

Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District

Reduction in Force Plan

WHEREAS, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District has seen enrollment decline for the past three years and projects that student enrollment will decline again for the 2024-25 school year; and

WHEREAS, the District anticipates its nonpersonnel costs will increase for the 2024-25 school year; and

WHEREAS, at its regular meeting on April 10, 2024 the Board adopted a plan for procedures that would apply in the event that it determined that a reduction in force plan needs to be implemented;

WHEREAS after the April 10, the Board of Education provided direction to the District Administration to work off of known funding streams as opposed to making any assumptions with respect to changes in funding at the State level. Based upon that direction, the District Administration provided for the Board of Education's consideration at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 24, 2024, an FY2024-2025 Budget consisting of a spending plan with the drastic elimination of just over \$6.4 million in expenditures; and

WHEREAS the Board of Education approved the significantly reduced FY2024-2025 Budget at a Special Board Meeting held on April 30, 2024; and

WHEREAS subsequent to the Board's action, District Administration transmitted the FY2024-2025 Budget and a request for spending authority of \$45,739,134 and corresponding appropriations equaling \$11,435,456, comprised of the required local effort of \$5,741,504 and a local discretionary contribution of \$5,693,952 to the Borough for the Borough's consideration in accordance with Alaska State Statutes; and

WHEREAS at a meeting held on May 6, 2024, the Borough amended Ordinance 2041 – Substitute to remove the local discretionary request of \$5,693,952 and reduced the spending authority to \$40,045,082, necessitating the need to implement this Reduction In Force Plan to accommodate an additional \$5,000,000 in budgetary cuts to meet the known revenue streams from the State of Alaska and the Borough; and

WHEREAS, the Board has notified the Ketchikan Education Association of the need for a Reduction In Force; and

WHEREAS, the Board has heard public comment and testimony as well as administrative recommendations regarding the most educationally responsible means to respond to this budget crisis; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Statute 14.20.177 permits a School Board to adopt a reduction in force plan if the Board finds that the district is experiencing declining student enrollment and a reduction in force is necessary to responsibly manage the district's finances; and

WHEREAS, the administration and the Board has considered a wide variety of cost cutting options and the Board has now determined that a reduction in the tenured and nontenured teaching positions is necessary as one means of addressing the District's anticipated budget deficit;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. The Board finds that a reduction in force is necessary based upon the fiscal considerations detailed in above and hereby adopts this Reduction In Force Plan which shall eliminate certain certificated positions including tenured positions, but allow the District to maintain its academic programs in a modified form as set out in Paragraph 2 below.

2. The District will maintain certificated positions to provide special education and instruction in core academic areas to educate students at

each existing school site with total staffing reduced to the levels reflected in Attachment A, with all other teaching positions being eliminated.

3. The following procedures will be followed: The District will provide notice of nonretention to nontenured teachers that do not hold a Professional Alaska teaching certificate provided that there are fully qualified teachers to replace and perform the needed duties of those teachers. The District will provide notice of nonretention to nontenured teachers (including those who teach at the District's charter schools) in reverse order of seniority except those nontenured teacher who no tenured teacher is qualified to replace. The District will layoff in reverse order of seniority tenured teachers who because of the elimination of specific programs or regular education positions are not qualified to teach in any remaining District position, effective June 30, 2024.

4. The District will provide the Ketchikan Education Association with a list that ranks all teachers by seniority with indication of their tenure status, certification, and endorsements. The District will provide Ketchikan Education Association with a list of teachers identified for layoff.

5. Consistent with the KEA Negotiated Agreement, seniority is defined as uninterrupted years, months, and days of teaching service in Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District. Approved leave, with or without pay, shall not be considered an interruption in service.

6. State law provides that for the purposes of this plan a tenured teacher is considered qualified for a position if the position is in

- a. grades K-8 and the teacher has an elementary endorsement;
- b. an established middle school and the teacher has an elementary endorsement, a middle school endorsement, or a secondary certificate with a subject area endorsement in the area of

assignment in which the teacher filling the position will spend at least 40 percent of the teacher's time or the teacher has, within the five years immediately preceding the last date on which the teacher performed teaching services for the District before being laid off, receive an evaluation stating that the teacher's performance in the subject or subjects meets the district performance standards;

- c. grades 9-12 and the teacher has an endorsement for each subject area in which the teacher filling the position will spend at least 40 percent of the teacher's time or the teacher has within the five years immediately preceding the last date on which the teacher performed teaching services for the District before being laid off, receive an evaluation stating that the teacher's performance in the subject or subjects meets the district performance standards.

7. All teachers laid off will be placed in Layoff Leave without pay for a period of up to three years. To remain on Layoff Leave and be considered for available positions for which they are qualified, the teacher must during March of each year notify the District in writing of their desire to continue on Layoff status for the following school year. The written notice must contain their current address and phone number.

8. The District shall recall teaching staff affected by this Reduction In Force if and when, in the course of the next three years, the Board determines that changed financial circumstances make it economically and educationally responsible to reinstate one or more positions. Teachers on Layoff status shall be recalled in inverse order of the procedure described in Paragraph 3 above. If a teacher in Layoff status who is offered a position does not accept the offered position within 30 calendar days of receipt of the offer, the teacher will no longer be considered on Layoff status and will no longer be entitled to hiring preference unless the teacher declines the offer

because the teacher is already contractually obligated to provide professional services to another private or public educational program.

9. Teachers on leave at the time of Layoff shall be treated as if they were presently teaching.

10. A tenured teacher who has received notification of Layoff may elect to take unpaid leave for up to one year. Teachers who elect to take unpaid leave in lieu of Layoff shall be considered for recall following the expiration of such leave in accord with these procedures, provided written notice of interest in and availability is provided to the District by March 15 annually.

11. Continuing access to benefits shall be available to any laid-off teachers to the extent provided by COBRA.

12. A laid-off tenured teacher shall be granted priority status by seniority on the District's substitute teacher list unless the teacher does not complete the necessary substitute forms.

13. Layoff status does not constitute a break in service for retaining tenure rights and accrued sick leave.

14. The District shall maintain all other academic programs not affected by this Reduction in Force Plan.

15. The District will provide Layoff notices to tenured teachers before the May 15 consistent with Alaska Statute 14.20.140.