



# Alaska Statewide Mentor Project

Vol. 1, 2014

## Lorrie Scoles, Founder Reflects on the beginnings of ASMP

It began with a short conversation. I had just returned to my classroom in Fairbanks after a week of mentoring new teachers in New Stuyahok. A parent, Dave Veazey, asked about my experience in the village, and I shared how hard it was for early-career teachers (ECTs). Their situation was so different than teachers who began in urban Alaska. I shared how I had been fortunate to have had experienced teachers around me when I was an early

career teacher. I learned so much from them, and my students benefited from me being informally mentored. He agreed what I was doing was important and mentioned that the University of Alaska Statewide was interested in doing more to support the K-12 system and mentoring was



Lorrie Scoles in 2004

part of a new grant they had just received. Two years later I was hired to develop a program supporting our new teachers.

### The Pilot Year

Four school districts were involved during the pilot year. Our largest districts, Anchorage School District and Fairbanks North Star Borough School District already had mentor pro-

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**Class of 2004, pictured below, left to right, starting with front row: Lori Hoover, Susan Hubbard, Lori Sheppard-Gillam, Jessica Willis, Darcia Dierick, Barbara Angaiak and Gay Jacobson. Second row: Melissa Hill, Janice Littlebear, Rick Frederic, Bob Williams, Joan Walser, Lesa Meath, Eric Waltenbaugh, Lynn Weckesser, Samantha Wuttig, and Lorrie Scoles. Third Row: Lolly Carpluk, Debbie Hawkins, Carol VanDerWege, Jeanette Hayden, Pat McDonald, Christa Bruce, Margaret Roberts, Kimberly Triplett, and Laurie Leonard**



## Meet three original mentors who are still with ASMP:

### Debbie Hawkins



Since the startup of the Mentor Project, I:

- currently serve as one of two Lead Mentors (along with Cathé Rhodes)
- worked as a full time mentor
- serve ASMP as a Management Team member
- coach ASMP mentors
- provide Academy trainings 1-8 to mentors and specific school district personnel across the state
- design and facilitate professional development opportunities for mentors
- delivered quality reading instruction to individuals K-Adults
- stay in contact with numerous former Early Career Teachers
- became a mother-in-law to two beautiful ladies (Toni and Kerri)
- became a proud grandmother of three
- traveled outside the United States



### Jan Littlebear

Since the startup of the Mentor Project, I:

- mentored in the Lower Yukon, Lower Kuskokwim, Unalaska and Anchorage
- presented nationally and internationally to hundreds of K-12 teachers about '6+1 Traits of Writing.' I've created and delivered 'Traits Across Language & Culture' workshops in Iceland and other sites through Education Northwest in Portland, Oregon
- returned to ASMP as Lead Mentor-Curriculum Developer, creating and delivering culturally-responsive content to the mentors. Currently in 5th year of mentoring work with ASMP

### Pat McDonald



Since I left mentoring for the first time in 2006, I:

- taught another year
- hiked 1,400 miles of the Appalachian Trail and 1,100 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail
- mentored 3 more years (including current work in Fairbanks with 4 ECT's)
- coached for 5 years in Lower Yukon and Yukon Flats School Districts as a state contractor, assigned to focus schools (ongoing)
- became a grandparent
- contracted with multiple districts as a math coach
- bought property on the Big Island (HI), and have begun work on it
- taught secondary math methods at UAF
- keep in regular contact with at least 10 former ECT's
- obtained my Type B administration license (started in a mentor cohort)

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grams, so they were able to share both what was working and what was challenging. There were also two rural districts involved: Lake and Peninsula Borough and Lower Kuskokwim School District.

During that year we hosted several training events for mentors, potential mentors and district administrators. The rural districts wanted full-time mentors, but most did not want to give up any of their most effective teachers. They needed them teaching students.

At the end of the pilot year we recognized the need for well-trained, effective teachers to work as full-release mentors. It was decided we'd work with the nationally recognized UC-Santa Cruz New Teacher Center (NTC) for training and support. Once we put together our plan, we scheduled a meeting with Roger Sampson, the Commissioner of Education. We wanted to partner with the Department of Education & Early Development (DEED). In our efforts, Dave Veazy, Melissa Hill, Jan Miles and I met with the commissioner and Barbara Thompson, Director of Teaching and Learning. They were on board right away, and the first partnership between DEED and UA was born. That first year we had more than 250 teachers from across the state apply for 22 mentor positions.

### **Flying the Plane as We Built It**

That year we built the program from the ground up. There was so much to develop: training, travel procedures, communication with mentors and mentees, prin-

cipals, superintendents, DEED, UA, legislators, funders, Schools of Education; development of a research plan; mentor protocols; mentor expectations and of course grant management.

We had growing pains, but were fortunate to have a management team that was focused on solving procedural issues as they came up while always staying focused on our goal of supporting new teachers.

### **National Interest**

The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project became the first statewide full-release mentor project, using NTC's evidence-based model. Where other projects in the U.S. had mentors that drove to work during the day and returned home each evening, in Alaska our mentors flew on planes, rode on snowmachines, slept in schools and packed their meals as they traveled from village to village working with their teachers. The remoteness of our teachers meant we needed to make adjustments to the mentor model being used by many successful projects outside of Alaska.

Educators nationwide were curious about what we were doing and the impact we were having. Nowhere else were mentors traveling to work with their teachers like we were. Nowhere else were ECT's spread out in an area larger than the state of Texas. No one else had the teacher turnover we were experiencing. And nowhere else was the state Department of Education and the state university system working in partnership

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**Pictured below is the class of 2014 (left to right) starting with front row: Marc Robinson, Betty Walters, Lisa Stewart, Stacey Wayne, Pat McDonald, Maureen Petronic, Kellie Wannamaker, Texas Gail Raymond and Abby Augustine. Second row: Karen Remick, Kirstie Wille-an, Kathleen Wright, Christine Walker, Marilyn White and Beth Hartley. Third row: Lindy Kinn, Sandi Toth, Karen Doyle, Glenda Findlay, Brenda Luthi, Carol Jerue, Cathé Rhodes, Liz Will, Trish Johnston, John Nielsen, Woody Wilson, Ann Ness and Sue McIntosh. Fourth row: Cynthia Petrovich, Judy Youngquist, Jenny Carlson, Deb McCabe, Kathie Steele, Cindy Masloski, Kris Selman, Marcia Indahl, Ed Sotelo and Charlie Costello. Fifth row: Hal Neace, Jan Littlebear, Todd Carlson, Linda Frey, Dave Boyd and Don Campbell. Not pictured: Marie Angaiak, Diane Klatt, Sue Peterson and Debbie Hawkins.**





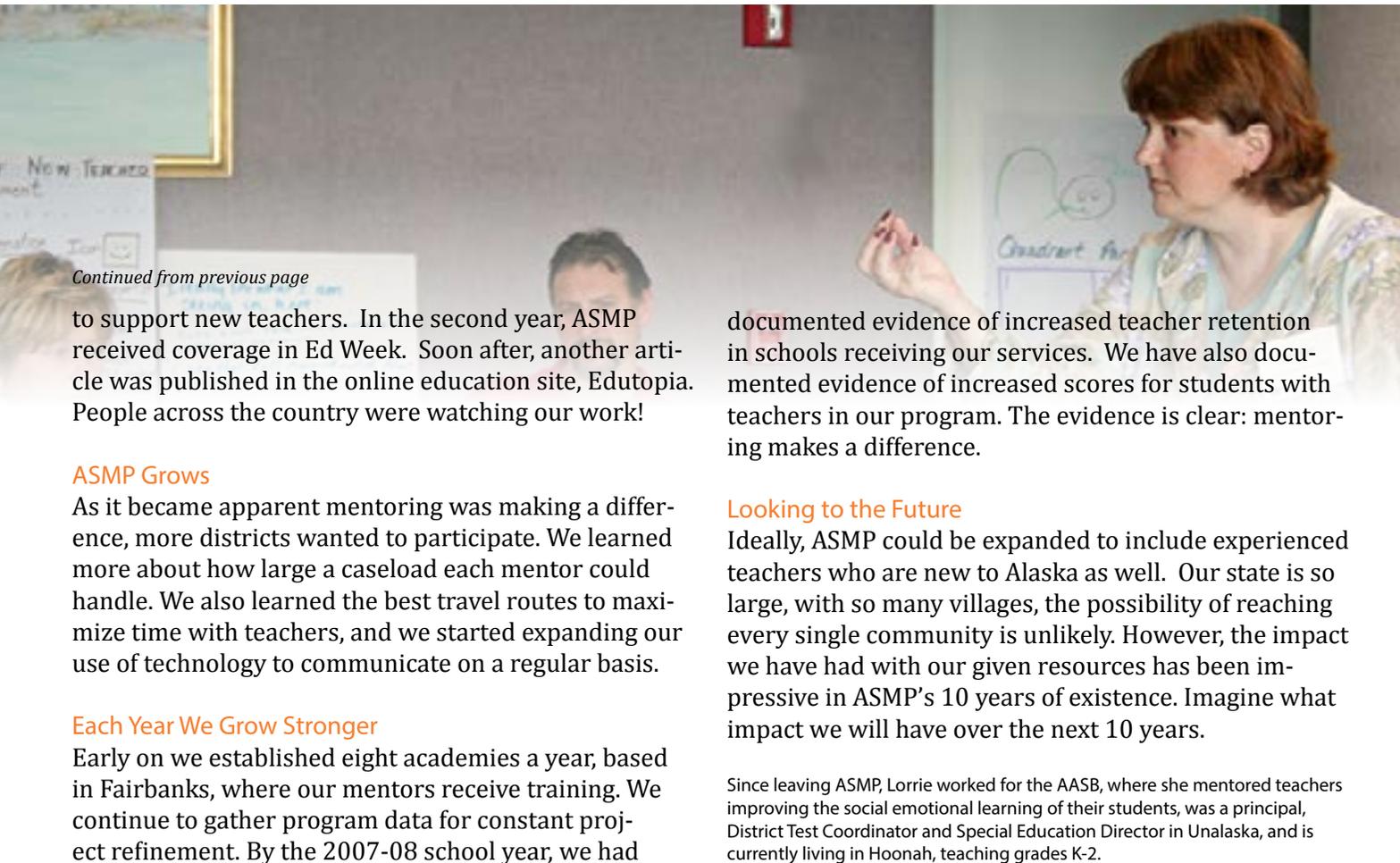
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“The Alaska Statewide  
Mentor Project is a lifeline  
for village schools.”

—Napakiak Principal  
Marlene Schmitt



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to support new teachers. In the second year, ASMP received coverage in Ed Week. Soon after, another article was published in the online education site, Edutopia. People across the country were watching our work!

#### ASMP Grows

As it became apparent mentoring was making a difference, more districts wanted to participate. We learned more about how large a caseload each mentor could handle. We also learned the best travel routes to maximize time with teachers, and we started expanding our use of technology to communicate on a regular basis.

#### Each Year We Grow Stronger

Early on we established eight academies a year, based in Fairbanks, where our mentors receive training. We continue to gather program data for constant project refinement. By the 2007-08 school year, we had

documented evidence of increased teacher retention in schools receiving our services. We have also documented evidence of increased scores for students with teachers in our program. The evidence is clear: mentoring makes a difference.

#### Looking to the Future

Ideally, ASMP could be expanded to include experienced teachers who are new to Alaska as well. Our state is so large, with so many villages, the possibility of reaching every single community is unlikely. However, the impact we have had with our given resources has been impressive in ASMP's 10 years of existence. Imagine what impact we will have over the next 10 years.

Since leaving ASMP, Lorrie worked for the AASB, where she mentored teachers improving the social emotional learning of their students, was a principal, District Test Coordinator and Special Education Director in Unalaska, and is currently living in Hoonah, teaching grades K-2.