

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
AGENDA STATEMENT

No 10 b

MEETING of: September 8, 2021

Item Title

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Approval of the regular meeting minutes of August 18, 2021

SUBMITTED BY: Kerry Watson, Clerk to the Board

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

b. Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 18, 2021.

**\* NOTE:**

**If amendments or corrections to the minutes are desired, a Board member should request removal of the minutes from the Consent Calendar.**

**The minutes would then be acted upon under Unfinished Business. Appropriate motions to correct or amend the minutes would be in order.**

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

**REGULAR meeting of  
Wednesday, August 18, 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 18th day of August 2021, in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers. Board President Kim Hodne 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 Kim Hodne; Board Vice President Diane Gubatayao; Clerk-Treasurer Bridget Mattson; and Board Members Paul Robbins Jr.; Jordan Tabb; Nicole Anderson; and Douglas Gregg.

Administrative staff present included Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson; COVID Communications & Public Relations Director Linnaea Troina; Business Manager Katie Parrott; and Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion to approve the agenda for the regular meeting of August 18, 2021.**

Moved by: TABB; Second by: ANDERSON

**ROLL CALL**

**GREGG, ANDERSON, ROBBINS JR., TABB, MATTSON, GUBATAYAO, HODNE - ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

**PUBLIC RECOGNITION**

Board Member Diane Gubatayao stated her appreciation for the young people spending the night on the docks that evening in an event to raise money for, and bring attention to, the homeless.

**CITIZEN REMARKS**

Board President Kim Hodne referred to Board Policy 9320 and its recommendations for public comments before opening the Citizen Remarks. He asked that Board Clerk Kerry Watson first read the written public comments which had been submitted by three citizens who could not be present at the meeting.

In her written comments, Heather Muench wrote that the school district should follow CDC guidelines and require masks regardless of risk level. Changing mask requirements with risk levels would create confusion with parents and students, she wrote.

Kathy Paulson referenced an article in the New York Times published on August 18, 2021, about masks and children's learning in her written comments. She stated the article might be helpful to parents of elementary school students.

Written comments submitted by Starla Agoney asked that the Start Strong plan reflect the August 5 updated CDC recommendations on masking and other precautionary measures, regardless of vaccination status.

Kristina Townsend spoke about germicides in reference to the contract with Alaska Pest Management for disinfecting of schools. She provided information on other products that could be used and which she said were safer.

Eric Muench addressed the Start Strong COVID mitigation plan, asking that the Board not shy away from mask requirements. He cited the CDC recommendation on mask wearing in school and said that the COVID pandemic is real.

Norma Thompson, teacher at Revilla, said if masks keep kids in school then it is irresponsible not to mask. She shared what she'd observed last year with students falling behind due to remote learning. She stated that although adults can make the decision to get vaccinated, students under age 12 do not have that luxury. Ms. Thompson stated it was unconscionable to not observe the CDC guidelines.

Jeremy Bynum spoke first against the suspension of a graduation requirement of 100 hours of work experience or volunteerism, which was on the agenda. He said there were plenty of job and volunteer opportunities in the community. Regarding the Start Strong plan, Mr. Bynum asked the Board to consider that a one-size fits all plan approach might not work for all schools throughout the district. He also commented that contracting out school sanitizing through a proposed agreement with Alaska Pest Management might not be an effective use of district funds.

Dawn Rauwolf, who has taught at Tongass School of Arts and Sciences for seven years, commented in support of a Capital Improvement project for the Valley Park facility. The CIP-listed project is for installation of additional windows at the school site.

Dave Timmerman spoke about how opioid use is affecting Ketchikan, particularly its youth, noting suicides and overdoses among young people. He spoke about how cheap heroin has become, and how easy it is to bring into Ketchikan. He urged the Board to get involved regarding the drug problem, saying that people are dying. He also commented that if kids are going to be required to wear masks at school, Boardmembers should set an example and wear them as well.

Gara Williams, Ketchikan Education Association president, said she relied on the expertise of epidemiologists and health experts in regards to COVID. She supports following the CDC guidelines as much as possible. She asked that the Board approve a plan that considers the safety of staff and students while keeping the students physically present in school as much as possible.

Christy Willis said that as much as there is information stating that masks work, there is also information that they don't; and she provided the Board with links to that information. She spoke about mitigation measures such as masking being unnecessary, and fear-based. Masking at school should be a parental choice, she said.

Jaylyn Merrill first read a letter from Tiffany Cook, a parent and member of the Start Strong plan committee, who wrote that she was unable to be in person at the meeting. Ms. Cook wrote that the plan represented a compromise that keeps students in school at all risk levels. In her letter, she asked the Board to consider a sunset of the plan after a vaccine is made available to children aged 5 to 11 and provided her rationale.

Jaylyn Merrill then turned to her own comments. She proposed the committee adjust the mask protocol in the moderate level at the upper grades and said she'd supplied a proposal requesting this which had been signed by 38 residents. She also referred to the survey results and asked the Board to let parents make the health decisions for their children.

Frankie Urquhart advocated for masks in elementary students regardless of risk level. Masking helped keep people relatively safe last year, she said. Ms. Urquhart said children under 12 who are not eligible for vaccinations are vulnerable.

Nicholas Kufner said the results of the district survey regarding how to operate school showed the majority preferred masks to be optional for students and at the parents' choice. He also said that people could find articles supporting their beliefs on the various issues regarding masking.

#### **INFORMATION AND REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

Paul Robbins Jr. reported on the policy committee's most recent work. It included drafting of a new board policy to address the Board's responsibilities with government to government consultation with the tribal governments; and review of a policy regarding challenging courses.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson first asked Business Manager Katie Jo Parrott to provide a brief update on several programs which fall under her supervision, the USDA breakfast and lunch food service program, and school bus program.

### **Start Strong Presentation**

Next, COVID Communications & Public Relations Director Linnaea Troina provided a comprehensive explanation of the Start Strong Plan, which was before the Board for its approval that evening. Interim Superintendent Johnson noted that after an initial presentation on the plan to the Board on August 11, a community forum was held on August 12 for feedback on the plan. Community feedback and follow up meetings of the Start Strong committee and advice of health professionals had led to further updating and modifying of the plan. One of the changes was modifying the criteria for the risk levels, so that one active case in the community would have less impact on the risk level. Each Friday, the Superintendent will set the risk level for the following week, and publicize it. Ms. Troina and Ms. Johnson pointed out that the plan could be frequently updated and the current version would be posted on the district's website.

*(The Start Strong timeline and mitigation plans as presented that evening for the Board's consideration are attached to these minutes as reference.)*

### **Other Superintendent report topics**

Ms. Parrott noted that the annual on-site financial audit will occur during the last week of August. A few board members are asked to meet with the auditors at the end of the process.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Motion to approve the Consent Calendar of August 18 2021** *(consisting of the following):*

*a. Motion to offer a teaching contract with Matt Lenhard for the 2021-2022 school year.*

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

## **ROLL CALL**

**GREGG, ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, ROBBINS JR., MATTSON, TABB, HODNE - ALL AYES**  
**MOTION PASSED**

## **Break**

A ten-minute break was called in the meeting from 7:52 to 8:02 p.m.

## **Adjust order of New Business**

**Motion to move the Start Strong Mitigation Plan consideration (New Business Item 9 a) to the end of New Business.** *(Strong Start mitigation plan)*

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: MATTSON

## **Discussion**

Mr. Robbins said the re-ordering might make that evening's business run smoother.

## **ROLL CALL**

**ANDERSON, TABB, GUBATAYAO, MATTSON, ROBBINS JR., GREGG, HODNE - ALL AYES**

**MOTION PASSED**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Motion that the Board of Education, through the authority provided in BP 9314, temporarily suspend for the graduating class of 2022 the following provision of BP 6146.1 (High School Graduation Requirements): "Additional requirements include 100 hours of work experience or community service and participation in the WorkKeys or ACT or SAT assessment."**

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: ANDERSON

Discussion:

Ms. Gubatayao proposed cutting the required work/volunteer hours to 50 instead of suspending that requirement entirely.

Other Board members commented regarding the same requirement.

Ketchikan High School Principal Jason House and Revilla Junior/Senior High Principal Kurt Lindemann were asked for their input. Mr. House advocated for not requiring any more than 25 hours of work/volunteer hours, if the Board chose not to suspend the requirement completely. Principal Lindemann stated he would like to see students concentrate on their schoolwork, rather than trying to complete work hours. Interim Superintendent Johnson also advocated for no more than 25 hours, if hours were to be required.

**Motion to amend to reduce the requirements for work experience or community service to 25 hours instead of waiving that requirement**

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: GUBATAYAO

**ROLL CALL on amendment**

**GUBATAYAO, GREGG, MATTSON, ROBBINS JR., TABB, ANDERSON, HODNE - ALL AYES  
MOTION PASSED**

**ROLL CALL on Amended Main Motion**

**GUBATAYAO, GREGG, MATTSON, ROBBINS JR., TABB, ANDERSON, HODNE - ALL AYES  
MOTION PASSED**

**Motion to approve the FY23 Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District to be submitted to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.**

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion:

Ms. Gubatayao said she was disappointed that the Schoenbar gym floor hadn't been fixed previously after years of issues. Now, it could possibly cost \$500,000 to resolve the issues, she noted.

Mr. Hodne commented on the Point Higgins' mechanical issues, which were included on the CIP list, as ones needing major attention.

Business Manager Parrott provided information on how the CIP projects are prioritized.

**ROLL CALL**

**TABB, GREGG, MATTSON, ROBBINS JR., GUBATAYAO, ANDERSON, HODNE - ALL AYES  
MOTION PASSED**

**Motion to approve the service agreement with Alaska Pest Management for the 2021-2022 school year in an amount not to exceed \$25,000.**

Moved by: TABB; Second by: MATTSON

Discussion

Business Manager Parrott spoke about the proposed agreement. The company would use a peroxide-based disinfectant approved by the EPA specifically to be used in schools. The solution has no risk of toxicity, she said. The contract would be for monthly "maintenance" treatments. If a COVID situation called for an emergency cleaning, the company could be on site in 15 minutes, said Ms. Parrott.

Mr. Robbins stated he would support the services to be supported with COVID funds, but not by using the operating budget.

Mr. Gregg concurred, stating that whether COVID money or not is used, the district should be using its funds responsibly.

**ROLL CALL**

**ROBBINS JR., GREGG, MATTSON, ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, TABB, HODNE - ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

**Motion to approve the purchase of 50 Lenovo ThinkBook laptops from OETC in the amount not to exceed \$47,000.**

Moved by: ROBBINS JR., Second by: TABB

Discussion

Ms. Gubatayao commented on the laptops being necessary and part of a systematic replacement of outdated teacher laptops.

**ROLL CALL**

**GUBATAYAO, ANDERSON, TABB, GREGG, ROBBINS JR., MATTSON, HODNE - ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

**Motion to approve a supplemental contribution to the district's Health Insurance Reserve Fund in the amount of \$146,649.**

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: ANDERSON

Discussion

Business Manager Parrott provided an explanation regarding the proposed contribution, which she said is supplemental to the \$547,787 previously approved by the Board in the current budget. She noted she'd spoken about the need to address the deficit in the health insurance reserve fund for several years. Even with this supplemental contribution, there will still be a substantial deficit, she added.

**ROLL CALL**

**ANDERSON, TABB, GUBATAYAO, MATTSON, ROBBINS JR., GREGG, HODNE - ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

**Motion to approve the Start Strong COVID mitigation plan.**

Moved by: ROBBINS JR. Second by: MATTSON

Discussion:

An approximately 50-minute discussion took place regarding the plan and various aspects of its effect on school operations. The topics covered and focus of comments included some of the following:

- An explanation of simplifying the 1 case per 100,000 population measure for determining the district operating risk level to one tied to the community's active cases. Abner Hoage provided his perspective from his former position as the incident commander of the now dismantled Emergency Operations Center.
- Whether community cases which might be isolated, such as in some congregant settings, should impact a school or district operating risk level;
- The difference in this year's school day operation at the secondary level from last year (from 50 percent capacity and less classes per day to 100 percent capacity and a full schedule day) and how that impacted the proposed mitigation factors;
- Masking requirements and whether this measure should be required, and at what risk levels;
- How and if vaccination availability and individual choice, including masking, affected others or impacted a school's operation.

**Motion that the plan be amended to align all school levels at the moderate risk level with the elementary regarding masking (making masks optional for the middle and high school).**

Moved by: ANDERSON: Second by: GUBATAYAO

**ROLL CALL**

**ROBBINS JR., GUBATAYAO, ANDERSON, HODNE - AYES**

**TABB, MATTSON, GREGG - NAYS**

**4-3**

***MOTION PASSED***

**ROLL CALL ON MAIN MOTION (Approval of Start Strong plan as modified)**

**TABB, ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, ROBBINS JR., MATTSON, GREGG, HODNE - ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

It was noted that the school risk level would be announced each Friday for the following week.

**DISCUSSION**

*AASB Fall Boardsmanship Academy in September/November Annual AASB Conference.* Ms. Mattson expressed interest in attending the September academy. Several Board members are interested in the November conference, which occurs after the school board election.

**BOARD COMMENTS**

Ms. Gubatayao remarked that she understood the pain of the speaker who spoke about the opioid issue. She commented that Board members are going to be trained on using Narcan, tentatively in September.

Mr. Robbins Jr. commented on the open seats on the School Board and invited potential candidates to contact him if they had questions about being a Board member.

Ms. Anderson said she supports training on Narcan, and briefly shared a personal perspective. She thanked Ms. Troina for her work heading up the Start Strong committee.

Mr. Tabb stated that there is one week remaining for School Board candidates to file. He also commented on local community resources for substance abuse and prevention.

Ms. Mattson spoke about the Start Strong plan, calling it a very solid plan, and directing her comments specifically at those who had concerns with the plan's mitigation measures.

Mr. Hodne expressed appreciation for Mr. Timmerman speaking about the local opioid problem. He also commented on the work that went into the school plan, and the Board's discussion that evening.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:59 p.m.