

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION  
AGENDA STATEMENT

No. 10 a.

MEETING OF February 12, 2025 \_\_\_\_\_

ITEM TITLE:

<b><u>Unfinished Business</u></b>	REVIEWED BY:
Motion to approve restructuring grade levels at Houghtaling, Point Higgins & Fawn Mountain Elementary Schools for School Year 2025-2026	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Budget Committee <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance

SUBMITTED BY: Daniel Schuler, Business Manager, 907 247 2116

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL: Michael Robbins, Superintendent

**SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

Administration is proposing approval changes to the grade level structures of Houghtaling Elementary, Point Higgins Elementary, and Fawn Mountain Elementary consistent with Board Policy 5116.

**ISSUE/BACKGROUND:**

Board Policy 5116 states that “available resources and services, class size, and pupil transportation, along with other reasonable considerations, will be weighed when considering school placement.” Administration has identified that, given the tenuous nature of funding from the State of Alaska, available resources dictate that in order to maintain, to the best of its ability, its current programmatic offerings, Administration proposes that KGBSD restructure grade levels at its elementary schools as follows:

1. Grade levels Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will be held at both Point Higgins Elementary and Fawn Mountain Elementary, with the attendance boundary dividing line being White Cliff Road.
2. Grades levels 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> would exist at Houghtaling Elementary.
3. Secondary grades would remain in the same configuration at Schoenbar Middle School, Revilla Alternate School and Ketchikan High School.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Superintendent’s Board Report, January 15<sup>th</sup> KGBSD Board Meeting

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

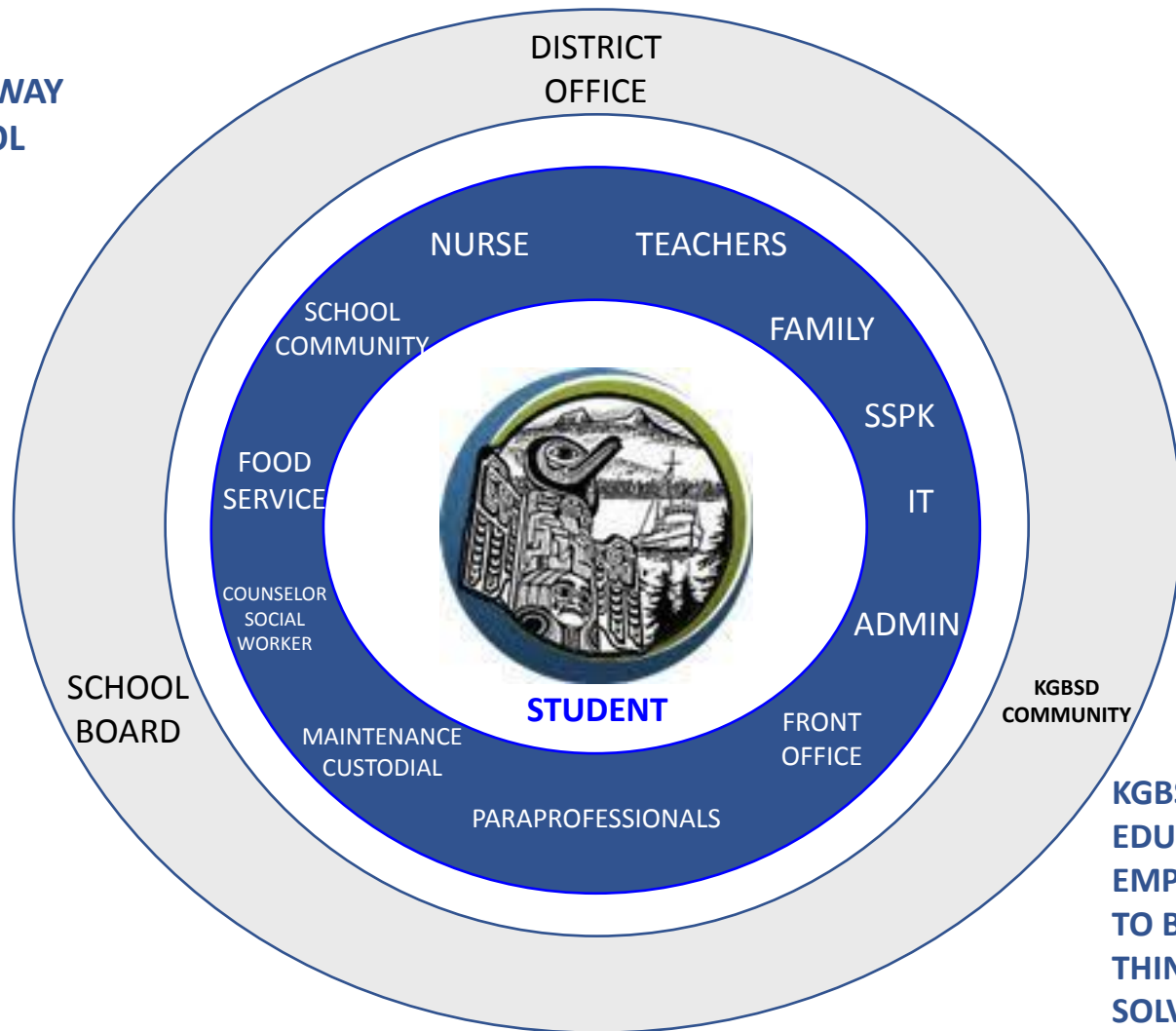
“I move that the Board of Education approve the restructuring of grade levels K-6 at Houghtaling Elementary, Point Higgins Elementary and Fawn Mountain Elementary for School Year 2025-2026.”



***Ketchikan Gateway  
Borough School District***

***School Board Presentation  
January 15, 2025***

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY  
BOROUGH SCHOOL  
DISTRICT**



**KGBSD GRADUATE:  
EDUCATING AND  
EMPOWERING STUDENTS  
TO BE LEADERS, CRITICAL  
THINKERS AND PROBLEM  
SOLVERS.**

## **Goal #1 – Graduation Rate**

*KGBSD will increase student graduation rate to 90%.*

## **Goal #2 – Growth**

*50% of students in grades 3 through 9 will achieve their targeted growth scores in both reading and math assessments.*

## **Goal #3 – Proficiency**

*60% students in 4th and 8th grades who have been students in the KGBSD for five or more years or will score proficient in reading and math.*

## **Goal #4 – Communication**

*Establish and implement a comprehensive communication plan with standardized processes and tools.*

## **Goal #5 – Social-Emotional**

*Students will respond with average % positive ratings on questions regarding on Socio-Emotional Learning.*

## **Goal #6 – Career & Technical Ed. (CTE)**

*Create fully-developed pathways in the current CTE areas*

# Introduction and Rationale

- Budget gap created by:
  - Inadequate funding from the state;
  - Increased costs due to inflation.
- Base Student Allocation (BSA) funded by the state is unlikely to increase.
- KGBSD experiencing steadily decreasing enrollment in grades K-12.
- We can't maintain status quo with stagnant funding from the state.
- Decision needs to be made ASAP regarding FY 2025-2026.

# Option B: Potential Challenges and Considerations

- **Community School Identity:** May impact sense of continuity that comes from attending the same school for K-6 years.
- **Transportation Times:** Some students may have longer or shorter bus rides due to boundaries. Note: transportation costs remain the same.
- **School Transitions:** Students will now attend two separate schools during their K-6 experience.
- **Shift from Ketchikan's Current School Structure:** The KGBSD has allowed for school choice.
- **Budget Solution:** While the specialization model provides savings over the next multiple years, it may require future adjustments if enrollment further decreases and state funding remains stagnant.

# Transportation Questions & Answers

Q: How many students are currently bussed?

A: District-wide average:

505 Students “Home-to-School” daily in the morning

615 “School-to-Home” in the afternoon

290 Elementary students “Home-to-School” daily in the morning

380 Elementary students “School-To-Home” in the afternoon

Q: How many bus runs do we currently have serving FME/HTE/PHE? How many would we have in the new specialization model?

A: Current: 11; Specialization: 11

Q: How long would the longest bus ride be in Specialization?

A: 55 Minutes - the same length we have now

Q: How long would the shortest bus ride be in Specialization?

A: 5 Minutes - the same length we have now

Q: What is the cost difference between current bussing and Specialization?

A: Cost-neutral

# Option B: Educational Benefits

- **Improved Instructional Focus**
  - Allows staff to concentrate on the unique developmental and academic needs of each age specific school grouping (K-3 and 4-6);
  - Evens out class sizes across grade levels;
  - Respects public input from Spring 2024 (keeping library, music, & P.E.).
- **Easier Curriculum Alignment**
  - Supports both vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment;
  - Offers staff increased opportunities to collaborate with grade-level colleagues about instructional strategies, lesson plans, assessments, and approaches to student engagement;
  - Promotes consistency in instruction, student achievement, and equity across classrooms.
- **Manage Population Shifts in the School District**



# Option B: Educational Benefits - Continued

- **Targeted Professional Learning Communities (PLC's)**
  - Administrators and Instructional Coaches will be able to provide and guide more focused, tailored professional development for grade bands and vertical teams.
- **Focused Work with Instructional Coaches**
  - District Instructional Coaches will offer specialized support tailored to grade bands and horizontal teams.
- **Enhanced Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Restorative Practices**
  - Administrators, Social Workers, and Support Staff can develop SEL programs that are focused on and tailored to specific ages/grades;
  - Two full-time administrators at each site = the capacity to effectively utilize restorative practices with students (which encourage student accountability and “repair over punishment”).

# Option B: Educational Benefits - Continued

## Maintaining Library, Music, and P.E. Programming

### Library

Librarians are integral to fostering literacy and supporting academic growth.

Their contributions include:

- Literacy Promotion
- Research Skills
- Diverse Resources
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Digital Literacy

### Music

Music education fosters cognitive, emotional, and cultural growth in children. Key benefits include:

- Brain Development
- Cognitive Growth
- Emotional Intelligence
- Cultural Understanding
- Mental Health
- Creativity and Confidence

### Physical Education

P.E. is essential for the holistic development of children.

Dedicated P.E.

teachers bring the following benefits to schools:

- Physical Health & Safety
- Mental Health
- Social Development
- Academic

Enhancement

# Option B: Educational Benefits - Continued

## Elementary Specialization

Assistant principals are essential for managing school operations, supporting teachers, and addressing student needs. Their contributions include:

- **Leadership and Administrative Support** : Share responsibilities with the principal, ensuring smooth operations.
- **Discipline and Behavioral Guidance** : Oversee student discipline and implement behavior programs to promote a safe learning environment.
- **Teacher Support and Development** : Mentor teachers, provide evaluations, and facilitate professional growth.
- **Student Academic Support** : Monitor academic progress and collaborate with teachers to support struggling students.
- **Parent and Community Engagement** : Act as a liaison, fostering positive relationships with families and community partners.
- **Crisis Management** : Play a critical role in emergency response and safety planning.
- **Focus on School Culture** : Promote inclusivity and equity, creating a positive school environment.

# Option B: Educational Benefits - Continued Elementary Specialization

## Smaller Class Sizes in Elementary and High Schools

### High Schools (25 vs. 35 Students)

- **Individual Attention** : Teachers can provide personalized instruction and support.
- **Student Engagement** : Encourages participation and interaction in discussions.
- **Stronger Relationships** : Fosters better teacher-student and peer connections.
- **Classroom Management** : Reduces behavioral disruptions, allowing more focus on learning.
- **Academic Outcomes** : Students in smaller classes achieve higher test scores and long-term successes.

# Option B: Educational Benefits - Continued

Pre-K education plays a critical role in shaping a child's future by laying a strong foundation for learning and development. Key benefits include:

- **Cognitive Development** : Pre-K helps develop essential skills such as early literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking, preparing children for kindergarten and beyond.
- **Social-Emotional Growth** : Early education fosters self-regulation, empathy, and positive social interactions, reducing behavioral challenges later in school.
- **Improved Academic Performance** : Children who attend Pre-K are more likely to succeed academically, achieving higher test scores and stronger overall outcomes in later grades.
- **Closing Achievement Gaps** : Pre-K provides equitable learning opportunities, helping children from diverse backgrounds start school on an even playing field.
- **Long-Term Success** : Research links high-quality early education to higher graduation rates, increased college enrollment, and greater career success.
- **Reduced Special Education and Intervention Costs** : Early identification and support in Pre-K reduce the need for costly special education services in later grades.

# Option B: Educational Benefits - Continued

Grade specialization, where teachers focus on a specific grade level or subject area, provides both educational and financial advantages:

- **Efficiency in Staffing** : Reduces the need for additional paraprofessionals, as specialized teachers can handle targeted instruction more effectively.
- **Streamlined Special Education Services** : Focused teaching reduces the need for extensive intervention, lowering special education costs.
- **Optimized Teacher Deployment** : Fewer teachers are needed, as specialization allows for better resource allocation and workload management.
- **Budgetary Relief** : With 90% of budgets typically allocated to personnel, reducing the need for additional staff can significantly lower overall costs.
- **Improved Student Outcomes** : Specialization enhances teacher expertise, resulting in more effective instruction and better student achievement, reducing costs associated with remedial programs.



# *Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District*

Relationships – Engagement – Student Centered