

5/18/17 Coalition for Education Equity Update

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2017 Spike Jorgensen Scholarship Winners

Our two 2017 Spike Jorgensen Scholarship winners have been selected! This year's awardees come from the Anchorage and Northwest Arctic Borough school districts.

Shila Marie Rivas is a graduating senior from Dimond High School in Anchorage and is planning to attend UAA with a major in Business Administration. Lucero Belen Nelson-Loya is a graduating senior from Kotzebue and is also planning to attend UAA where she will study criminal justice. Both will receive a \$1,000 scholarship toward their post-secondary education in the 2017-2018 academic year, which is renewable for a total of four years.

I've attached more information about both of our scholarship winners for your information. Please join me in congratulating Lucero and Shila!

Ed Connector – Recent Activity, Tools, Resources

Last week, Ed Connector embarked upon a new partnership with Alaska's Elementary Principals across the state. We are excited to support this new learning community and their effort to enhance further statewide collaboration.

This month inside Ed Connector, district administrators are talking about:

- Athletic Directors and non-teaching time
- Interest based bargaining training
- Attendance initiatives
- House and Senate Education funding plans

And, here are some of the newest resources added to Ed Connector:

- The Cost of Teacher Turnover in Alaska - CAEPR 4-20-17: This new report from the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR) details the costs associated with teacher turnover and calculates an average per-teacher cost in four categories: Separation, Recruitment, Hiring, and Induction. This report also details actual dollars allocated to these activities and makes recommendations for policy and practice.
- OMB Analysis of AK Budget per Capita: This analysis points out some pitfalls with comparing Alaska's per capita spending with other states.

- Alaska Education Challenge Kick-Off Documents & Tools: On April 20, 2017 the Governor, the State Board of Education and the Department of Education & Early Development brought key stakeholders from across the state together to focus on 5 broad committee priorities: Student Learning, Educator Excellence, Modernization & Finance, Tribal & Community Ownership, and Safety & Well-Being.

For these and other resources and tools, go to www.EdConnector.org (if you don't have an account, request one from the site today!)

District Member Highlight: Lower Kuskokwim School District

ACT announced on May 4 the four national winners of the 2017 ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign, which highlights the exceptional achievements of students, schools and employers championing college and career readiness in their communities. This year's ACT National Student Readiness Exemplar (High School Senior) is Jayne Hanna from Nunivak Island, Alaska, in the Lower Kuskokwim School District.

Jayne is a master problem-solver and go-getter, particularly when it comes to keeping connected with her Robotics team, the Sunchasers. She lives in the remote Alaska Native village of Mekoryuk on Nunivak Island—a long 150 miles away from her teammate in Bethel—which makes exchanging ideas, parts and fundraising goods extremely challenging. Jayne worked with community members and school sports teams to hand-deliver goods by bush plane from one community to the other, and used teleconferencing resources to update code and collaborate with her teammate. Despite having limited access to academic opportunities (Jayne is one of 11 high school students in her village) she has actively participated in team sports, speech and poetry competitions, and various student government roles and obtained college credits from dual enrollment since her sophomore year in high school. Jayne hopes to become an educator in rural Alaska to continue her love of learning and act as a role model for other Alaska Natives.

What a proud moment for our member district, and a great example of the rigorous and well-rounded education they provide to their students!

Legislative Update

The House and the Senate adjourned yesterday. During the 121-day session, the Alaska legislature failed to pass an operating, capital or mental health budget or agree upon a fiscal plan. They have been called into special session by Governor Walker, beginning today, 5/18/17, to address these issues. We remain hopeful that the final resolution of the fiscal plan components and the operating budget will result in an intact education budget that includes pre-kindergarten and the additional \$1.2 million for Moore pre-k sites. We are disappointed that any resolution will be coming so late in the year that it prevents reasonable and efficient planning by our school districts across the state. It

remains critical for everyone to contact our state Senators to let them know you support a balanced fiscal plan (such as what the House has proposed), including oil and gas tax reform and a broad-based tax and that you oppose any further cuts to the education budget. They need to receive these calls and messages every day and they need to hear from community members, not just school district personnel. Comments regarding the operating budget should go to members of the conference committee: Senators Hoffman, MacKinnon, and Olson and Representatives Seaton, Foster, and Pruitt.

HB 135, School Construction Grant Program, was unfortunately held up in Senate Finance, so never made it to the floor for a vote. It will have to be picked up next session, but it is very near final passage.

Calendar: CEE meeting dates for 2017-18

- **Fall 2017 Meeting:** Thursday, November 9, 2017 (in conjunction with AASB Fall Conference in Anchorage)
- **Spring 2018 Meeting:** Thursday, March 15, 2018 (in conjunction with the Alaska Teacher Placement Job Fair in Anchorage)

*The **Coalition for Education Equity** is a member-based, non-profit organization that uses research, policy development and advocacy to help solve school performance issues in rural and urban areas of Alaska. Our work is made possible predominantly through membership dues from our school district and corporate members. Learn more about us at www.ceequity.org. If you're interested in becoming a member, please contact Sarah Sledge at sarah@ceequity.org.*