ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

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2012 ANNUAL CONVENTION

12-44

TITLE: EXPANDING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL EDUCATION AND LOCAL PROGRAMS

WHEREAS: The statewide 2011 Alaska Native high school 4 year graduation rate is 50.07; and

WHEREAS: Of the 131 small high schools, 93 have 30 or fewer students; and

WHEREAS: Of the 2,662 students in small high schools, 95.38% are Alaska Native students; and

WHEREAS: Almost 1,000 students participate in residential programs of different types throughout the state, and different regions are developing regional programs that fit their needs and circumstance; and

WHEREAS: State policies have had a negative impact on small high schools and urban schools have very poor performance with regard to Alaska Native students; and

WHEREAS: Alaska Native students learn in a variety of places, from small rural schools in the villages, to large urban schools in the cities, and distant boarding academies; and

WHEREAS: Each type of school has its own strengths and weaknesses. Though rural schools often are not provided the same resources as urban schools, they teach things that urban ones do not and they permit our youth to remain with their families and help ensure the continued vitality of our people, our homes, and our cultures; and

WHEREAS: Regardless of where one attends school, education is the foundation of opportunities for Alaska Natives and for all peoples; and

WHEREAS: Quality education should therefore be available to all who want it; and

WHEREAS: Alaska Natives have suffered discrimination and disparities in education, which, as recognized by the courts, has persisted to today; and

WHEREAS: Several programs throughout the state have had excellent results with short term, medium term and long term programs that connect rural and urban Alaska Native students with opportunities to advance their education; and

WHEREAS The current Alaska law only authorizes statewide residential programs through school districts to be eligible for state residential stipends; and

WHEREAS: It is essential that Alaska Native organizations operate educational programs for Alaska Native students to advance their opportunities; and

WHEREAS: The current stipend does not meet the operational cost needs of programs currently under operation; and

WHEREAS: Residential Learning Centers provide one option and offer the following benefits:

- Student access to short- and long-term courses and programs that small high schools are unable to deliver;
- State education funding would remain in a student's home district or region.
- Collaboration on course delivery and cost sharing;
- Student access to technical centers, university campuses, job shadowing, and apprenticeships;
- Year-round course delivery;
- Increased opportunities for Performance Scholarship Program, CTE programs, social and service learning; and

NOW BE IT RESOLVED by the Delegates to the 2012 Annual Convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc. (AFN), that AFN works with the Governor, his Administration, and the Alaska Legislature to rename 4 AAC 33.090 as follows: District-operated or non-profit operated residential programs that deliver in-district, regional, or statewide residential educational programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AFN advocate to amend language in 4 AAC 33.090 to include in-district and regional residential educational programs as well as statewide residential educational programs, and that Alaska Native organizations are required to lead or partner with such programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AFN advocate to amend language in 4 AAC 33.090 to provide student stipend funding to approved in-district and regional residential educational programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State of Alaska establish in regulation an annual application period for districts wishing to establish a district, regional, or statewide residential school in compliance with 4 AAC 33.090; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the current stipend be increased by at least 50% to adequately reflect the costs associated with operating residential programs; and

BE IT FINALLY FURTHER RESOLVED that AFN partner with individuals, groups, and other organizations that also believe in educational equality to ensure that Alaska Native Organizations are driving the residential programs for the benefit of Alaska Native students.

SUBMITTED BY: BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

CONVENTION ACTION: PASSED

