and that you can be successful. If you can engage with this optimism, you are much less likely to burn out and much more likely to be productive.

Positive engagement influences whether you see complex circumstances as challenging or threatening. Are your behaviors directed by your prefrontal cortex (thinking) or amygdala (fight or flight)?

Support for others reflects a genuine willingness to invest in the success of those around you. This approach nurtures a highly motivated team while fueling your own sense of well-being.

Here are three strategies you can use in your everyday life to enhance a Success Mindset:

Start your conversations and emails with a Power Lead. Begin with something positive, personal, and meaningful. This builds work optimism. When someone asks how you are, reply with a positive response, except in extreme cases. When discussing next steps, insert “together” to build positive, mutual energy.

Fact-check your situation to build positive engagement

Isolate a negative or stressful thought

List the known facts

Identify facts that illuminate a new story: recent wins, resources you can draw on

Praise or thank someone new every day.

This builds the “support for others” component. Try two lines a day via email to someone new each day for 21 days, and you may be surprised at the results. Or just try smiling at three people every day whom you might not normally smile at...I challenge you to try it!

You can find out more about Michelle Gielan and her research at www.michellegielan.com.

ESSA our Path to a Fulfilling Future

By Jennifer Schmitz; AAESP President



In October of 2002, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was signed into law by President Bush. I believe it was an effort, in his mind, to improve schools and show that our government was not going to accept any sort of failure in education. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to lay the blame for any sort of perceived failure directly on teachers and schools. When President Bush signed the law into effect, he said,

"Accountability is incredibly important for the school systems. People shouldn't fear accountability; they ought to welcome an accountability system as a useful tool to make sure no child is left behind."

As a classroom teacher in 2002, I believed in accountability, and after being an administrator for over 10 years now, I still do. Educators across the country spoke out against NCLB, pointing out its many pitfalls—from the underlying expectation that eventually every child, no matter his or her surrounding circumstances, would henceforth magically become proficient in reading and math, to its rating of schools solely according to test scores (and then offering students in “failing schools” transportation to others). NCLB was a law that was broken from the beginning. Educators' resistance to it did not mean we didn't want to be “accountable.” We longed for systemic changes that would support our daily efforts to ensure the success of all students. Teachers still had to work their tails off. Administrators needed to look at data, use evaluations to address subpar teachers, and try to ensure that all students' academic needs were being met. There were elected officials (and their staff members) in Washington, DC, who understood the reality on the ground and spent the better part of a decade trying to change NCLB. I appreciate each one of them.

Thirteen long years later, in December of 2015, after many state waivers and a variety of other strategic “work-arounds,” President Obama signed into effect the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This was not an easy place to get to. Many elected officials, working alongside groups like NAESP and NASSP, worked tirelessly for years to see the new Act brought to fruition. On its passage, teachers and administrators around the country felt a heavy burden lifted—not because we aspire to be held less accountable for student learning and success, but because we long to work toward goals and milestones that reflect the work we actually do and are supported by resources we actually need.

As we proceed to figure out the nuts and bolts of ESSA, we can breathe a sigh of relief because ESSA's sponsors took care to ensure educators would have a voice in how the Act is organized and implemented. Imagine that, asking educators to help plan education.... A true miracle! When President Obama signed ESSA into law, he declared, *"With this bill, we reaffirm that fundamentally American ideal—that every child, regardless of race, income, background, the zip code where they live, deserves the chance to make of their lives what they will."* The president's words echoed our aspirations as educators.

We are in the trenches. We work every day to help kids make their lives “what they will.” Our greatest reward is when students realize their potential, their dreams, their gifts. We are privileged to be working in the greatest occupations in the world, and the passage of ESSA moves us closer to being able to celebrate students' differences, to look at our schools for what we offer the “whole child,” and successfully place each individual learner on a path to a fulfilling future, whatever that may be.



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2016 Educational Association Events

May:

24-27 Alaska School Leadership Institute For
Rural School & District Leaders,
Anchorage

June:

15-17 State Board of Education Meeting,
Juneau

July:

6-8 NAESP National Conference,
National Harbor, MD
22-24 ALASBO Summer Leadership
30-Aug 1 ASA/DEED Summer Meeting,
Juneau

September:

21-24 ASA Fall Meeting, Palmer

October:

23-25 Alaska Principals' Conference,
Anchorage

December:

4-5 State Board of Education Meeting
Anchorage
4-7 ALASBO Annual Conference,
Anchorage

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