



## Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District

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### Title VI Update

6/4/2021

1. The federal government approved KGBSD's Title VI grant application in the amount of \$233,440.
2. The Ketchikan Native Education Parent Committee, in consultation with KIC and Saxman IRA, voted to use the funds for the following:
  - A. 1.0 fte Cultural Coordinator position (Approximately \$100,000 in wages & benefits)
  - B. .5 fte of each Indian Education Preschool teacher located at Fawn Mountain & Pioneer Home (Approximately \$100,000 in wages & benefits)
  - C. Approximately \$17,000 in supplies
  - D. Approximately \$16,000 in contractual services
3. The KGBSD School Board approved the hiring of an administrative assistant for the 21-22 school year.
4. The next regularly scheduled KNEPC meeting is set for August 3, 2021.

Good evening. My name is Jessie Embree. I currently hold the Vice Chair seat on the Ketchikan Native Education Parent Committee (KNEPC). I am addressing the board on behalf of our entire committee tonight and would like to begin by providing a brief background of our committee and our purpose.

The KNEPC is comprised of family members of currently enrolled KGBSD students, local tribal representatives, one (1) student liaison, and the KGBSD Curriculum Director. The purpose of our committee is to provide input and approval of how the Title VI grant funds are to be allocated in our district. Our focus is to provide culturally relevant education to our native students, their families, and ultimately our entire student body.

Although the Title VI grant program has been in place for 20+ years, our KNEPC only officially began two short years ago. This committee began after many passionate community members, parents, and KGBSD staff recognized the need to take a much more active role in providing a program that meets the cultural needs of our students, specific to this area.

The KNEPC wants to provide you with an update on our approved Title VI grant budget for this upcoming 2021/22 school year. Our committee is also requesting your consideration in funding a support position in our district.

Our district program currently consists of two (2) American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) preschools and one (1) District Cultural Coordinator (Teresa Varnell).

The two (2) AI/AN preschools are located at Fawn Mountain and The Pioneer Home (Houghtaling Elementary). Both of these programs provide early child education for 3 & 4 year old students with an emphasis on integrating a culturally rich curriculum specific to each student's heritage. This program has proven success in our students' long term educational outcomes, their social/emotional wellbeing, and the strong family relationships fostered.

The preschool program is set to begin this next school year with four sessions, 8:12 ratio of eight (8) AI/AN students in each session, and at two locations. The KNEPC will work together with the KGBSD district administration, community members, and teachers to determine when it is safe and/or space allows us to return to the previous fifteen (15) student class capacity.

KGBSD's Cultural Coordinator, Teresa Varnell has truly gone above and beyond the KNEPC's vision, expectations, and all in record time. I encourage the community and this board to visit the KGBSD website and view the district cultural coordinator tab listed under departments to see a brief overview of the work that is being done. Teresa is assigned to this entire district and it is truly moving to see the outcomes and accomplishments she has made in the last two years. But, she is one person and there are many challenges in her efforts to meet the needs of so many.

There is also a film that was created by Schoenbar Middle School (SMS) students titled, *I Fought for That Seat* that gives perspective to the benefits of having a cultural coordinator available to our teachers. You can find the link under Chad Frey's page on the Schoenbar Middle School website to view. The KNEPC congratulates Mr. Frey and his class for their work and partnerships in making this amazing film.