

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR meeting of  
Wednesday, May 12, 2021  
Remotely held via videoconferencing platform

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

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Board of Education met in regular session on the 12th day of May 2021, participating remotely via Zoom videoconference<sup>1</sup>. Board President Kim Hodne called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The following members were present on the videoconference to establish a quorum and due notice had been published: Board President Kim Hodne; Clerk-Treasurer Bridget Mattson; and Board Members Jordan Tabb; Diane Gubatayao; Paul Robbins Jr.; and Nicole Anderson. Student member Henry Clark was also present.

Administrative staff present included: Acting Superintendent/ Business Manager Katie Parrott; and Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion to approve the agenda for the regular meeting of May 12, 2021.**

Moved by: ANDERSON; Second by: MATTSON

**ROLL CALL**

**Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) - AYE**

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

**MOTION PASSED**

**CITIZEN REMARKS<sup>2</sup>**

Two citizens had submitted written comments to be read aloud.

Brenda Loughman wrote that the district can now keep more students in school, with the availability of vaccinations and rapid testing for students.

Wendy Romano, parent of a Kayhi baseball player, wrote about her disappointment with how COVID had affected the sport's season. She pleaded for the baseball team to be allowed to play, especially for the sake of the senior team members.

**INFORMATION AND REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

Board Member Jordan Tabb noted a district safety committee meeting that had been scheduled to occur the previous evening had been postponed.

President Kim Hodne stated a hiring committee for the interim superintendent position had convened the previous evening. He introduced one of the committee members, Bill Urquhart, to report on its work. Mr. Urquhart named each of the committee members and which stakeholder group they represented. For himself, Mr. Urquhart said he is a professor at the University of Alaska-Southeast, Ketchikan campus, and father of four children in the school system. He reported the other committee members were: Matt Beimler, representing the district technology staff; Trixie Bennett as a representative of Ketchikan Indian Community; Kurt Lindemann, principal of Revilla, as a member of the Ketchikan Leadership Organization; Sheryl Yeisley, parent and involved in a parent group; Gara Williams, Kayhi special education teacher, representing Ketchikan Education Association; Lana Boler, former member of Ketchikan School Board and parent; and Alma Parker, also a recent school board member and a parent, and additionally representing English Language Learners in the school district.

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<sup>1</sup> Meeting "location" was remote via ZOOM video conferencing, due to an increased COVID-19 community alert level.

<sup>2</sup> Citizens were invited to submit written comments to be read aloud at the meeting by the Board Clerk.

Mr. Urquhart then described the process the committee had used in reviewing the three applications for the interim superintendent position that had been received. He said that each individual committee member had scored one of the three individuals the highest on the matrix they'd used. Mr. Urquhart stated that the committee recommends that the Board hire Melissa Johnson as the interim superintendent.

President Hodne followed up by thanking the committee and briefly spoke to his task of forming a committee of stakeholders as directed by the School Board.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Smart Start Risk Level Update - Acting Superintendent Katie Parrott reported on actions taken in response to the community's continued increase in positive cases which led to its highest risk level - Level 4. Ms. Parrott said in response, she had raised the school district level to medium risk which changes school operation district-wide. However, she noted that Houghtaling's school operation was remote through at least the end of the week, due to the number of positive cases affecting that school. She provided some description on the factors informing the decisions on how individual schools might operate.

Abner Hoage, Ketchikan Emergency Operations Center Incident Commander, and Arizona Jacobs, Ketchikan Public Health nurse were both present on the videoconference to provide expertise and updates on the community and district COVID situations.

Mr. Hoage reported that the active positive cases in Ketchikan had continued to increase, with 14 new positives announced that day. Ketchikan currently has 91 positive cases. Mr. Hoage also briefly referred to the theme of the earlier public comments, noting that the Board may need to look at the safety of outdoor activities versus indoor activities, and also that more people are now vaccinated, in making some decisions on school and student activities. Roughly 50% of Ketchikan's population is now vaccinated, he said.

Ms. Jacobs commented on Kayhi and Houghtaling being affected with positive cases, and said the district nurses had done a good job of trying to keep spread out of the other schools. She also said that public health had learned some tools for contact tracing in a school population, including utilizing school bus seating lists to identify potential close contacts.

There were follow up questions and discussion regarding further actions that could be taken to decrease school spread. Recommendations made by Mr. Hoage and Ms. Jacob included: to encourage vaccination; consider COVID testing programs in the schools; adhere to mitigation plans; and continue the CDC recommendations of universal use of masks; physical distancing; hand washing; cleaning of facilities; and contact tracing.

Student Board Member's Report: Henry Clark commented on how empty it was at Kayhi with the 50/50 school operation. It has also disrupted some of the AP (Advanced Placement) testing coming up; and also plans for a band concert, he said. Henry also briefly commented on some senior events still being planned for the end of the school year.

Schoenbar Middle School Annual Report: Schoenbar Middle School Principal Sheri Boehlert led off the school report by citing the school's mission statement and also the school's priorities, which align with the district's mission statement. She shared slides and data to illustrate those priorities of: safety in school; meaningful relationships; social emotional learning; responding to individual needs; and setting high standards. The school's current enrollment of 258 students is almost evenly split between seventh and eighth-grade, 130 and 128 students respectively, with the numbers of males and females also being a fairly close number, she said. Ms. Boehlert said that Schoenbar's attendance at 94.1 is slightly higher than other schools in the district. She commented that after being out of school last year, the students appreciated and wanted to be in school this year.

Principal Boehlert also detailed assessment and data programs used by Schoenbar, including PowerSchool, Schoolzilla, MAPS, and subject specific assessments used to ensure appropriate placement of students in classes. She noted that this year the school shifted to a block-type schedule to provide for spacing of students. Core programming and extra instructional support were emphasized this year, she added.

Schoenbar teacher Chad Frey highlighted the documentary on Irene Jones that he and his elective class on documentary film-making had created. The idea to tell the story of Irene Jones came from District Cultural Coordinator Teresa Varnell, he said. After the Native student was denied admittance to the white-attended school in 1929, leaders including William Paul Sr. took up her case, he said. Mr. Frey suggested that September 25 (1929), the day Irene was admitted to the school, should be a time to promote differences and diversity.

Assistant Principal Melissa Johnson spoke about the variety of student activities, clubs and intramurals offered at Schoenbar; as well as the electives offered to seventh and eighth graders to accompany the required core classes.

To close out the Schoenbar report, Ms. Boehlert stated she is requesting to initiate a rolling start for school again next year, as it was successful this year. She also noted the school has several serious capital improvement needs: the school's outdated security camera system and the ongoing issue with buckling or warping of the gym floor.

Board members followed up with some questions.

At the end of the report, President Hodne noted that Board Member Paul Robbins Jr. was no longer participating in the virtual meeting, as his cell phone had quit.

#### Business Manager update

Ms. Parrott briefly updated the Board on what occurred with the district's budget at the most recent Borough Assembly meeting. The Assembly voted to reduce its discretionary contribution by \$153,490. The Assembly would have a further discussion on the district's budget at its second reading at its May 17 meeting. If the reduction to the discretionary contribution remained, the district would need to determine how to fund that shortfall, she said. She also noted the Borough would be providing some pass-through relief funds to the district, and that would be on a future agenda of the School Board.

#### **CONSENT CALENDAR:**

- a. Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of April 28, 2021.
- b. Motion to approve the special meeting minutes of May 4, 2021.
- ~~c. Motion to approve the emergency meeting minutes of May 4, 2021.~~
- ~~d. Motion to approve the emergency meeting minutes of May 5, 2021.~~
- e. Motion to approve the offer of a teaching contract with Richel Dapudong for the 2021-2022 school year.
- f. Motion to approve the offer of a teaching contract with Aldrin Torrejos for the 2021-2022 school year.
- g. Motion to approve the offer of a teaching contract with Trisha Bermudez for the 2021-2022 school year.
- h. Motion to approve the offer of a teaching contract with Sean O'Neil for the 2021-2022 school year.
- i. Motion to approve the offer of a teaching contract with Deborah Badertscher for the 2021-2022 school year.

#### **Motion to approve the Consent Calendar of the regular meeting of May 12, 2021.**

Moved by: TABB; Second by: GUBATAYAO

It was noted that items c and d (minutes) had been pulled as they were not ready for consideration.

#### **ROLL CALL**

**Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE**  
**TABB, GUBATAYAO, ANDERSON, MATTSON, HODNE - ALL AYES**  
**MOTION PASSED**

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Motion to approve the lease agreement with the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, as presented.**

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: TABB

#### Discussion

Mr. Hodne commented that he hopes that in two years the district will be past COVID and can regain its previous office spaces.

**ROLL CALL**

**Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE  
GUBATAYAO, MATTSON, ANDERSON, TABB, HODNE - ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

**Motion to approve application and acceptance of the FY21 Screening Testing to Reopen and Keep Schools Operating Safely Grant in the amount of \$392,630.**

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: TABB

Discussion

In response to a question from President Hodne, Ms. Parrott said that "surveillance" or screening tests will be funded through the grant. In addition, personnel costs such as for a testing coordinator could be funded. Another allowable use would be for the district to purchase its own equipment for testing, she said.

**ROLL CALL**

**Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE  
ANDERSON, MATTSON, TABB, GUBATAYAO, HODNE - ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

**Motion to accept the dates of July 14, 2021, November 10, 2021, and December 8, 2021 as regular meeting dates for the School Board.**

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

Ms. Gubatayao pointed out that the Board can choose to hold a second meeting during those months.

**ROLL CALL**

**Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE  
MATTSON, TABB, ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, HODNE - ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Board Member Jordan Tabb commented on the need to support mitigation efforts in an attempt to provide as normal as possible athletic events and high school graduation. He also urged people to encourage their friends and families to get vaccinated.

Henry Clark commented on hearing from other students about how school has gone for them. The next School Board meeting will be his last, he said.

Board Member Nicole Anderson noted that the community is seeing more COVID cases now than during the entire pandemic. She urged residents to do what needs to be done to bring the risk level down.

Board Member Diane Gubatayao thanked Mr. Hoage and Ms. Jacobs for advising the Board on the COVID and school situation; and also thanked Ms. Parrott for her daily updates to the Board. She commented on hoping to see activities return to normal.

Board Member Bridget Mattson thanked Henry for his insight on the Board and bringing a needed perspective. She also encouraged the community, and particularly families concerned about their students, to take steps to get to a lower risk level.

President Hodne stated it was incumbent upon everyone to do the right thing. He said Ketchikan had dropped its guard and that it needed to "to buck up" as a community to get the numbers down. He also thanked the stakeholders on the hiring committee.

An upcoming workshop with AASB was noted; as was potentially holding interviews for an interim superintendent by May 19.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

*Minutes approved as distributed at the June 9, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Education.*

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BOARD PRESIDENT  
Kim Hodne