



Certificate in Local School Financial Management

Participant's Handbook

Revised August 2022

What is the Certificate in Local School Financial Management?

- The Certificate is designed to develop your professional knowledge, understanding, and competence to a level where you will be able to contribute effectively to key areas of school administration.
- The program aims to provide you with a framework for developing and improving your own professional administrative practices within the organization where you work.
- The program encourages you to think about what you do and how you do it within your job.
- The program promotes best practices within educational administration.

What are the objectives of the program?

The specific objectives of this program are to provide opportunities to:

- Provide professional growth opportunities in order to carry out effectively the responsibilities of the position.
- Gain additional knowledge and understanding about your current role.
- Apply your skills at work.
- Maximize your personal and professional development.
- Develop future leaders in school business management.
- To promote the highest professional and ethical standards of school business management practices for Alabama's schools.
- To provide recognized standards of professional competence for school business officials.
- To capitalize on the experiences and training of current school business officials to enhance the functions of all school business officials.

Who is the program for?

- The program is for participants with different levels of educational and local school financial management experience. The flexible structure of the program allows participants to focus on their particular learning needs in the context of their school.
- The Certificate is open to local school financial personnel interested in a starting point for further learning and increased knowledge in the field of school finance.

How will I be supported while undertaking the program?

- It is recommended that the Chief School Financial Officer or designee from your district acts as a mentor and supports you in all aspects of the program to help develop your role in your job.

- The program will also provide you with opportunities to meet and discuss issues with colleagues. We believe that **'networking'** can be one of the most valuable aspects of the program and we hope you will take full advantage of the opportunities available.
- The program courses will provide a great deal of information in a short period of time. The courses are intended to cover major points about their respective topics, offer opportunity for questions and discussion, and provide resource information for future use.
- Throughout the program you will be supported by instructors who will meet you at the face to face sessions, be in contact with you when you are working through the modules and will assist you as you prepare for assessment.
- AASBO's professional development opportunities are geared toward helping you complete the program and maintain your certificate.
- AASBO also offers a mentor program for new local school financial managers that includes additional workshops and training.

How will I be encouraged to learn while working through the program?

You will be given the opportunity to take part in a number of different learning activities as you journey through the program.

- You will have opportunities to work on your own studying the materials.
- There will be times when you may meet with other participants to take part in learning activities.
- You will be able to learn from a range of sources through real time experience.
- You will have discussions with your instructors in order to stimulate your learning.

What if I have difficulties during the program?

We know that you are embarking upon a long journey through the program. You may or may not have studied for some time. There may be times when you experience some difficulties. Wherever possible we want to help and support you throughout your learning journey. Therefore, if you have any concerns, your first point of contact is your Chief School Finance Officer. If your issue is technical or administrative, the point of contact is the program leader who can be contacted through the AASBO by email at www.aasbo.com. A mentor will then be assigned to work with you.

What does the program contain?

The program will contain 3 modules of study composed of 10 courses.

Principles of Accounting I (6-hour course)

An introduction to accounting concepts and principals. This course will provide a solid foundation of accounting knowledge that is critical for local school financial personnel. After completion of this course, participants should understand the basic accounting assumptions, principles, and terminology used within the general accounting function.

Course Content:

- Accounting assumptions and terminology use within general accounting function
- Elements of accounting equation
- Rules of debits and credits
- Basic business forms used in accounting

Principles Of Accounting II – Activity Fund Accounting (6-hour course)

This session is designed as an introduction to Activity Fund Accounting at the local school level. It will focus on the accounting principles and controls related to district and support organizations financial activities. Course will define and distinguish the types of activity funds and their proper classification and provide guidance on accounting and reporting of activity funds under Alabama school accounting procedures.

Course Content:

- Types of activity funds and proper classification
- Controls for establishing and maintaining activity funds
- Recording of basic transactions in various funds
- Preparation and review of monthly activity fund reports
- Analysis of trial balances and supporting documents
- Preparation of basic financial statements

Knowing Your School/School District and Understanding Your Role Within School Administration

This course is designed to give participants an overview of their school/school district in terms of its purpose, objectives, structure culture and systems. Participants will gain an understanding of how following policies and procedures make the school a more effective and efficient organization.

Course Content:

- Knowing your school purpose, objective, structure and systems
- Following school policies and procedures for dealing with parents and students
- Understanding the role of the local school accountant
- Safeguarding confidential information
- How your school district is funded

Elements of Local School Accounting I

This session will provide an in-depth review of the purpose and use of the financial reports of the school/school district. Participants will gain an understanding of the standardized accounting structure for school districts, as well as the classification of school funds at the local school level and their proper uses and required reporting. Basic concepts of student activity fund accounting will be reviewed and effective management practices that make day-to-day financial operations more efficient will be discussed.

Course Content:

- Standardized accounting structure of local school district
- Classification of the two types of local school funds and their proper use and reporting
- Activity fund accounting concept
- Purpose and use of the financial reports of the school district

Elements Of Local School Accounting II

This session will focus on how the district's policies, procedures and regulations relate to their job function. The course will provide an in-depth discussion of proper accounting procedures related to cash receipts/disbursements, fundraisers, outside organizations and other financial transactions. Participants will gain an understanding of the proper procedures and guidelines for payroll to include federal, state and local regulations.

Course Content:

- Interpretation and application of local school board policies, procedures and regulations as related to your job functions
- Application of standard accounting procedures for the recording of local school financial procedures
- Proper procedures and guidelines affecting the payroll/personnel process, including federal, state and local regulations

- Application of district policies and procedures for procurement of goods and services and control of assets and inventory

Effective Communication/Working With People

This session will present the importance of building positive working relationships with others and effective communication in the workplace. Discussion will focus on proposed techniques for handling difficult situations and minimizing staff resistance and stress. Session will also discuss the impact that their conduct, attitude, and professionalism have on the image of their school.

Course Content:

- Building positive working relationships with others
- Communicating effectively with contacts
- Presenting a positive image of yourself and your school

School Law

This course will cover the laws and guidelines relating to public education. Topics will include laws related to public records, the Alabama competitive bid law, employment law, ethics law and copyright issues.

Course Content:

- Local school expenditures that are subject to the competitive bid law
- State laws relating to the conduct of public employees
- Laws and guidelines for dealing with public records and the copyright issues
- State and federal laws relating to public education

Personnel Management

On completion of this course the candidate should have an understanding of laws, guidelines and procedures related to personnel. Topics will include the employment process, evaluations, and employee leave. Discussion of wage and hours issues, as well as contractor vs. employee (W-2/1099) will also be covered.

Course Content:

- Process/procedures for employing, evaluating and dismissing public education employees
- State/federal laws relating to employee leave
- Fair Labor Standards Act
- Difference between contract (1099) vs. W-2 employees

Budget and Financial Reporting

This session will discuss the purpose, principles and application of budgetary accounting in the local school environment. Candidates will gain an understanding of the local and state requirements for local school financial reporting.

Course Content:

- Purpose, principles and application of budgetary accounting in local school environment
- Local and state requirements for local school financial reporting
- Recognition of impact of timely reporting by local school on district's monthly financial reporting requirements
- Monthly edit checks required before uploading local school financial reports

Utilizing Technology in Local School Financial Management

This course will discuss the different users and uses of information in a school as well as ways to manage information resources. Topics include utilizing the tools in the financial management software, time management and technology tools available to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative procedures and processes.

Course Content:

- Operating school administration systems
- Utilizing technology to be more efficient in your role
- Management of information resources
- Time management

How will the program work?

AASBO contracts with the University of Alabama to administer the certificate program. There will be at least two training session per year consisting of two days per session. The sessions will be offered in March and November. The 10 courses will consist of 36 hours of classroom instruction with each course consisting of 3 hours of classroom instruction with the exception of the accounting principles courses which will be 6 hours each.

Participants enrolling in the program will be expected to complete the program requirements within a two-year time frame. Participants are required to attend each two-day session in its entirety.

What difference will the program have made to me?

On successful completion of the Certificate in Local School Financial Management, the graduate will:

- Be able to reflect on their own practices, to contribute to improving performance in relation to systems and resources, and to understand the requirements of their role in supporting the management process
- Have developed skills in self and time management, information retrieval and evaluation, written communication, and the use of standard office IT systems and software.

Continuing Professional Education (CPE)

Upon completion of the certificate program each certificate holder is required to obtain a minimum of nine (9) hours of continuing professional education each fiscal year (October–September)

The CPE requirements take effect the fiscal year following the completion year of the certificate. (Certificate is completed in FY 2020-2021; CPE requirements take effect in FY 2021-2022.)

AASBO will accept CPE credits through the following organizations: AASBO, SASBO, International ASBO, AASOP, GFOA, ASCPA, or any organization recognized as CPE by the Alabama State Board of Public Accountancy. One-half of the required hours must be through the AASBO professional development program.

Any certificate holder who does not maintain their CPE requirements is classified as **inactive status**. In order to return to active status, he or she must provide proof of the required annual CPE for that certificate for each year of inactive status. Certificate holders who are on inactive status for three or more years are required to go back through the program.

AASBO recognizes there are unforeseen circumstances where an individual may not be able to complete their annual CPE requirements. In these instances, the certificate holder must apply for an extension of time through the AASBO organization stating the reason for the request. If granted, the certificate holder will have six months from the end of the fiscal year to complete the needed hours.

Upon starting the program, the participant will have five (fiscal) years to complete the program. Participants will not receive credit for courses that were taken in excess of the five-year period years of their appointment.