

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL meeting of Thursday, February 18, 2021
Noon
Via WebEx virtual platform

CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Board of Education met in a **special session** on the 18th day of February, 2021, virtually via WebEx. Board President Kim Hodne called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

The following members were present via WebEx, to establish a quorum and due notice had been published: Board President Kim Hodne; Vice President Sonya Skan; Clerk-Treasurer Bridget Mattson; Board Members Diane Gubatayao, Jordan Tabb, Paul Robbins Jr., and Nicole Anderson. Student Board Member Henry Clark also participated.

Administrative staff present on the videoconference were Business Manager Katie Parrott and School Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

No written comments were submitted and no citizens had signed up to comment.

DISCUSSION regarding the district's Smart Start plan operations and risk level

Emergency Operations Center Manager Abner Hoage attended the virtual meeting to provide an update on the community's risk level. Six positive COVID cases had been confirmed in Ketchikan the previous day, with eight cases the day before that, said Mr. Hoage. The community's positivity rate that day of 2.77 percent was one of the indicators putting the community risk level solidly in the Level 3 range, he said. Realistically, the community risk level would not drop to Level 2 before late in the following week, or even after, he added. For those reasons, EOC Manager Hoage recommended that the district extend the current Smart Start risk level through at least the next week.

Acting Superintendent Katie Parrott also spoke about factors that weigh into her recommendation, including recent cases at Ketchikan High School and Schoenbar Middle School in the past several days. The district worked with public health to identify close contacts and quarantine those persons; and to determine if the schools could be kept open, she said. She recommended the Board extend the medium risk level operations through the entirety of next week.

Ms. Parrott added that principals and staff optimally need a two-day window to make the school operation change go smoothly, but definitely not less than 24 hours.

For approximately 40 minutes, Board members discussed various situations which might factor into their decision on this issue, with Mr. Hoage and Ms. Parrott providing additional information. These topics included: the Schoenbar/Kayhi cases; compliance with quarantine; the EOC's recommended protocols for businesses during a high risk level; the impact of the 50 percent and 100 percent capacity levels on safety at the schools, and students' mental health and educational experience; Ketchikan's COVID positivity rate levels and CDCs recommendations; how vaccinations might impact the community and district risk levels; and the importance of staff following protocols.

Motion to continue at the current level for another week and that the Board reconvene again next week for further consideration

Moved by ROBBINS JR.; Second by: TABB

Discussion

Board Member Diane Gubatayao asked whether another special meeting needed to be scheduled next week if a regular meeting was already scheduled. She spoke to why she wasn't in favor of continuing the 50/50 model.

Mr. Hodne commented on the necessity for everyone to follow protocols that had been in place and for kids to be in school. He said he would vote to move the schools back into 100 percent capacity.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark advisory vote - ABSTAIN

ANDERSON, SKAN, TABB, MATTSO, ROBBINS JR. - AYES

GUBATAYAO, HODNE - NAYS

5-2

MOTION PASSED

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board Member Nicole Anderson said she would like to see the community's positivity rate go down before kids are back in school at 100 percent. She asked that the community do its part, stating that students are being affected by things that are not necessarily in their control.

Board Member Jordan Tabb and Board Member Bridget Mattson both commented on appreciating the Board's deliberation and discussion.

Ms. Gubatayao said she hopes teachers take advantage of the available vaccines.

Student Henry Clark commented on the work the Board put into making its decisions.

Mr. Hodne said he appreciated the Board's debate. He asked for Ms. Parrott to stress the importance of following protocols by students and staff.

Board Member Sonya Skan stated her appreciation for district teachers and staff who she said are working in a high risk environment. She also commented on the choice for teachers to get vaccinated.

Acting Superintendent Parrott said she would put out a reminder to the district of protocols to be followed and also provide information on available vaccine providers.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 1:14 p.m.

Minutes approved as distributed at the March 10, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Education.

BOARD PRESIDENT
Kim Hodne