

CEAAC's board adopted program for the 2014 session of the Alaska Legislature

Following our September 2013 Board meeting, CEAAC has established the following Legislative Agenda:

- Introduction of legislation to increase the Residential Learning Center (RLC) Stipend to our original 2013 proposed amount.**

Spearheaded by Dr. Jerry Covey and our partner Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC), we are planning to follow up on our unanimously successful 2013 RLC legislation. Legislation is drafted and we are in the process of securing legislative sponsors for the proposed increase. If successful, the stipend would increase by half over the current amount – three times the statutory amount prior to the passage of last year's legislation and equal to the amount identified by our members as sufficient to meet the costs of RLCs.

As part of this work we will also be seeking greater clarification of how this law is to be implemented and will seek to ensure that the regulations that will ultimately govern the application of this legislation are applied in a manner that makes sense for our members.

- CEAAC will again pursue funding of the remaining *Kasayulie* schools from the General Fund and will also seek to Fund schools beyond the limits of the Rural Schools Fund to try and fund further down the list.**

We were successful last year in unanimously passing the amendment to the Rural Schools Fund to add in the small municipal schools. Now we need to be sure that we continue to move our schools off the list beyond the initial *Kasayulie* schools

and beyond the funding amounts of the Rural Schools Fund. Recent financial projections for the state will make this increasingly difficult in coming years.

- **We are exploring whether or not to support proposed Legislation that would address a bonding solution for a number of districts and that could help in moving schools off the list at a more rapid pace.**

A draft of this concept was presented at the September 2013 CEAAC Board meeting and will be reviewed by the Executive Committee before the session. Assuming we adopt a position on this legislation, we will be reaching out to members to testify in favor of its passage.

- **We will continue to seek to fund Major Maintenance projects and continue to work with the Administration for a long-term solution to funding of Major-Maintenance.**

As described above, with severe reductions anticipated in future budgets, it is imperative that we fund items down this list sooner rather than later. While we recognize that some projects will always be in the Governor's budget, we must get additional projects further down the list approved and we need to ensure that we codify an automatic minimum for major maintenance construction for future years.

- **We will develop and introduce meaningful Pre-K legislation to codify the *Moore* settlement**
- **We will develop and introduce meaningful teacher retention legislation to codify the *Moore* settlement**

As mentioned in September, introducing these bills and securing some legislative support should help set us up for future success in these areas.

– **We will join efforts to improve the Base Student Allocation,**

We will join with many other entities in supporting efforts to move education funding forward.

Additional issues will remain on our radar such as the recently proposed Ketchikan law suit on state and local funding of education, and we will also keep an eye on other pending legislation in the coming year such as a pro-rate formula funding for under populated schools, and identifying ways to inflation-proof the rural schools funding mechanism. Look for regular updates on all of these issues throughout the Session.

– **We have endorsed and will be supporting an effort that seeks to provide a bonding option for a number of our districts and other small districts.**

This legislation will provide more bonding flexibility by improving potential reimbursement prospects should districts elect to bond for certain projects that are presently languishing on the School Grants Construction List. This will also potentially have the effect of reducing the number of projects on the Construction List over time. A draft of this concept was presented at the September 2013 CEAAC Board meeting and was subsequently approved for inclusion in the Legislative package after review at our November Executive Committee meeting. We will be reaching out to members to testify in favor of its passage.

– **We will forcefully advocate for adding major maintenance projects to the capital budget and for fully utilizing the funds in the Rural School Construction Account.**

The Governor proposed no funding for Major Maintenance in this year's budget proposal. Further, he again draws the *Kasayulie* Suit school, Kwethluk, from the Rural School Construction Fund. We continue to maintain that these schools should be funded from

the General Fund as was intended in the law suit and that the Rural School Construction Fund should be used for the next schools on the list. It is our intent to work to fund those next schools.

Should you have any questions or suggestions, please contact our Government Relations Director at cwrecord@alaska.net or (907)350-1635