

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR meeting of
Wednesday, March 9, 2022
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers**

CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Board of Education met in regular session on the 9th day of March, 2022, in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers. Board President Stephen Bradford called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The following members were present to establish a quorum and due notice had been published: Board President Stephen Bradford; Board Clerk-Treasurer Bridget Mattson; and Board Members Diane Gubatayao; Paul Robbins Jr.; and Nicole Anderson. Board Vice President Keenan Sanderson and Board Member Jordan Tabb were present via teleconference. Student Board Member Braxton Zink was absent and excused.

Administrative staff present included Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson; Business Manager Katie Parrott; Curriculum Director Alonso Escalante; and Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Board Member Diane Gubatayao provided several recognitions: to Tongass Federal Credit Union and Katherine Tatsuda for sponsoring a "Get Real Financial Reality" program for high school seniors; and to students Autumn Elsner and Lily Gosnell for being selected for the First City Rotary's Youth Leadership Award. They will meet with other students from around the state in Wasilla in April. Ms. Gubatayao also shared information on the local Native Youth Olympics.

CITIZEN REMARKS

Kim Simpson spoke in support of the proposal to create an assistant superintendent in the district. She said she thinks it is something the district has desperately needed, and she believes there is available funding.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS - There were no reports.

CLAIMS FOR INFORMATION - For Information - *Claims of March 4, 2022* - No questions were asked.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent's Report

Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson announced that the basketball regionals were starting that night at Ketchikan High School. Teams from seven other communities are participating in addition to Kayhi. She said the Kayhi principal position is open, with the application period closing that evening. She briefly described the position's hiring process. A small committee will be narrowing down the candidates. Its members are: the KEA president, a KEA member, incoming superintendent Michael Robbins; Schoenbar principal Sheri Boehlert; and as an alternate principal Kurt Lindemann; Board Member Bridget Mattson; and herself. Eighteen applications had been received so far, she said.

Lastly, Ms. Johnson noted that schools will be on Spring Break the following week.

Business Manager - Budget survey

Business Manager Katie Parrott gave a detailed report regarding a recent budget survey designed to gather community input into the district budget as it is being developed. She said that 234 responses were received. Three survey contained three main areas which she defined as "general ratings;" COVID-related questions regarding the use of its federal relief funds; and a section for survey respondents to provide recommendations.

Houghtaling Elementary School Report

Principal Michael Cron opened his school's annual report, by pointing out that Houghtaling is the oldest continually running school in the district. Also, of note, is that Houghtaling employs 85 staff members, more than any other school in the district, with many of them being classified staff, stated Mr. Cron. He said that the student enrollment of 348 students is a slight decrease from prior to the pandemic. The school is also the only one in the district with specialized special education programs, he said. These include the learning options program for children with behavioral IEPs; and the integrated learning classroom, serving intensive needs students, mainly with autism.

Principal Cron next described the year's successes and challenges. He said one of the main successes was that the school operated 100 percent onsite - the entire school never had to be shut down. He contributed this to effective mitigations conducted with more fidelity. He also touted the school's RTI program as a success, and an improvement in school climate.

As far as challenges, Mr. Cron cited major attendance issues, with 40% of the students considered to be chronically absent, which he defined as a student being at school only 80 to 90 percent of the time. In addition, 28% of the school's students attend school even less, not even 80% of the time. He spoke about how the pandemic's effect on school had impacted attendance. Hiring staff has been another challenge with constant shuffling of staff to fill gaps. He also said the age of the facility has meant continual maintenance challenges.

Regarding academic progress at the school, Mr. Cron feels that smaller classes have helped, but said he didn't have data to compare due to the pandemic and the change in the achievement tests. He showed the Board one piece of MAPS data he finds helpful in monitoring an individual student's academic progress.

Meredith Lundamo, dean of students, described restorative justice and how it has reduced both out of school suspensions and office referrals for students having issues in the classroom. She said there is a dire need for mental health services for students at the school this year. In addition to the school's onsite counselor who is seeing 38 students at the school, counselors from Ketchikan Indian Community and from WISH are also meeting with some students at the school each week, said Ms. Lundamo. She also noted that referrals to outside agencies for students' health and well-being have increased this year as well.

In concluding the school report, Mr. Cron shared some of the school's plans for next year. This included adding an assistant principal position to the school, while retaining the dean of students position. Linnaea Troina will be assistant principal. She will concentrate on coaching of teachers, and ensuring fidelity of curriculum and instruction, said Principal Cron.

****PUBLIC HEARING - POLICY** - Procedure (1) Citizens may give public comment regarding the subject of the hearing; (2) the public hearing is closed; (3) opportunity for Board discussion and decision.

Motion to approve revisions to Board Bylaw 9320 - Meetings in first reading

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

Public Hearing

There were no comments during the public hearing.

Board discussion

Ms. Gubatayao suggested that the word "regular" should be added for clarity to the proposed language about the second meeting in the month.

Ms. Mattson explained why she felt there was justification to move to one regular meeting a month with a potential worksession as a second meeting. Ketchikan's School Board is one of the few in the state to hold two monthly regular School Board meetings, she said. This type of meeting format would help the board function better with more time to tackle other important goals, said Ms. Mattson. In addition, she noted that meeting preparation takes a lot of staff time.

Ms. Gubatayao stated she felt the Board should continue to hold two regular meetings, indicating there was sufficient business to conduct. The Board could hold a worksession with its regular meeting, she said. Interim Superintendent Johnson said, in part, that staff would be more strategic in planning if there were only one meeting a month.

Mr. Bradford cited his experience with city councils in the lower '48 who met only once monthly, stating it had worked well. Staff spent less time preparing, and meetings which were held as worksessions were productive for the council members, he said.

Prior to the roll call vote, it was agreed to add the word "regular" to "meeting" in the proposed language.

ROLL CALL

ROBBINS JR., SANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, TABB, ANDERSON, MATTSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion to approve revisions to Board Policy 5141 - Health Care and Emergencies in first reading.

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Public Hearing

There was no public comment on the policy.

Board discussion

Mr. Robbins Jr. explained that the policy committee met to discuss criteria for sending ill students home, after public comment on the issue at the previous Board meeting. He said the group found state guidelines that addressed the issue: the Alaska "Infectious Disease Management Guidelines for Alaska Schools." He read a sentence from those guidelines regarding excluding students who have an infectious disease from school. The decision should be made "in conjunction with the school nurse, the state or local public health agency, health care professionals, and/or parents/guardians," he said, reading from the guidelines. *

Ms. Gubatayao thanked public health for assisting the policy committee in finding these guidelines.

** Clerk's note: (The exclusion guidelines would be referenced and attached to the policy, if approved.)*

ROLL CALL

TABB, ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, ROBBINS JR., SANDERSON, MATTSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

CONSENT CALENDAR of March 9, 2022

- a. Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 23, 2022.
- b. Motion to approve a long-term substitute contract with Judith Doyon for the 2021-2022 school year (TSAS).
- c. Motion to approve Resolution #22-03 regarding Hazardous Bus Routes.

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar of March 9, 2022.

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

MOTION APPROVED WITHOUT OBJECTION

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to approve the (math) curriculum for K-12 classrooms in the amount of \$345,288.28.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

Curriculum Director Alonso Escalante spoke about the math committee's process in selecting math curriculum materials for the next six-year cycle. The K-2 teachers were interested in piloting a different

program than Envision, which has been used for the past six years in the district. However, after trying other products those teachers decided to stick with Envision, said Mr. Escalante. Similarly, the middle school teachers also looked at different options, but decided to stay with Envision.

At the high school level, textbook samples were reviewed on a course specific basis. He said it had been 12 years since the high school math department had new textbooks.

Mr. Escalante also mentioned possible professional development with Karen Karp, who has provided math inservices in Ketchikan in previous years.

Board Member Paul Robbins Jr. asked about the curriculum costs being split over multiple years as was referenced on the agenda statement. Ms. Parrott indicated she was very sure that a multi-year payment plan would be accepted.

Ms. Gubatayao credited Mr. Escalante and the teachers for their work during the math curriculum process.

ROLL CALL

MATTSON, ANDERSON, TABB, ROBBINS JR., GUBATAYAO, SANDERSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion to approve creating the Assistant Superintendent position and direct District Administration to establish this position effective July 1, 2022.

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: BRADFORD

Discussion

Board President Bradford said he had requested that staff provide information on this item, and he had also asked incoming superintendent Michael Robbins to provide input. (*Mr. Robbins had been connected telephonically at this point in the meeting.*)

Business Manager Parrott came to the podium to provide some historical data and also financial information for this agenda item. She first explained that during the process of hiring an interim superintendent, the Board determined the selected individual could potentially stay on as an assistant superintendent to provide continuity, if a permanent superintendent was hired during the current school year. The position was ratified in the interim superintendent's contract, she said. The assistant superintendent position would be a new position and an additional cost in the budget. Ms. Parrott commented on the "leanness" of this school district's administrative costs as compared to other school districts in Alaska. However, as a result of that staffing level, there were gaps, she indicated. As a result, for several years the district had contracted with a retired administrator to handle administrative duties, such as special projects, and filling in as principal. The intent of adding the assistant superintendent position would be to fill some of those gaps, as directed by the Board, and to also support outcomes of the district, said Ms. Parrott. She elaborated more on various aspects of the subject.

She also stated that the Board would be able to again weigh in on this position as it would need to authorize this cost in next year's fiscal budget.

Board Member Gubatayao commented on administrative positions district-wide, particularly regarding dean of students and assistant principals. Interim Superintendent Johnson responded and said that the dean of students was not an administrative position.

Mr. Bradford stated that he put this item on the agenda as he felt the position needed to be available if Mr. Robbins chose to fill it. He added that he viewed the position as being able to fill voids in administration that he'd observed over the past year.

Incoming Superintendent Michael Robbins was then invited to provide his feedback. In part, he said an assistant superintendent could help the district achieve the goals of the School Board and district. Otherwise,

the district is attempting to triage and just get through each day, he said. Mr. Robbins stated he was fully behind adding the position and felt it would result in moving the district forward. Board Member Robbins Jr. compared the cost of an assistant superintendent with other staff positions, stating it could roughly equal two teachers; and asked for more comment on how it would move the district forward.

In response, Mr. Robbins spoke of initiatives that would be supported by having both a superintendent and assistant superintendent, such as concentrating on MTSS (multi-tiered system of supports) and closing student achievement gaps, and being a visible presence in the school buildings.

Ms. Gubatayao stated she thought the proposed action was premature and she didn't see the justification at this time.

Ms. Anderson said she was not opposed to the position necessarily. However, she was concerned that the cost might take away from other district efforts such as smaller class sizes.

Business Manager Parrott spoke again, stating that the incoming Superintendent could establish the position and the job description when he comes on board July 1. In order to enable him to do so, she said it seemed appropriate to start the process now. She noted some state economic indicators that made her more optimistic in incorporating the position into a draft budget.

Board Member Mattson said this position has been floated since she's been on the board. She described it as an infrastructure type decision. Because the superintendent is always having to deal with emergencies, there is never the time to spend on daily maintenance of the district, she said. Ms. Mattson said she appreciated that Mr. Robbins was in essence "working" for our district before he was yet being paid, and he was thinking about what the district would need in moving forward.

Mr. Tabb said that while he shares some of the concerns expressed, he noted that the district and Board had ambitious strategic goals that had not been possible to implement. He said he hopes that this position will help move those goals forward.

Mr. Sanderson commented on his perspective observing a similarly slim administrative team at Ketchikan Indian Community. He stated he would like to see this position created.

Interim Superintendent Johnson added that with this position, there would be opportunity to apply for more grants, pursue partnerships, and other things that come onto the plate of the superintendent.

Ms. Gubatayao stated that she was on the School Board previously when the assistant superintendent position was eliminated, after the pulp mill closed.

Mr. Bradford said he was optimistic the position could be funded, without cutting staff or increasing class sizes. He noted there would be savings through no longer needing to contract with the retired administrator nor needing the COVID communications position. He added that an assistant superintendent would provide the district the opportunity to get back on track post-COVID and to move forward.

ROLL CALL

TABB, SANDERSON, ROBBINS JR., ANDERSON, MATTSON, BRADFORD - AYES

GUBATAYAO - NAY

7-1

MOTION PASSED

Motion to approve Resolution No. 22-02, a joint resolution with the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly, calling on the governor and the legislature of the State of Alaska to increase the base student allocation (BSA).

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

Mr. Bradford pointed out that the Borough Assembly had passed this resolution at its meeting that Monday.

Ms. Mattson thanked Ms. Gubatayao, Ms. Parrott and Borough Clerk Kacie Paxton for their work on the resolution. She said it was well-worded and a strong statement.

Ms. Gubatayao also thanked Ms. Parrott for providing pertinent data for the resolution and commented on the value of the joint effort.

ROLL CALL

ROBBINS JR., SANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, TABB, ANDERSON, MATTSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCUSSION

AASB Spring Boardmanship and Legislative Fly-In (March 19-22, 2022). There was support for the Board to cover Ms. Gubatayao's attendance at this event. She would already be attending a concurrent AASB Board of Directors meeting.
KNEPC training. - The Ketchikan Native Education Parent Committee has offered to train the School Board on cultural standards and cultural competence.

Board Policy 4112.8 - Employment of Relatives and Others - Discussion on whether the policy needed to be strengthened or made clearer. The policy committee may look further at the policy.

Drug abuse/overdose issues

An upcoming event to provide education to parents was noted. It was also stated that more Narcan training had been done in the community.

BOARD COMMENTS

Board Member Gubatayao wished staff a good spring break.

Board Member Robbins Jr. clarified comments made at the last School Board meeting regarding the superintendent finalist process. He said he supports the job the interim superintendent candidate has done and he has a great amount of respect for her.

Board Member Mattson stated her appreciation to staff and being able to attend parent teacher conferences in person. She also stated thanks to the business staff who she said are often unsung heroes.

ADVANCE PLANNING

It was announced that there was a public forum on the school district budget the following evening.

ADJOURNMENT

With no objection to a motion to adjourn, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Meeting minutes approved as distributed at the March 23, 2022 regular meeting of the Board of Education.

BOARD PRESIDENT
Stephen Bradford