FY2013 SITKA SCHOOL DISTRICT STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Sitka School District seeks funds to develop an all-weather turf multi-purpose track and field complex for year round use. As a region 3A school Sitka High School has seen an increase in student athletic participation and an increase in southeast schools traveling to Sitka for athletic competitions. The Lower Moller Park is inadequate with its track surface, outdoor lighting, spectator seating and surroundings needing substantial costly improvements to adequately serve both high school athletic events and off hours community use. The new Kimsham Sports Complex, which currently has three softball fields and a multi-purpose field. Upgrades to this area would be substantially less money and would be a better facility due to the drainage, location and safety. There also is easy access to restrooms, concession facilities and plenty of parking. **The approximate cost is $6,400,000**

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.**

Sitka School District is also 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, including birthday parties and United States Coast Guard official picnics. **The approximate cost is $384,000.**

**Important statewide funding issues endorsed by the Sitka School Board:**

- The Sitka School District strongly urges the Legislature to 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 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.
- The Sitka School Board requests legislative support for funding to continue and expand the AASB Consortium for Digital Learning so all Alaskan children have access to appropriate technology for internet access, distance learning opportunities and global citizenry.