



## Inside ASD - March 7, 2008

### Optional plan to undergo mandated changes

ASD has been told by the Internal Revenue Service to make mandated changes to its 403(b) retirement savings plan, which is available to all employees. The new regulations will require ASD to be much more involved in the administration of the program.



The district currently acts as a conduit between employees and 39 vendors that offer investment products. Deductions are made from the checks of the enrolled employees and forwarded to the vendors. Those vendors are currently responsible for monitoring the limits and regulations of the plan.

That will change because of the new IRS regulations for tax-sheltered annuity plans like ours, and the **Human Resources Department** expects the number of vendors to be reduced considerably by the Jan. 1 deadline.

On Monday, the **Anchorage School Board** approved a three-year contract with **Woodside Financial Partners** to act as the district's consultant to help make the required 403(b) changes.

"The district's goal is to provide a wide array of competitive investment products, said **Human Resources Director Eric Tollefsen**. "We want to ensure employees will have a good investment selection with minimum fees."

For more information about the timeline for changes to the 403(b) plan, [click here for the board memo](#). More information will be distributed to employees as the process progresses. Be sure to check Inside ASD and the newly designed Benefits Web page for updates.

### Susitna goes green, earns award

**Susitna Elementary School** earned a **Green Star Award** this year and the students and staff well deserved it. According to teacher **Ingrid Bodensteiner**, the school's main goal



### Volunteer reception set for April 29

Principals and their staff should decide on the four volunteers they plan to honor this year at the ASD Volunteer Reception. The event is set for 5:30-7 p.m. April 29 at the ASD Education Center.

Principals can enter up to four volunteer names by using the secure "ASD Volunteer Nomination" application on the District Connection. The volunteer names are due by April 10.

Once the names are entered, the Communications Department will send invitations to each school to distribute to their volunteers. Certificates will be made for each person, and must be completed by April 15.

For more information about the reception, contact Terry Wilson at 742-4152 or [Wilson\\_Terry@asdk12.org](mailto:Wilson_Terry@asdk12.org).

### Central teacher trains for PolarTrec



Craig Kasemodel, a Central Middle School science and

was to turn its existing, teacher-run recycling program into a student-run, schoolwide project.



"Our recycling club, made up of K-6 students, purchased a paper recycling bin for every classroom, and we bought large recycling containers for our multi-purpose room," Bodensteiner said. "We now collect plastic bottles, aluminum cans, glass, mixed paper, and plastic film in the MPR. We also updated the recycle bins in the staff lounge and workroom."

Next, the students and teachers created a new area in the teacher workroom for reusable paper, which teachers now use for their one-sided copies. They also crafted tiles to hang permanently above sinks and water fountains reminding people to conserve water.

A "Save Water/Save Electricity" poster contest was held and the top 30 posters were displayed throughout the school. Every classroom and restroom now has posters encouraging people to turn off the lights and to not waste water.

"We also installed a bulletin board to keep students aware of the club's activities and our progress towards the Green Star Award. Our Recycling Club read morning announcements about water conservation and turning off the lights. We also put together a short skit about these topics to perform in classrooms," Bodensteiner said. "And the students created a short movie to teach the student body how to recycle at Susitna."

A mixed paper dumpster from Alaska Waste was rented and all of the school's mixed paper is now collected for recycling each week.

"Our recycling program used to depend on teacher volunteers to collect paper, cans, magazines, and newspaper from the teacher workroom, loading it in their cars, and then transporting it to the recycling center," Bodensteiner said. "Now, a different class is in charge of collecting recycling each week. We also have parent volunteers take the materials to the recycling center each week."

### State Farm funds FCCLA's efforts

**State Farm Insurance** presented a \$5,000 check to **Chugiak High School's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America** members and teacher **Kathleen Vik** at Monday's Anchorage School Board meeting.

The "Shift into Safety" grant will allow the students to develop educational programs on Alaska's graduated driver's license, what it means to "drive under the influence" of drugs or alcohol and the specifics of seat belt safety. They plan to teach Chugiak students about the many hazards and responsibilities associated with operating a vehicle.

State Farm representatives **Al Bowler, Troy Sayer** and **Steve Pifer** presented Vik and her students with the check.

technology teacher, is going on a fantastic voyage and students and teachers can virtually go with him.

Kasemodel is one of just 12 teachers chosen from around the nation to participate in the PolarTREC project this year.

PolarTREC is an educational research experience, funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation and managed by the [Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S.](#), in which K-12 teachers participate in polar research, working closely with scientists as a pathway to improving science education.

Kasemodel is one of the first teachers to go out on a trip this year. He is heading straight for the Bering Sea as a member of a diverse team of researchers aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy in support of the Bering Sea Ecosystem Study and the Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program.

He will be documenting late winter ocean conditions, studying biological communities found in sea ice, examining the early spring plankton bloom, and investigating light penetration through open water and ice cover.

Additionally, his team will be examining the seafloor and the predation habits of the walrus.

Kasemodel is receiving training in Fairbanks, and then leaves for Dutch Harbor. He expects to be back at Central on April 1. Teachers and students can follow his activities at [www.polartrec.com/bering-ecosystem-change](http://www.polartrec.com/bering-ecosystem-change).

He is posting a daily journal on the Web site.

### Hitting the trail online

The Last Great Race gets more competitive every year. To keep up with the action and the weather, check out the teacher section on the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race Web site.

There's a free e-newsletter, lesson plans and other teaching resources.

Go to



"Teens are four times more likely to get into a car crash than older drivers," Bowler said. "Chugiak High School's innovative campaign is a strong step toward improving the odds that our students and all motorists will arrive at their destinations safely."

Vik was grateful for the support and said her students understand the distractions teens face when driving and will be able to share the message of safety more effectively with their peers.

### Bow ties for Abraham

#### MLMS staff pays sartorial tribute

No, it wasn't an invasion of George Will look-a-likes that caused all the bow-tie action at **Mirror Lake Middle School** recently. The staff wear their ties, shirt collar or not, in keeping with "Bow Tie Thursday," a special day each week to support one of the school's students - **Abraham Lugo**.



**Principal Scott Batchelder** said "Abe" was suddenly flown down to the Children's Hospital in Seattle for treatment of lymphoblastic lymphoma, a very rare form of cancer.

"He had worn a bow tie to class some months ago for a joke and his mathematics teacher, Bobbi Jo Erb, asked him about the tie. His jocular response was, "Hey, it's bow tie Thursday," Batchelder said. "Some of his classmates began wearing bow ties on Thursdays for fun and now that he is in Children's Hospital it is becoming a schoolwide thing."

Erb's teaching team at Mirror Lake, **Todd Carlson, Todd Gillespie, Kristine Schillinger, Sandra Schmidt**, intern **Valerie Chaffin**, ordered a ton of bow ties and are selling them

www.iditarod.com/teachers/.  
Here's a sample:



#### Sled dog profile: Babe

Babe runs for Ramey Smyth of Willow

Age: 10.5 years

Sex: female

Weight: 46 pounds

Breed: Alaskan husky

General bloodlines: Smyth

Where does the dog run? Lead

Race experience: Eight Iditarod starts, seven consecutive finishes in lead, taking me under the arch. Photo verifiable, numerous placing and winning mid-distance races, 2nd place in this year's Kuskokwim 300, lead all except 30 miles in middle.

What makes this dog special?

"I don't have time to write what this dog deserves. She has been trying to lead my team since she was 6 months (loose back then). The story for her deserves a book, sorry. This dog has been faithful for me through all my mistakes and travails. A one-time learner. Courage and dedication to her job beyond belief. Wish I could write more."

- Ramey Smyth

#### Easter egghead fact

Easter Sunday is March 23 this year, the earliest Easter in 95 years. Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon following Spring Equinox, which this year is March 20. The dating of Easter is based on the Hebrew calendar which calculates the time for Passover. The next time Easter Sunday will be this early will be in 220 years, on March 23, 2228.

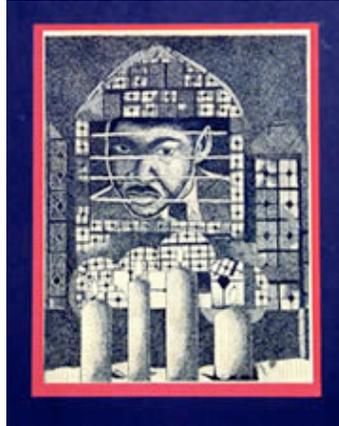
Easter and Passover are two religious holidays highlighted in

to kids at a low rate with proceeds going to Abe's family.

### Advancing the Arts: ASD Student Art Show

The **ASD Student Art Show** opens Sunday at the **Anchorage Museum of History and Art** and will run through April 6. An opening reception is scheduled for 6-8 p.m. on March 19.

For 35 years, this annual exhibition of ASD student artwork has demonstrated the wonderful creativity of our student artists. This year's theme, Advancing the Arts, showcases artwork from kindergarten through high school of every media.



Learning in the arts involves content, connections and application. The concept of "transfer," in which learning in one context assists learning in another is practiced consistently in visual arts instruction.

Please take the time to visit the museum this month and enjoy the drawings, paintings, metalwork, ceramics, sculpture and multi-media pieces.

### Teacher certification news

#### From Training and Professional Development

Support is available for teachers completing the **Performance Review** requirement to move from their initial certificate to a professional certificate. TPD recommends the video requirements be completed within the first two years of the initial certificate. The following teacher certification meetings are available for registration in My Learning Plan:

Date	Time	Location
March 19	3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	ASD Ed Center, Lime Room
March 19	4:30 - 5:30	ASD Ed Center, Lime Room
April 17	3:30 - 4:30	ASD Ed Center, Lime Room
April 17	4:30 - 5:30	ASD Ed Center, Lime Room
May 5	3:30 - 4:30	ASD Ed Center, Lime Room
May 5	4:30 - 5:30	ASD Ed Center, Lime Room

TPD is offering two sessions of a 1 credit course on Best Practices, which aligns with the DEED Performance Review requirements. Both classes start in April through UAA. Look at the [MLP calendar to sign up](#).

A three-hour workshop is being offered to elementary and secondary teachers who desire assistance with their performance review requirement. No credit is available and there is no charge to attend. Register for one of the workshops listed below through MLP:

- Teacher Certification Performance Review Workshop for

the ASD cultural dates of significance, meaning no school activities can be scheduled to conflict with those dates. Go online to see a [three-year calendar](#) for those dates.

### Whaley and students will travel to Russia



Russian students and West High School world language teacher Michele Whaley worked together this fall on a grant through the Shared Beringia Program of the National Park Service.

West High won one of only three nationwide grants. The funding is for a three-year period to collaborate with students from Chukotka Okrug in Anadyr, Russia. Students will compare interviews, data and volunteer efforts as they try to determine how young people can best contribute to the protection of their environment.

The National Park Service is in the process of determining the extent of funding. Students have begun fund raising so that they will be able to travel this June. Congratulations to all.

### Carol meets Cat in the Hat

Superintendent Carol Comeau met the mischievous "Cat in the Hat" this week at Trailside Elementary School. She was a special guest reader at the school in honor of the birthday of Dr. Seuss. Thank goodness Thing One and Thing Two didn't show up.

### Thought for the day

"We have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must

Elementary Teachers, 4:30-7:30 p.m. April 7 at Hanshew Middle School.

- Teacher Certification Performance Review Workshop for Elementary Teachers, 4:30-7:30 p.m. April 21 at Muldoon Elementary School.
- Teacher Certification Performance Review Workshop for Middle School and High School Teachers, 3:30-6:30 p.m. April 21 at East High School.
- Teacher Certification Performance Review Workshop for Middle School and High School Teachers, 3:30-6:30 p.m. April 28 at Dimond High School.

Video kits are available for check out through TPD. Contact Pat Odin at 742-4775 or [odin\\_pat@asdk12.org](mailto:odin_pat@asdk12.org), or Steve Brown at 742-3865 or [brown\\_stephen@asdk12.org](mailto:brown_stephen@asdk12.org) for more information.

### Prep now for the Praxis

The Training and Professional Development department is also offering **Praxis I** preparation workshops. Those interested can register for the workshops through My Learning Plan.

- Praxis I Exam - Reading Test Preparation Workshop, 4:30-7:30 p.m., March 31, April 1-2 in the Blue Room at the ASD Education Center.
- Praxis I Exam - Math Test Preparation Workshop 4:30-7:30 p.m. April 18, and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 19 in the Lime Room at the ASD Education Center.

For more information contact Pat Odin at 742-4775 or [odin\\_pat@asdk12.org](mailto:odin_pat@asdk12.org).

have the courage to change  
old ideas and practices so that  
we may direct their power  
toward good ends.  
– *Mary McLeod Bethune,*  
*American educator, 1875-1955*

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displaying correctly for you?  
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**- Until next week -**