

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
AGENDA STATEMENT

No 10 a.

MEETING OF February 7, 2024

Item Title

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to approve Resolution 24-02 Calling on the Governor and Legislature of the State of Alaska to Make Improvements to Teachers' Retirement System (TRS.)

Reviewed By:

Superintendent

School Board President

SUBMITTED BY: Board of Education, President Stephen Bradford, 907 247 2109

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL: Michael Robbins, Superintendent, 907 247 2109

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The Board of Education is being asked to approve Resolution No. 24-02, Calling on the Governor and Legislature of the State of Alaska to Make Improvements to Teachers' Retirement System (TRS.)

ISSUE:

Alaskan teachers are the only teachers in the country with no defined retirement benefits. No pension, no Social Security, just the 7% contribution by the State. They do not have a choice of provider on those investments, and the State's contractor has overcharged and underperformed for the past 17 years.

Alaska has had a teacher shortage for years because of diminishing pay and lack of pensions, and without competitive applicants, quality suffers. From hundreds of applicants for open teaching positions twenty years ago, we often see only a few, if any, applicants to most teaching jobs in Ketchikan. Temporary J-1 Visa teachers from overseas fill the gaps. Paraprofessionals and uncertified teachers are asked to step up, often unprepared to do so. The lack of a decent retirement is purging the rolls of quality teachers in Alaska, and a crisis in Ketchikan is looming.

BACKGROUND:

A discussion on the agenda of the School Board regular meeting of January 24, 2024 resulted in a request to bring a resolution to the Board that supports teachers' voices and urges the State of Alaska to make improvements to TRS.

EXHIBITS ATTACHED

- Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Board of Education Resolution 24-02

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

"I move that the Board of Education **approve Resolution No. 24-02, Calling on the Governor and Legislature of the State of Alaska to Make Improvements to Teachers' Retirement System (TRS.)**"



KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT RESOLUTION 24-02

Calling on the Governor and Legislature of the State of Alaska to Make Improvements to Teachers' Retirement System (TRS)

WHEREAS, Alaskan teachers are the only teachers in the country with no defined retirement benefits (no pension or Social Security); and

WHEREAS, Alaska is facing a teacher shortage and hiring crisis, and Alaska school districts' wages and benefits are no longer competitive compared to compensation provided in other neighboring states; and

WHEREAS, Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) employees are excluded from the Supplemental Annuity Plan (SBS-AP) that public employees are automatically enrolled in as part of their retirement. The Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) employee (14.125%) and employer (11.125%) contributions total over 25% of wages for retirement investments. However, the TRS totals 15%, with 8% from the employee and 7% "match" from the employer; and

WHEREAS, many employees in TRS are not able to save enough for retirement; and

WHEREAS, the Ketchikan School District has faced a decreasing number of applicants for teaching positions because of diminishing pay and lack of pensions.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED BY THE KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION, as follows:

Section 1. The Ketchikan Board of Education finds that the State's failure to provide adequate benefits within Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) undermines the ability of districts statewide to provide compensation needed to adequately recruit and retain teachers.

Section 2. The Ketchikan Board of Education strongly urges the Alaska Legislature and the Governor to significantly and appropriately increase the retirement compensation to all teachers in order to decrease teacher turnover and increase teacher quality.

Section 3. The Ketchikan Board of Education urges the Alaska Legislature and the Governor to implement a mechanism to provide increased retirement security in TRS through a pension, and/or to increase retirement funding in amounts no less than retirement funding for other public employees (PERS.)

Section 4. Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective upon adoption by the Ketchikan Board of Education.

ADOPTED by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Board of Education on
this ____ day of February, 2024.

Stephen Bradford, School Board President

Nicole Anderson, School Board Clerk-Treasurer