Sitka School District

FY18 Legislative Priorities

Timeliness
The Sitka School Board is requesting that the 1st session of the 30th Legislature be finished in fewer than 90 days, and would greatly appreciate settling on the education budget and finances by March 15, 2017.

Operational

Funding
Keep funding levels stable, and do not attempt to shift state’s PERS/TERS liability to school districts/cities

Ferry Service
Fund the Alaska Marine Highway to better serve SE Alaska communities

Early Learning
Adequately fund optional early learning preschool programs throughout Alaska

Capital

Health and Safety
Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School covered playground area siding/roofing, and new playground equipment
The importance of the Alaska Marine Highway and Early Learning Opportunities

**Ferry Service:** Sitka is experiencing the worst ferry service since statehood with only 1 ferry northbound and 1 southbound weekly. This limited schedule does not allow our co-curricular teams to travel by ferry, which greatly increases costs to the district and families. We request increased ferry service be provided to coincide with significant co-curricular activities.

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

**Timeliness**

Local school boards have deadlines to submit budgets by the end of April while the Alaska Legislature, if it is to be in session for the statutory 90 days, adjourns no earlier than April 19th. Hiring decisions are closely tied in with the state’s bottom line. In order to extend teacher contracts, school boards must know our complete fiscal picture.

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**Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School Covered Area Roofing and Siding**

$384,000 Estimate

We are seeking funding for a new roof and siding for the covered area at our largest elementary school. Over the years of extensive use in Sitka’s damp climate, this critical resource for students and the community is in dire need of repair.

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**Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School Playground Equipment**

$225,000 Estimate

We seek funding to replace and upgrade the playground equipment at our largest school. Improvements in the safety and quality of the current equipment are important to meet the needs of our elementary students. We require robust facilities for students to increase their physical activity during recess and after school. It is in the elementary years that this is most important for it is in early childhood that the engram of valuing and seeking vigorous exercise is normally formed.