



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No. 12-012

State Settles *Moore v. State*

January 26, 2012, Juneau, Alaska - Governor Sean Parnell, Education and Early Development Commissioner Mike Hanley, and Charles Wohlforth, Executive Director of Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children (CEAAC), announced the settlement of a significant constitutional case: *Moore v. State of Alaska*.

The agreement brings an end to an 8-year-old case concerning the state's education system with the state providing \$18 million for the lowest performing schools, pending the Legislature's approval. In turn, CEAAC will agree to drop the lawsuit.

This development marks the second significant court settlement to resolve concerns among Alaska's rural school districts by the Parnell administration within the last five months.

"This settlement is another step forward in our effort to improve educational achievement," Governor Parnell said. "Our children are our future. My administration is committed to the goal of having an outstanding education system."

The *Moore* case, filed in 2004, challenged whether Alaska's public education system was adequate under the Alaska Constitution. The court found that the state's public education had adequate funding, standards, and assessments. It also found, however, the state was not meeting its constitutional obligations in the lowest-achieving schools.

The settlement targets struggling schools. Subject to legislative approval, the settlement provides an \$18 million appropriation to be distributed by the Department of Education and Early Development working with a collaborative committee of educators. Districts with the lowest performing schools can apply to receive money over the next three years. Funds will be used for targeted improvement programs, including early literacy, teacher retention, and remedial efforts to help students pass the high school exit exam. These schools must also adhere to established best practices and agree to set improvement benchmarks.

"This settlement is a milestone in Alaska education," said Wohlforth. "We will be taking significant action as a State to address Alaska's lowest-performing schools and most disadvantaged students, in direct acknowledgement of our constitutional obligation to provide every child with real educational opportunity. The settlement marks the beginning of a new era of problem solving between advocates for rural education and the State, which could not have come about without visionary leadership by Commissioner Hanley and Governor Parnell."

"This settlement is built on our confidence that our teachers are good teachers and that

children will succeed," Commissioner Hanley added. "I appreciate the efforts that Mr. Wohlforth and CEAAC's board put into resolving this matter. This settlement will help districts use best practices and achieve the improvements that we know are within reach. In addition, it shows the benefit of collaboration and cooperation between the State and the districts as we work together for Alaska's children."

CEAAC Executive Director Charles Wohlforth can be reached at 907-242-2151, or by email at director@ceaac.net

###