Important statewide Sitka School Board Priorities:

- The Sitka School District strongly urges the Legislature to **increase the BSA and forward fund education**. Local school districts must build the fiscal year budget well in advance of the verified student count in October that finalizes actual revenue figures. This makes it impossible to accurately estimate revenues for a school year that begins July 1 each year.

- Studies have shown that **Early Childhood Education**, specifically preschool programs, greatly increase the social and academic success of students. Adequately funded optional preschool programs in districts throughout the State of Alaska would increase academic achievement in all communities.

- The Sitka School District requests **increased ferry service** planned to coincide with significant academic and athletic activities. School districts in Southeast Alaska need ferry access to provide reliable and economically feasible transportation between communities. Frequent and dependable ferry service is necessary for districts to utilize the AMHS in school sponsored trips. The only alternative for many of the communities served by the AMHS is to arrange travel by air which markedly increases transportation costs and diminishes the numbers of students who can afford to participate.

FY2016 SITKA SCHOOL DISTRICT STATE LEGISLATIVE CAPITAL PRIORITIES

1) **Instructional materials & professional development for new state standards alignment - $1,648,800**

   The Sitka School Board, in consultation with administrators, staff and community members believes our legislative priorities for FY2016 should be financial aid to the district for the acquisition and implementation of new instructional and curricular materials that will allow the district to become fully aligned with the new state standards in English Language Arts and Math. Additionally, since the new English Language Arts standards address literacy in the context of Science and Social Studies, instructional materials in all four content areas will need to be aligned with the new state standards in order to ensure our students are prepared for college or career readiness and to succeed in taking the new state assessments. The cost of this important and massive undertaking over the next three years will include both new instructional materials (text books, digital resources, etc.) and more importantly significant professional development for teachers and administrators to assure complete and successful alignment. With multiple years of inadequate or reduced education funding from all revenue sources (state, federal and local), the Sitka School District does not have the financial resources to acquire, implement and develop the newly aligned curriculums for math and language arts without incurring substantial reductions in force and elimination of programs (foreign language, extracurricular activities, music, art, reading and math tutors, interventions, etc.). Thus the Sitka School District, **focusing on student achievement as its number one priority**, requests **$1,648,800** to assist with instructional material acquisition and professional development to allow alignment with the new state standards for math and language arts.

2) **Teacher Evaluation -Development and Implementation - $250,000**

   In 2013, the State Board of Education adopted a requirement for a new teacher and principal evaluation process. This new evaluation will incorporate student performance as a significant portion of the evaluation. This will be a critical link to the successful implementation of the new state standards and the goal of significantly improving student achievement throughout the state of Alaska if done correctly with forethought, logic and reason. The Sitka School District embraces this as a unique opportunity to have a real and positive impact on the teaching profession and classroom pedagogy that could greatly improve student success. The need however for resources to fully develop and implement such a system within the Sitka School District is beyond our means. Just as in the above
request, if no further funds are available to aid the district with this task, we will have to reduce staff, increase pupil teacher ratios (PTR’s) and eliminate programs and services. It is critical that the Sitka School District obtain further funding from the state of Alaska to assist with the development and implementation of the new teacher evaluation system and thus we request $250,000 for FY2016.

3) Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School Playground Equipment - $225,000

Sitka School District seeks funding to replace and upgrade the playground equipment at Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School. Improvements in the safety, quality and age appropriateness of the current equipment are important to meet the needs of the students in second through fifth grade. Current standards for playground equipment have changed significantly since the facility was built. Trends in child obesity and our community focus on wellness require robust facilities for students to increase their physical activity during recess and after school. The approximate cost is $225,000.

4) Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School Covered area Roofing and Siding - $384,000

Sitka School District is seeking funding for a new roof and siding for the covered play area on the Keet Gooshi Heen playground. Over the years of extensive use and weather the covered area is in need of repair. The covered area is important during recess and after school, due to the inclement weather that we have here in Sitka. The Keet Gooshi Heen playground and covered area is also an important community asset for families and students on weekends and non-school days. As examples of the importance of this resource to the community as a whole, the covered area was recently used for birthday parties and United States Coast Guard picnics. The approximate cost is $384,000.

Important City of Sitka funding issues endorsed by the Sitka School Board:
The Sitka School Board supports the following Legislative Capital Project requests:

Project Title: SITKA MULTI-PURPOSE BALL FIELD IMPROVEMENTS
Total Project Cost: $1,500,000
FY 2016 State Funding Request: $1,500,000
City and Borough of Sitka Federal Tax ID Number: 92-0041163

City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) requests $1,500,000 in funds from the State of Alaska to develop one of the CBS sand lot baseball/softball fields with a new synthetic turf field, improved drainage and safety for field users.

The City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) seeks to improve one of the city’s old sand lot ball fields with a new synthetic turf field, just like the new Moller Baseball Field. Replacement of an old baseball/softball field would be utilized for girls’ softball, Little League play, and could be used for middle school activities. This project is a high priority request of the Sitka School District.

Every season, City maintenance crews are out on these fields trying to address the many drainages issues that crop up; attempting to make a safe playing surface. The grandstand area is in poor condition also. This project would encompass a new synthetic turf field built upon a stabilized base with sufficient drainage, new grandstands, and new fencing. One possible location is Blatchley Middle School. A positive for developing Blatchley Middle School is that it could be used as a multi-purpose field for baseball and softball. The field is located adjacent to Blatchley Middle School, and this would provide for school activities on a field for year-round play potential.

The Moller Baseball Field has set high standards and has proved to be a driver for economic diversification. Moller Field has brought numerous tournaments to Sitka in the last two seasons that would not have been possible without the drainage improvements and synthetic turf playing surface. CBS expects similar economic profit from a new turf at one of these multipurpose fields. These fields are always busy with baseball and softball players; and there are runners, soccer players, football players, and a large contingent of ultimate Frisbee matches. Mt. Edgecumbe High School utilized the field extensively during the past school year as well.