

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR meeting of  
Wednesday, October 13, 2021  
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers**

**CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL**

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Board of Education met in regular session on the 13th day of October 2021, in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers. Board President Kim Hodne called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The following members were present to establish a quorum and due notice had been published: Board President Kim Hodne; Board Vice President Diane Gubatayao; Board Clerk-Treasurer Bridget Mattson; and Board Members Jordan Tabb; Paul Robbins Jr., and Nicole Anderson. Douglas Gregg participated via teleconference. Student Board Member Braxton Zink was also present.

Administrative staff present included Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson; Business Manager Katie Parrott; Curriculum Director Alonso Escalante and Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion to approve the agenda for the regular meeting of October 13, 2021**

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

**ROLL CALL**

***Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE***

**ANDERSON, TABB, GUBATAYAO, ROBBINS JR., MATTSON, GREGG, HODNE - ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

**PUBLIC RECOGNITION**

*Filipino-American History Month* - Board Vice President Diane Gubatayao introduced the recognition of Filipino-American History Month, stating that she estimates about 10% of the district's students are of Filipino heritage. She noted that her own children have Filipino heritage through their great-grandfathers. Former School Board Member Alma Manabat Parker invited the Board to that weekend's local celebration highlighting the contributions of Filipino Americans. Several new district teachers of Filipino heritage as well as two students introduced themselves. These individuals were: eleventh-grader Czarina Cabillo, president of the Fil-Am Cultural Club at Ketchikan High School; James Escabarte, a new student at Kayhi who came here from the Philippines with his mother, Ronor Escabarte, who is teaching science at Ketchikan High School; Jaysel Señires, who is teaching life skills at Schoenbar Middle School; Joshua Porca, new science teacher at Schoenar Middle School; and Tricia Mae Bermudez, special education teacher at Schoenbar.

Board President Kim Hodne expressed condolences in acknowledging the death of former Ketchikan resident Carl Webb on September 17. Mr. Webb served on the Ketchikan School Board from 2005 to 2008.

Board Clerk-Treasurer Bridget Mattson acknowledged Red Ribbon Week, educating about drug and alcohol awareness, would occur the week of October 23-31.

**CITIZEN REMARKS**

Angela Putrino remarked regarding the issue of required mask-wearing in physical education classes. She said that physical activities for youth at the Gateway Recreation Center were analogous to the physical education classes, but there had been no outbreaks of linked to COVID at the Rec. Center, where mask wearing was optional. Ms. Putrino asked that each board member address this subject in their board comments.

Lewis Amundsen said the drop-off and pick-up lanes at Houghtaling Elementary School are not working as they were engineered to; and asked that this be looked into. Some parents are using other spots, such as the Revilla parking lot across the street, to drop off Houghtaling students, but that has created other issues, he asserted.

Keenan Sanderson expressed his support for government to government consultations between the Ketchikan School Board and tribal governments in the area. He is a representative on the Ketchikan Tlingit and Haida Community Council, and said that in his experience consultations have worked well for all stakeholders.

### **INFORMATION AND REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

*Policy committee:* Board Member Paul Robbins Jr. reported on the policies brought forward by the policy committee that were on that evening's agenda. He explained what was being proposed for the benefit of the public who might want to comment during the policy hearings.

*Insurance committee:* Board Member Nicole Anderson reported that the insurance committee met on October 7, with plans to meet quarterly. The deficit in the health insurance pool was one of the topics discussed.

*Curriculum committee:* Board Member Bridget. Mattson said the major curriculum review subject this year is math. Various vendors of math curriculum products will be presenting to the committee on upcoming Mondays. Members of the public can contact Alonso Escalante to view the math product samples.

### **CLAIMS FOR INFORMATION - Claims of October 1, 2021**

Board Member Gubatayao commented on the high cost of Workman's Compensation as reflected in the claims report. Business Manager Katie Parrott provided some information on the subject in response to several school board member questions.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

*Student Member's Report:* Student Board Member Braxton Zink first commented that precautionary measures against COVID for those students involved in extracurricular activities seemed to be working in allowing them to travel for competition. He also reported that interested sophomores and juniors had taken the PSAT that day. Braxton said a study by the College Board found that many who take the PSAT can correlate it to an extra 100 points on the SAT.

#### **Superintendent's Report**

Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson briefly highlighted some of her recent activities, stating she wanted to be brief, as Business Manager Katie Parrott would be giving a comprehensive report next on the district's health insurance pool. Superintendent Johnson reported that:

- District administration recently met with representatives of Residential Youth Care on how to serve those students during COVID.
- The district will be requesting a full-time nurse through Alaska's agreement with the federal General Services Administration to bring contracted health care workers to Alaska;
- A COVID testing coordinator has been hired and will start working on the district's COVID testing program;
- The Start Strong Committee will next meet on October 19.
- No school will occur for students or staff on Friday, October 13, as a trade for time spent at parent teacher conferences earlier in the week.

### **Break**

At 6:51 p.m., an approximately 10-minute recess was taken before the next report began.

#### **Health Insurance Pool**

Business Manager Katie Parrott provided a comprehensive overview of the district's health insurance program, the history of its large deficit and measures taken to address that deficit. The intent of the report was to provide necessary background to the Board before that evening's action item regarding acceptance of the final allotment of COVID relief funds, she said. Administration is recommending that approximately \$1.45 million of those funds be applied to the COVID-specific costs in the health insurance program. With the insurance pool deficit standing at \$2.49 million, action must be taken, Ms. Parrott said.

**\*\*PUBLIC HEARING - POLICY\*\*** - Procedure (1) Citizens may give public comment regarding the subject of the hearing; (2) the public hearing is closed; (3) opportunity for Board discussion and decision.

**Motion to approve a new Board Policy 1420, Relations between Sovereign Nations and the Schools in first reading.**

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: ANDERSON

Public Hearing

No citizens commented.

Board Discussion

Policy Committee member Jordan Tabb noted that the committee had reworked some language to reflect the intent of the Board, and he encouraged the policy's approval.

Ms. Gubatayao commented she was glad the government to government consultations were being formalized. She also said this would bring the district into better compliance with the spirit of the federal ESSA law as it applies to the Indian Education Grant.

Ms. Mattson said she supports the policy, and thanked the policy committee for its work.

President Hodne said the policy would serve everyone well, and he is excited the relationships are being codified.

**ROLL CALL**

***Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE***

**MATTSON, TABB, GREGG, ROBBINS JR., ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, HODNE - ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

**Motion to approve revisions to Board Policy 6115 - Ceremonies and Observances in first reading.**

Moved by: ROBBINS; Second by: MATTSON

Public Hearing

There was no public comment on the hearing.

Board Discussion

Mr. Tabb said the language added to this policy gave clarity to staff on proper adherence to flag-lowering observances. He pointed out that the U.S. flag code only authorizes this to occur upon the declaration of the President and governors of states.

**ROLL CALL**

***Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE***

**GREGG, TABB, GUBATAYAO, ROBBINS JR., ANDERSON, MATTSON, HODNE - ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

**Motion to approve revisions to Board Policy 9322 - Agenda/Meeting Materials in first reading.**

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: MATTSON

Public Hearing

There was no public comment.

Board Discussion

Policy committee member Mr. Robbins Jr. explained the proposed revisions to the policy. Those included removing the vice president and clerk treasurer from the section regarding who would set the agenda in cooperation with the superintendent. The committee had discussed that agenda-setting is normally between the board president or designee and the superintendent, he said.

Ms. Gubatayao said she would oppose that change as she felt it was beneficial to have the other officers involved in setting the agenda.

Ms. Mattson said she is in full support of the proposed changes. She said that legal counsel and the Association of Alaska School Boards had both questioned the current manner of agenda-setting, which she said was operating like a committee.

Board Member Tabb expressed a concern that Board business was being discussed outside of a full Board meeting. He said that all Board members should have an equal opportunity to submit items for the agenda, as well as all members of the community also having that opportunity. The superintendent and president can then review submitted agenda items and determine if they are appropriate for an agenda, said Mr. Tabb.

Ms. Gubatayao said that different officers attending the agenda setting meeting brings different perspectives and that discussing agenda items wasn't really a meeting. She said the current process is working and doesn't need to be changed.

Board Member Anderson said it is her understanding that in Sitka the president and vice president often meet together with the superintendent to set their agendas.

Board Member Douglas Gregg referred to the current policy language providing the option for the vice president and clerk treasurer to meet, in addition to the president, with the superintendent; and said he didn't see the need for the proposed change.

Mr. Hodne stated there was no issue with the open meetings act and the agenda setting meetings. He also stated he hadn't known this particular policy had been added to the agenda. He said the current process for agenda-setting was a long-standing one, and he supported having the other Board officers involved.

Interim Superintendent Johnson provided her perspective. She said with more people involved, setting an agenda takes longer. She added that, in speaking to her colleagues, in most other districts it is the superintendent and Board president who set the agenda for the sake of time and efficiency.

Mr. Tabb noted the process outlined in the policy for a citizen to submit an item for a Board meeting agenda. He said he wondered if that process was being followed. He said he was concerned that the items to be discussed were being decided by a portion of the board.

There was more discussion.

#### **ROLL CALL**

***Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE***

**ROBBINS JR., MATTSON, TABB - AYES**

**ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, GREGG, HODNE - NAYS**

**3-4**

#### ***MOTION FAILED***

#### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Motion to approve the Consent Calendar of September 22, 2021** (consisting of the following):

- a. *Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 22, 2021.*
- b. *Motion to approve a long-term substitute contract with Mark Woodward. (TSAS)*
- c. *Motion to approve a contract with Kristin Ferris for speech language pathology services for the 2021-22 school year.*
- d. *Motion to approve a professional services contract with Robert Hewitt for the 2021-2022 school year.*

Moved by: TABB; Second by: MATTSON

#### **ROLL CALL**

***Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE***

**MATTSON, TABB, GREGG, ROBBINS JR., ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, HODNE - ALL AYES**

#### ***MOTION PASSED***

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Motion to approve the 2021 School Food Service Equipment Assistance Grant application for up to \$10,000.**

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: TABB

#### **Discussion**

Ms. Anderson asked about ownership of the equipment being purchased as it was for a Ketchikan Charter School annex at Holy Name school. Business Manager Parrott said that KCS had entered into a three-year agreement with Holy Name. If KCS vacates its annex use at Holy Name, all equipment and supplies would stay with the district.

She also noted that any additional funds necessary for the equipment over the grant funding would come from the district's food service program.

## **ROLL CALL**

***Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE***

**GUBATAYAO, MATTSO, GREGG, ROBBINS JR., ANDERSON, TABB, HODNE - ALL AYES**

## ***MOTION PASSED***

### **Motion to approve the receipt and use of ESSER III Coronavirus Response and Relief funds in the amount of \$1,450,061.**

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: MATTSO

#### **Discussion**

Mr. Tabb said that hearing about the report on the health insurance program, and having faith in administration's recommendations, he supported approval of this action.

Ms. Gubatayao said regrets the loss of funds for future needs, but the district needs to address the deficit.

Ms. Anderson also stated it is unfortunate not to have these funds available for other needs such as addressing learning loss, but added that the effect of COVID related claims on the health insurance fund balance is staggering.

Mr. Hodne stated it is extremely disheartening to spend \$1.4 million on a deficit, and questioned what else in the budget would be impacted.

In response, Ms. Parrott affirmed that the \$1.4 million wouldn't be there to cover other things in future years, but she noted there may be expenses this year that might not be needed next year, depending on the pandemic. She also noted that by funneling these funds to the COVID-specific charges contributing to the health insurance deficit, these expenses won't have to be taken out of the operating fund. Part of the core programs will then be protected.

## **ROLL CALL**

***Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE***

**ROBBINS JR., ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, MATTSO, TABB, GREGG, HODNE - ALL AYES**

## ***MOTION PASSED***

## **DISCUSSION**

***2022-2023 School Year Calendar:*** Ms. Mattson, who was on the calendar committee, explained some features of the proposed calendar and answered questions of the Board.

#### **Board travel budget**

In order to allow enough funds for Board members wanting to attend a training conference, a revision will be needed to the Board's budget. Other areas of the Board's budget, in addition to travel, were also briefly discussed. The benefit of the conference was noted.

Proficiency rate on student assessments

Mr. Hodne explained that he had requested this discussion topic as he was disheartened by students' not proficient assessment scores. His suggestion is to have a discussion group or task force to address this issue. Mr. Tabb suggested a new board could address this in the strategic plan. Further discussion ensued.

**BOARD COMMENTS**

Mr. Robbins commented on being able to attend the AASB training, and said he appreciated the clarification on the Board's budget that provided for his attendance. He spoke about trying to fix the health insurance deficit, before any request to the Borough for funding. He offered to be a Board member representative on any upcoming negotiations with bargaining units. Mr. Robbins also commented that he plans to bring up part of the agenda setting proposal that wasn't discussed by the Board in its deliberation.

Ms. Anderson shared an experience her family had with free COVID testing and delayed results, which then led to seeking rapid testing through a physician. She said it would be beneficial for families to have access to COVID testing at the schools, especially for families that can't pay the out of pocket expense to get a rapid test.

Student Board Member Zink said he was appreciative and grateful that Kayhi students were in school. At this time last year, he was at home attending school virtually, he noted. He commented that it was important to maintain social distancing and wearing of masks to keep students in school. He also shared his situation with COVID testing, and a delayed response with no rapid test being available.

Mr. Tabb remarked that the state-provided testing resources had been impacted by the sustained high rate of COVID in the community. He said he supports anything the district or board can do to make testing fairly and easily available to all who need it; adding there is a tie between testing being available and keeping kids in school.

Ms. Mattson thanked Mr. Hodne and Mr. Gregg for their service on the Board. She said she is looking forward to working with the newly elected members, and mentioned the strategic plan and building of board skills to set its goals. She also commented that she too was grateful that students were in school in person, while noting it had been a long two years.

Ms. Gubatayao congratulated the newly elected board members. She commented on the agenda-setting policy. She expressed appreciation for in-person parent teacher conferences.

Mr. Hodne congratulated the newly elected Board members. He stated appreciation to the community for electing him, and to the Board for then electing him as Board president. He said that the School Board represents the community well and puts kids first.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

*Minutes approved as distributed at the October 27, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Education.*

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BOARD PRESIDENT  
Stephen Bradford