

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**REGULAR meeting of  
Wednesday, November 10, 2021  
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 10th day of November 2021, 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 Vice President Keenan Sanderson; Board Clerk-Treasurer Bridget Mattson; and Board Members Diane Gubatayao; Jordan Tabb; Paul Robbins Jr.; and Nicole Anderson. Student Board Member Braxton Zink was also present.

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

Explanation of work session on agenda

For the benefit of the public, Board President Stephen Bradford explained that the Board would be entering a work session that evening for the purpose of discussing the Start Strong mitigation plan.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion to approve the agenda for the regular meeting of November 10, 2021.**

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

**VOICE VOTE: PASSED**

**PUBLIC RECOGNITION - National Native American Heritage Month/ Alaska Native Heritage Month**

Board President Bradford read a proclamation issued by Governor Mike Dunleavy recognizing Alaska Native Heritage Month. Mr. Bradford stated it would be implemented as the school district's as well.

Board Member Diane Gubatayao recognized fellow Board members Paul Robbins Jr. and Jordan Tabb for serving in the armed services. Mr. Robbins commented that very day marked the 246th birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps.

**CITIZEN REMARKS**

Dave Timmerman spoke about drug use and drug overdoses in Ketchikan, and stated that the district's drug education needed to be re-examined.

Kristina Townsend spoke about a variety of health issues from mask wearing, in addition to citing visual and auditory effects for children. She provided a scientific article on the subject to the Board.

Riley Gass stated that mask wearing at school should be up to parents and their children; and questioned whether mitigation measures would prevent upcoming large events, such as the Clarke Cochrane basketball tournament.

Monica Thorne said masking of children needs to be reconsidered. She said that education needs to be the district's priority and not COVID protocols. Ms. Thorne also shared comments from teacher Mandy Buckingham about her concerns with wearing masks in physical education. Ms. Thorne's young daughter Mia who accompanied her to the podium said the world should be free from masks.

Sharli Arntzen expressed frustration regarding the district's COVID mandates and spoke about its effect on her children. She said her family is done compromising and pleaded with the Board to "let parents be parents."

Student Zerek Arntzen asked that students not have to wear masks in physical education.

High school students and Lady Kings softball players Hannah Moody and Paige Boehlert spoke in support of the team's requested trip to South Carolina, and why it would be beneficial.

Kalea Allen, head coach for the Kayhi softball team, spoke about the benefits of the requested spring trip and why a Florida camp was being proposed, and how the team would fund-raise. She also commented on COVID mitigation, citing the protocols followed at the Gateway Recreation Center in her position as recreational programmer.

Christy Willis declared that the district's education was failing at all levels. She provided a petition to the Board which called for masks to be optional at school. She also stated that a lot of the drug overdoses had to do with mental health issues related to COVID.

Liz Thomas asserted there was disparate treatment of students and parents, depending on their views on mitigation measures and what is safe. She said she doesn't feel it is safe for her children to be wearing masks 8 hours a day. She said the district is failing its students.

Laura Munhoven objected to masks in school with vaccines available for those who want them. She indicated vaccinated and unvaccinated students are being treated differently. She also commented on not being allowed to volunteer in her children's school.

MJ Cadle spoke about trauma-impacted children, including her daughter. She said the district needs to consider trauma-informed education to help those children.

High school student Linnaea Loretan said masks should be optional, not mandatory. She also stated that healthy people shouldn't have to quarantine; and also commented that there was a very low pediatric death rate from COVID.

Darlene Svenson demanded that Board members do the job that she said 76.6 percent of parents wanted and that was to change the rules.

Written comments were then read from five individuals who'd requested their comments be read aloud at the meeting.

Teacher and parent Gale Lindemann, urged that the district's mitigation measures not be lessened, writing that to do so would be a significant mistake.

In her written comments, Heather Muench asked that masks be kept as part of the district's COVID mitigation measures.

Colleen Smith, a district third-grade teacher, wrote about the impact of COVID on students and staff, and advocated for retaining multiple layers of mitigation to keep children and staff in school.

Ann McKim attached a signed petition to her email which asked that masks be made optional for students, and also attached an article about masks potentially being harmful to children.

Danielle McClennan wrote that teachers are paid to teach and not to be dealing with mask wearing by students. She contended that students and staff have the right to choose whether or not to wear masks.

Ms. Thomas, who'd spoken earlier that evening, came to the podium again to comment on some of the written remarks which had just been read.

### **Break**

The Citizen Remarks portion of the agenda concluded at about 7:45 p.m. and a 10-minute break was taken in the meeting.

## **WORKSESSION**

### **Motion to move into work session to discuss the Start Strong Mitigation Plan**

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: ANDERSON

#### **VOICE VOTE: PASSED**

COVID communications staff person Linnaea Troina provided an overview of the district's Start Strong mitigation plan, primarily for the two new Board members Keenan Sanderson and Stephen Bradford. The Board then discussed various aspects of the plan and associated topics in its work session, including: a potential "sunset" of, or rolling back, mitigation measures; and keeping students in school when they are close contacts instead of quarantining them. There were some requests for information to be provided on air filters in the district, and also on conducting a survey.

### **WORKSESSION CONCLUDED - REGULAR SESSION RESUMED**

At approximately 9:30 p.m., the work session ended and the Board re-entered its regular session. Board President Bradford asked if there was follow up direction from the Board for administration.

Board Member Tabb suggested a special meeting to hear from public health experts, and possibly physical education teachers, and to have more review of the plan from the Start Strong committee.

After some discussion, Board members agreed to hold a special meeting on Wednesday, November 17 for those suggested purposes. It was also agreed to institute a five-minute limit on individual public comments at that meeting, as provided for in Board policy. It was suggested that reports from state health experts precede the public comments to accommodate those individuals' schedules.

#### **Extend meeting**

At 9:36 p.m. the following motion was made:

### **Motion to extend the meeting to 10:30 p.m. as per Board Bylaw 9320.**

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: GUBATAYAO

#### **VOICE VOTE: PASSED**

### **INFORMATION AND REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS** - *including any Committee Reports*

Board members Robbins Jr. and Gubatayao reported on their experience at the Association of Alaska School Boards Association annual conference. Mr. Robbins reported on the resolutions action at the conference, and shared about some training and programs which are available to School Boards and districts. Ms. Gubatayao reported that she had been elected to a three-year term on the Board of Directors of AASB at the annual conference. She provided information on several programs she'd learned about at the conference that are available to the district.

Board Member Jordan Tabb said his feedback on a possible substance abuse task force has been delayed, and there were disparate ideas on how the district might be involved.

President Bradford said he intends to keep drug addiction issues as a discussion item on most agendas.

**CLAIMS FOR INFORMATION** - Claims of October 29, 2021. There were no questions.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson said that due to the lateness of the meeting, she would defer several subjects on her report to the next regular meeting.

#### **Student Member's Report**

Student Member Braxton Zink stated he could also hold his report until the next meeting. He did note that the Kayhi Ocean Sciences Bowl team is undefeated.

**\*\*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 9322 - Agenda/Meeting Materials in second reading.**

Moved by: ROBBINS JR; Second by: MATTSON

Public Hearing / Board Discussion

No one spoke during the public hearing, and there was no Board discussion.

**ROLL CALL**

*Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote)*

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

GUBATAYAO, ANDERSON - NAYS

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**MOTION PASSED**

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

a. Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of October 27, 2021.

**Motion to approve the Consent Calendar of November 10, 2021**

Moved by: TABB; Second by: MATTSON

**VOICE VOTE - PASSED**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Motion to approve the out-of-state travel request for a Kayhi softball team spring trip to South Carolina in early April.**

Moved by: ROBBINS; Second by: MATTSON

Discussion

Mr. Sanderson expressed pleasure that the students have the opportunity to travel.

Mr. Bradford thanked Coach Allen and Hannah and Paige for speaking about the trip that evening.

Ms. Gubatayao commented positively on Ms. Allen and the team's planned fundraising.

**ROLL CALL**

*Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote)*

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

**MOTION PASSED**

**DISCUSSION**

Permanent superintendent position – Discussion that the superintendent search process should be re-started. President Bradford asked Ms. Mattson to be the liaison with AASB to arrange for the process to move forward.

Board evaluation; Strategic Plan; Board training - Discussion resulted in an agreement to meet in a work session regarding a board self-evaluation, the Strategic Plan and goals and evaluation of the interim superintendent.

Regular Meeting Date change: The Board also agreed to move its next regular meeting date to December 15 instead of December 8, due to administrative staff being out of town on the 8th.

Report on drug/addiction issues - It was noted that this issue is the purpose of the PIERS (Prevention, Intervention, Education, Recover, Support) task force of the Wellness coalition.

## **BOARD COMMENTS**

Student Member Braxton Zink stated his support for any mitigation that would help keep students in school, instead of having to revert to virtual school. He congratulated the Kayhi volleyball team; and Sabertooth Ocean Sciences Bowl team for their recent competitions; and added good luck wishes to the Kayhi wrestling team.

Mr. Sanderson referred to the Board needing to address substance abuse issues and the reality of overdoses. He shared how this issue had affected him personally. As coach, he confirmed his Sabertooth Salmon and Smolts team has reached a 5-0 record in competition thus far, and beat Bartlett High School and Sitka High School this past weekend.

Mr. Tabb reflected on founding fathers John Adams and Thomas Jefferson being models of how to compromise and deliberate respectfully, while coming from different backgrounds and opinions. He encouraged those who speak in citizen remarks or send written comments to do so in language that is persuasive rather than dismissive.

Ms. Anderson stated her appreciation to veterans, as the day would be Veterans' Day. She also asked for people to be kind and respectful regardless of their opinions. She said she is hopeful and excited that younger children now have an opportunity to vaccinate.

Ms. Gubatayao expressed appreciation for the local community, stating that Ketchikan citizens are civil to each other. She commented on hearing at the Anchorage conference that isn't the case in some communities.

Ms. Mattson also thanked veterans, and noted the Eagle Scout project at the Kayhi main entrance with plaques for local graduates who have served in the military. She stated her appreciation for being able to exercise free speech. She also thanked school administration and staff, students, and families, for their efforts to keep students in school.

Mr. Bradford thanked the Board and staff for its discussion that evening regarding the mitigation plan.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 10: 25 p.m.

*Minutes approved as distributed at the December 15, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Education.*