

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
AGENDA STATEMENT

No 10 c

MEETING OF February 23, 2022

Item Title

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to approve amendments to the Start Strong Plan

SUBMITTED BY Paul Robbins Jr. Board Member

Contact Person/Telephone

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL

Name

Phone

SUMMARY STATEMENT: Board Member Paul Robbins Jr. is asking for the Board to direct that the Start Strong plan be amended. *(See "Issue" below.)*

ISSUE:

With the Omicron Variant proving to have less severe symptoms, the entire community having had ample time to become vaccinated, and recognizing the community & student push for the lifting of mask mandates - the Board must discuss a solution. The Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) currently requires a COVID mitigation plan (Start Strong) of all school districts, so the plan cannot be ended. Only amendments can be made.

Thousands of cases over the past few months in Ketchikan without corresponding hospitalizations has demonstrated the virus is here to stay, but no longer the significant threat it was. The Board focus must remain on keeping kids in school, and the current plan does not support that effort due to the highly transmissible variant and current policy to send asymptomatic teachers & students home through testing.

Policy must change to mirror how other sicknesses are handled -"if you are sick (have symptoms) then stay home."

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

"I move that the Board of Education direct the Start Strong plan be amended to make masking optional at all risk levels and to end the practice of sending asymptomatic persons home from school."