



Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District

333 Schoenbar Rd. • Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Ph. (907) 247-2109 Fax: (907) 247-3820

Melissa Johnson, Interim Superintendent • Katie Jo Parrott, Business Manager

Catherine Alilin, Human Resources Manager • Alonso Escalante, Curriculum Director

Derek Meister, Special Services Director • Linnaea Troina, COVID Communications and Public Relations Director

Memo

To: KGBSD School Board Members

From: Melissa Johnson, Interim Superintendent

CC: Kerry Watson, Board Clerk

Date: September 3, 2021

RE: Superintendent Report for September 8th meeting

Start Strong 2021-2022

The first week of School in the KGBSD has been a challenging experience, as we have had many cases of COVID in the schools. In the first week of the school year we have had as many cases as the first semester of 2020-2021 school year. The significant number of cases in a short period of time significantly challenged our contact tracing abilities and the capacity of the District to respond to each case, which led to broad initial quarantines and school closures. Our number one priority to our staff and students is safety, so we had to ensure that we weren't allowing potentially exposed individuals into the schools that would have led to further quarantines and closures. We are working to build capacity within our schools for contact tracing, but require time for training and supervised practice.

To rectify this lack of capacity to contact trace, we have building-level contact tracers who are identified, are taking a course on contact tracing (offered by Johns Hopkins University), will have more training next Wednesday with district and public health nurses, and who will be responsible for the contact tracing of all building-level COVID cases. By the end of next week, we will have one-two contract tracers per building ready to begin their specific building's contact tracing, plus three district directors who can also step in and offer additional contact tracing support if needed. Our hope is that expanding our district's capacity to contact trace will expedite the tracing process, and drastically decrease the instances in which schools have closures and/or classes of staff/students sent home.

Additionally, over the past week we have received multiple concerns from parents, employees, and community members that we are actively working to respond to. After receiving inquiries from concerned parents regarding masking in the P.E. classes, there was clarification given to all school staff, reminding them that in high risk and substantial risk levels, masks are mandatory ***in all areas at all schools***, including in physical education (P.E.) classes. This was not a change in the Start Strong mitigation plan; this is in compliance with the Start Strong mitigation plan approved at the school board's 8/18/21 meeting. In addition, [this link to the Center for Disease Control's guidance for K-12 Schools](#) has been shared with stakeholders who question the importance of wearing masks in a P.E. setting (screenshot below, but the link adds more considerations regarding ventilation and sports:



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Recess and Physical Education

In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, and physical education activities). CDC recommends people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised. Universal masking is recommended during indoor physical education or recess.

In addition, edits were made to the Start Strong approved mitigation plan regarding the school risk level and closure matrix. These edits were to aid in readers' understanding that the matrix lists *possible* steps that can be taken in different scenarios, and is not a checklist to be followed in order.

The Start Strong Committee is scheduled to meet on September 21st to review the approved mitigation plan, and they plan to meet once/month thereafter (and more often if necessary).

Curriculum/PD/Assessment:

The world language curriculum committee meets on September 15th to begin reviewing curricular options for Spanish and French.

Math samples have started arriving and we hope to have the committee formed and begin meeting by the end of September or early October.

Mandated OCS training have been scheduled by the principals and Mr. Hewitt and should be completed at every school by October 29th.

The Evaluation Committee is kicking off the Eval Pilot on 9/13. Each administrator is teaming with a teacher to go through the pilot together. Interested teachers or administrators will be able to sign up for 2 UAA renewal credits.

The state has adopted MAP Growth as the new state assessment. PD on the new assessment will take place districtwide on 9/13.

The Calendar Committee meets tomorrow on 9/9 to put forth a recommended 2022-23 calendar to the community and school board.

Special Education

We are excited to welcome several new staff to our special education teams this year. Virtual professional development will be provided by the Safe & Civil Schools organization for all special education teachers and education support professionals (ESPs) working in special education on Monday (9/13) afternoon. This training supports improving behavior management skills for ESPs, as well as streamlining various teamwork processes and supervision between special education teachers and their ESP counterparts working in school settings, based on the book called *Para Pro* produced by Safe & Civil Schools. This training includes a follow up training to be scheduled after



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the new year (2022). An intensive, weeklong training prior to the start of the school year was provided to the staff working in Houghtaling Elementary's (HTEs) Learning Options (LO) program. The training involved two days of Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training on deescalating and managing behavior in a crisis; a day of mental health first aid training; and two days of focused behavior management and procedures training (reporting, documentation, etc.).

Business Department

Last week the District hosted the annual on-site financial audit with our auditors from Altman Rogers Co. Initial results demonstrated that KGBSD is in compliance with all financial controls and procedures, and have implemented positive changes to the financial management of the district. Remaining activities to complete the audit will take place over the next few weeks, including reviewing Borough financial reports of the Local Education Fund and Health Insurance Reserve Fund. Additionally, the District will be following up with changes to our accounting and funding procedures for Student Activities to be consistent with updates made by GASB 84. Final audited financial reports are due to be completed around the beginning of October, barring any unforeseen delays.

The District also submitted our annual application to participate in the National School Lunch Program, which includes a waiver through the Summer Seamless Option to continue to provide free breakfasts and lunches to all KGBSD enrolled students for the 2021-2022 school year.

On September 1st, the District received official notice of the approval of Alaska's American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) plan, which allows the distribution of the remaining ARP ESSER III funds to the state. DEED has since uploaded the remaining 1/3 of district's ARP ESSER III allocations to the FY22 COVID Relief Application in GMS which is approximately \$1.45 million. In the coming weeks the District will adjust the grant budget to account for these additional funds. The Business Manager will also likely recommend allocating a significant portion of funds to cover COVID-specific costs in the health insurance program.

On September 3rd, the District received notice of acceptance and approval of the District's FY22 budget from the State of Alaska.

We have been looking for additional grant and special program revenue to apply for to address identified needs throughout the District. Notably, our library staff have put forward a grant proposal to replace lost items and supplement existing resources with online and digital media. Additionally, the District will be pursuing Emergency Connectivity Funds to cover the cost of fully updating our student device inventory. Last but not least, the District is also looking for relief and grant resources to accomplish a variety of facilities projects that could be accomplished within the next year or two. Future grant applications will be submitted to the Board for approval.



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Technology

Network Services Team

- **Accounts**
 - All account maintenance continues as an ongoing process. This is the support that assures that all users can access the needed technology services.
- **Server Environment**
 - Planning for district server upgrades continued. Our current server environment consists of equipment whose age ranges from 2006 - 2016. This upgrade was postponed when Covid happened. No upgrades happened, but additional services continued to be upgraded, which has pushed our infrastructure to the maximum and in some instances, beyond its limits.
- **Device Rollouts**
 - Teacher - All teachers, including new, have devices
 - Student - All students in grades 2-12 have access to devices.
- **1:1 device plans**
 - We are currently waiting on an indication from the State for the use of funds to move forward with our student device rotation purchase. Our Business Manager has indicated that we may only be able to do a portion of the needed purchase.
- **Security**
 - We experienced a distributed attack on our network that was identified by our staff. A distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack is a malicious attempt to disrupt the normal traffic of a targeted server, service or network by overwhelming the target or its surrounding infrastructure with a flood of Internet traffic. We continue to research how to put in place additional tools for us to identify and deal with issues such as this.
- **Asset and Inventory Tracking and Support Ticket Software**
 - Purchase of new asset and inventory tracking software that will replace the existing ticket system at comparable cost with much added functionality.

Application Support Team

- **Learning Management System (LMS) Adjustments**
 - Over the summer, we upgraded the way that users log into Canvas. Now, they have the ability to login with their district Google credentials which will simplify the login process.
- **New Website**
 - We are in the beginning stages of migrating our existing website host to a new one that will reduce our yearly cost while providing an easier interface for content builders. The new product, Schoolblocks, will also provide our website visitors with a much better experience. Our goal is to have this transition complete by the end of 1st semester.