

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Regular meeting of  
June 24, 2020  
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 24<sup>th</sup> day of June in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers. Board President Bridget Mattson 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 Bridget Mattson; Vice President Sonya Skan; Clerk-Treasurer Diane Gubatayao; Board Members Leslie Becker; Jordan Tabb, Paul Robbins Jr. and Thomas Heutte.

Administrative staff present included: Beth Lougee, Superintendent; Business Manager Katie Parrott; and Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

Vision and Mission Statement

The vision and mission statements were read by School Board Member Sonya Skan.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Motion to approve the agenda for the regular meeting of June 24, 2020**

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: BECKER

**ROLL CALL**

**BECKER, GUBATAYAO, ROBBINS JR., HEUTTE, TABB, SKAN, MATTSON - ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

**PUBLIC RECOGNITION**

Sarah Campbell, Ketchikan High School teacher, was recognized for her selection as a 2020 Sanford Teacher Award winner for the state of Alaska. One teacher from each state and the District of Columbia is chosen for the award each year. Awardees are “extraordinary, inspirational teachers,” according to the Sanford award information read by Board President Bridget Mattson.

Board Member Diane Gubatayao remarked on the peace events that Ms. Campbell initiated at Kayhi, and stated the award is well-deserved. Board Member Tom Heutte noted that Ms. Campbell was not at that evening’s meeting to be acknowledged in person, but she had been involved in the previous evening’s Board worksession, and he appreciates her hard work.

**CITIZEN REMARKS**

Tiffany Cook told the Board how the current plans for next school year would be difficult for parents and children. One constant in a child’s life has always been school, and now, she said, children are sad, depressed and uncertain about the future. She said she is constantly reassuring her own children that things will be okay. Ms. Cook noted the state of the economy, and said that already-burdened parents can’t take on the additional job of schooling. She commented on how elementary-aged children would be mixing with different groups of other children if attending daycare and the proposed extended learning opportunities (ELOs); and said it would be safer and easier if those children’s “bubble” was their classroom. The same kids could then also eat lunch together, take recess together, and ride the bus, she said. Ms. Cook also stated that a full day of professional development for teachers each week seemed to be a lot. However, she added she would be more receptive if her kids were getting 4 full days at school, instead of one or two. She then made several suggestions including: a parental waiver releasing the district of liability to allow their children to attend school on-site; and use of alternate locations to spread kids out safely (such as the community facilities being considered for the ELOs). She asked the district to start over in its planning and bring key stakeholders in. Ms. Cook ended her comments by speaking about the various risks some children could face by being at home and not physically at school.

Nicole Anderson spoke about the CDC guidelines for school reopening, which she'd heard the Smart Start team reference in regards to Ketchikan's restart plans. The guidelines are not "a must" for the district to follow, she said. According to the CDC, the district can determine how to implement the considerations in collaboration with the state and local community and adjust to its unique needs and circumstances, she said. Ms. Anderson indicated that the district could accommodate more than 50% capacity in its schools because the CDC's recommendation to space seating and desks at least six feet apart in a classroom is "when feasible." Seating on school buses could also be more flexible, she indicated. Ms. Anderson also had suggestions for addressing distancing issues in bathrooms and in hallways, with the goal of allowing for more children in school. Physical barriers such as the shields could be used in between sinks in the restrooms as a safety measure and taping on floors could be employed, as is done in grocery stores, to provide distancing directions to children passing each other. Ms. Anderson also cited the CDC as recommending keeping small groups of children together as much as possible, especially at the younger ages, i.e. a cohort. She posed questions about: the extended learning opportunities; the number of hours her child might spend in asynchronous learning; whether there would be student instruction on the teacher professional development day; and if the school year would need to be extended to make up for a later start date. Lastly, she stated she would sign a waiver if it meant her children would be onsite in a classroom learning with a teacher.

Alexandra Ginter stated that COVID-19 is not going anywhere soon, and asserted that the world will not be infection free again. Is only 50 percent school capacity what is intended for the future of Ketchikan's children, she asked? Ms. Ginter stated that level is unacceptable. She stated that 50% of Ketchikan students failed to meet grade level standards for most core subjects. Children will continue to drop behind, she said, if there is a reliance on online learning. She also commented on the CDC recommendations for schools in regards to being adaptable to a particular community's needs and circumstances. She cited the local COVID case statistics with the number of cases recovered, and with no deaths; and asked what were the statistics and death rates compared to a bad flu season. Ms. Ginter questioned what would warrant each risk level regarding schools, and what data would be utilized specific to Ketchikan. She also questioned if 100% school capacity was being considered, indicating the community was advocating for such. Ms. Ginter said she'd heard that Alaska's Education Commissioner had commented that school reopening levels should be a community-based decision. Ketchikan should not have to abide by the same guidelines as communities with higher infection, she said.

Sharli Arntzen stated she was dismayed at the district's current draft Smart Start Plan, asserting that it lacked community engagement and is not what is best for students. While she said she appreciated the district's efforts to stay abreast of the CDC guidelines and to prioritize student and staff safety, she indicated it was due to the district's concern with liability. The district should put the quality of education at as high a priority as its liability, she said. Ketchikan children need to be in school five days a week, she maintained. Without that schedule, her family will look at other schooling options, she said. She also described the effects on children and families of being in school on site at less than that. Ms. Arntzen also said she was concerned with transparency in regards to the May 27 Board action which dealt with parts of the Smart Start plan. She said she understood the need to set a school start date, but felt the plan was pushed through without community engagement. She also spoke to how a four-day school week was addressed in a June 4 letter to parents from the superintendent. The plan means there will be one full day when no students are at school; and working parents would have to make arrangements for children not to be left at home alone, she said. Online instruction and too much screen time was another situation she described. All healthy children should be in school full time with good hand-washing and physical distancing in place, she stated; adding she doesn't support wearing of masks. Ms. Arntzen also suggested polling staff anonymously on the impacts of school plans.

Ms. Arntzen also read a letter from her ten-year old daughter to the School Board. The youngster wrote that she wanted to go to school very badly and that she did not like distance learning. She questioned why students couldn't "go back to school without a mask" when she'd seen many people protesting with no masks on and without social distancing. She wrote that she hopes to be able to go to school for more than one day a week.

Jill Cowan first expressed that it was distressing to her that young people's education was being decreased while liquor stores, dispensaries and other establishments had been opened. Providing youth with a quality education is "essential," she stated. Ketchikan can find a way to get students back into the classroom full time by thinking outside the box, she said; and suggested a multidisciplinary committee to identify solutions. She shared some suggestions which included: utilizing other facilities for additional class space and to allow for social distancing; and providing additional staffing through seeking volunteers, substitutes, and bringing teachers out of retirement. Ms. Cowan asserted that all involved in planning for school reopening need to focus on "what can be done" and show that education is "essential." She also shared her middle-school student's issues accessing Zoom and attempting to get a working computer; issues which were never completely resolved by the end of the school year. She contended the district, and Ketchikan overall, lacks adequate infrastructure for online learning to be successful. Ms. Cowan also briefly described how as a nurse she'd been involved in rapid training in regards to preparation for potential COVID-19 hospitalizations. She cited this situation to illustrate: "if there's a will, there's a way;" and asked the district to use the same approach in trying to re-open school fully.

Angela Blandov spoke of her challenges as an adoptive parent with two preschool age children with various special needs. With the closure of school and community agencies due to COVID-19, she lost access to necessary services and respite, she said. She described issues with the Zoom sessions for her children as well, particularly due to their age and needs. Ms. Blandov said she is doing everything she can as their mother, but her children need physical and occupational therapy and speech services, among other specialized services. The impact of school closure on special needs children needs to be considered, she stressed.

Nathaniel Currall said the Board has a tough job, but it exists to represent the community, provide the best education it can, and not to be a rubber stamp. He said the only update he'd seen to school start plans since the last School Board meeting was changing the professional development day from Wednesday to Friday. For teens, that schedule would be viewed as a three-day weekend, he said. Mr. Currall said his biggest objection to plans for next school year is that students aren't being schooled 5 days a week. If the district operates schools at 50% capacity, why can't half the kids go every other Friday, he asked; adding that would provide more of a school year. He cited an average class size of under 20 students per classroom at Point Higgins to counter information the district had cited for not being able to provide appropriate distancing measures in a classroom at full capacity. That average size of students in a classroom was workable, he indicated. Mr. Currall stated there was confusion in the community as to whether the Smart Start plan was mandated or not; and added that the state's education department website shows that it is not. He also commented on his disappointment with Ketchikan's spring instruction not being graded and lacking any new material. In comparison, other communities in Southeast did provide new material instruction and required grades, he said. Mr. Currall also asked for clarification to the community and parents on how positive COVID cases in the community would trigger various risk levels for schooling scenarios. He concluded by asking that the Board consider the community's comments and suggestions.

Tamra King also referenced the state's information on Smart Start plans and framework. She said that Ketchikan and much of Alaska is struggling with job loss. She stated there are a lot of people who desperately need jobs and perhaps the district could hire some of them. She said she sided with parents who said they would sign a waiver if they felt their children were okay to go into school.

#### **Claims for Information - June 12, 2020**

Clerk Treasurer Diane Gubatayao stated that she hopes the district is purchasing as much as possible from local businesses due to the current economic situation.

#### **Superintendent Report**

Superintendent Beth Lougee thanked the public for their comments and suggestions. She said the Smart Start Plan continues to be a work in progress; and that the district team is listening to the public and will continue to do so.

Several Board Members then responded to the public comments. Board Member Gubatayao referred to the suggestion of a parent waiver, and asked if the district could get legal advice on that question if that had not already been done. She also suggested conducting another parent survey and also one for staff. The staff could be asked what risk level they are comfortable working in, she said.

Board Member Paul Robbins Jr., thanked the speakers and said much of their testimony had been eye opening to him. He added that he didn't think enough parent choice had been sought. Mr. Robbins reported that the superintendent and planning team have been considering the particulars of Ketchikan in regards to risk levels and what that means for school capacity. He said the speakers' input was very valuable.

Board Member Jordan Tabb also thanked those who spoke. He referred to the planning to use additional facilities so that schooling was available, within the guidance of what the district is being told is safe. He addressed the concept of a waiver as well. Either the district can provide a school that is safe, or it cannot. He indicated the district cannot provide a fair educational opportunity to all students if some parents can accept a risk for their children, while others cannot. Mr. Tabb also addressed the comment about students needing special education services, stating it is his understanding services will be provided based on the child's IEP. He also stressed that the crisis model of education employed in the spring is different than what is expected in the fall. The district needs to provide training to its staff so they are prepared for the fall, he also added.

Board Member Sonya Skan noted she had been absent for the last regular Board meeting and for the previous evening's worksession. In addition, she was not present at the meeting in which the draft school start plan was voted on, she said. She stated she favors planning for a regular school start, and then determining how to deal with any curve balls. This year, the district had to react to no plan, she said. Ms. Skan indicated the Board needs to make the planning decisions; adding it needs to make sure every base is covered and it forgot the first base.

Board Member Leslie Becker requested that the Board have a special meeting to rescind the vote of May 27. There was a brief discussion.

President Mattson said the Alaska education department is requiring that the district submit a plan in July for the start of school. She stressed that this is a state requirement. This is the reason the draft plan was brought to the board, she said. President Mattson cautioned against rescinding a vote which was based on a draft, and which provided a timeline for the start of school.

Ms. Mattson and Ms. Gubatayao both remarked on information that had come out of a webinar for school boards that day from Commissioner of Education Michael Johnson.

Superintendent Lougee then addressed some of the comments heard that evening. She stated that many of the ideas are the same thoughts of those who have worked on this plan. The planning team includes teachers, administrators and others. Also, many of the ideas mentioned that evening were addressed in a Board work session the previous evening, she said. The district is working on getting many of the issues answered and trying to communicate as best it can. Ms. Lougee asked for the patience of the public and parents. She emphasized that the school start plan presented on May 27 was a draft, and was never intended to be "the" plan. It is being adjusted as the team gets guidance from applicable authorities. Superintendent Lougee also said she feels staff has been heard from. School staff have to feel safe and be ready for the opening of school, she said. She again asked for patience and said she would be communicating more information out to the public that Friday.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

### **Motion to approve the Consent Calendar of June 24, 2020**

- a. *Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of June 10, 2020.*
- b. *Motion to approve the special meeting minutes of June 10, 2020.*

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: GUBATAYAO

## **ROLL CALL**

**SKAN, HEUTTE, GUBATAYAO, BECKER, ROBBINS JR., TABB, MATTSON – ALL AYES**

***MOTION PASSED***

## **NEW BUSINESS**

## **Motion to approve the FY20 Operating Fund budget transfers as presented**

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: HEUTTE

### **Discussion**

Noting that this past year had been unusual, Business Manager Katie Parrott explained that the budget transfers essentially align the current budget with actual spending. Budget areas in which spending was less than anticipated are transferred to those areas in which expenditures were higher. Budget transfers above a certain fiscal amount are required to be brought to the Board for its approval, she also explained. Those transfers were indicated by highlighting in a spreadsheet she'd provided in the Board packet. Ms. Parrott emphasized that these budget transfers do not require any additional funds; the transfers are simply a re-allocation of funds based on reality. Some of the budget transfers she noted resulted from a significant increase in supplies and materials with subsequent underspending in small tools and equipment. The latter was mainly due to not purchasing previously planned computer servers.

### **ROLL CALL**

**HEUTTE, SKAN, ROBBINS JR., TABB, BECKER, GUBATAYAO, MATTSON – ALL AYES**

### **MOTION PASSED**

### **DISCUSSION**

Board "Safety" Goal regarding the School Climate and Connectedness survey results: Board members shared ideas and comments on the School Climate and Connectedness Survey results. Board members were asked to bring back a possible goal based on the survey results for the next Board meeting.

Review of AASB Policy Updates: BP and AR 5141.42 Professional Boundaries of Staff with Students –New from AASB; BP 3510; BP and AR 4161 (formal BP adoption required). The policies will be reviewed by the policy committee except for BP 3510, which will go to the Board for a policy hearing. That policy revision incorporates a new section of state statute in regards to preventative maintenance programs.

Review of AR 5116- Changes are recommended to Administrative Regulations dealing with class size, and the regulations now provide more clarification to principals on students transferring from one school to another.

Review KGBSD Annual Agenda Calendar 2020-2021: The annual agenda calendar provides a listing of items that typically come before the Board annually. Notations were made regarding students assessments and that school reports to the Board will start in January. Listing a Board self-evaluation was discussed. It was agreed to schedule an evaluation with a worksession, potentially in July.

Review Superintendent Goals. Superintendent Lougee spoke to each of the goals she had written. She had expanded on some goals produced out of a goal setting worksession held earlier this year. Boardmembers made a few suggestions.

Government to Government consultation with Ketchikan Indian Community – A brief report on the June 18 consultation with KIC by several Board members was given. President Mattson hopes to schedule the full School Board to meet with the KIC Board in August. KIC has offered to bring in presenters for a team building training for both boards. Saxman IRA will be contacted for government to government consultation.

### **CITIZEN REMARKS**

Alexandra Ginter asked some questions of the Board, stemming from that evening's meeting. They included: would the Board be making the call on what level of risk the community would be classified at? When will there be a clear outline on what warrants each level, for example, if it depends on infection numbers and will those include travelers or only community member cases; will the data and research be available to the community? Clarification on the finality of a Smart Start plan was requested, as was clarity on guidelines and requirements.

Theresa Elliot suggested the facilities being looked at for ELOs could be used to get kids into school 5 days a week with the proper distance. For example, Ms. Elliott said churches which may already be used for preschools, could provide preschool and kindergarten classrooms, while allowing the other grades to spread out in the public schools.

### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Ms. Gubatayao again thanked the individuals who had spoken for sharing their concerns and ideas.

Board President Mattson spoke, stating she was representing herself. She thanked the teachers, administrators and other personnel for their time that they spent into developing this plan and for changing it

as they received new information. She acknowledged all the parents, grandparents, and caregivers for giving their opinions on school opening. Ms. Mattson then stated that any assumption that the Board is not doing due diligence and educating itself on these issues is not true. She said she is actively researching the issues herself, and is also concerned with the changing guidelines and the science. The aspiration is that the district can return to full capacity and full schedules of school as soon as possible, said Ms. Mattson. She stressed that after the crisis situation for school that occurred in March, it would be negligent for the district to not provide systems for school in the fall and for training of its staff.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSIONS**

### *Administrative Assistants*

**Motion to enter an Executive Session for an update on negotiations with the Administrative Assistants, a matter the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the school district.**

Moved by: SKAN; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

### **ROLL CALL**

**ROBBINS JR., BECKER, HEUTTE, SKAN, TABB, GUBATAYAO, MATTSON**  
**MOTION PASSED**

### **Executive Session; and Re-entering Regular Session**

The Board entered the executive session at 8:55 p.m. with Business Manager Parrott and Superintendent Lougee also present. The session ended at 9:05 p.m. President Mattson announced that no action was taken, but direction was given.

**Motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss Superintendent/Board Relations, a matter the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the school district.**

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: TABB

### **ROLL CALL**

**TABB, SKAN, HEUTTE, ROBBINS JR., BECKER, GUBATAYAO, MATTSON – ALL AYES**  
**MOTION PASSED**

Board President Mattson stated that the executive session was not being held regarding the Smart Start plan nor was it for discussion of anything that should take place in open session.

### **Executive Session; and Re-entering Regular Session**

The Board entered the executive session at about 9:20 p.m. The session ended at 9:52 p.m. President Mattson stated that no action was taken, but direction was given.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:53 p.m.

*Minutes approved as distributed at the July 15, 2020 regular meeting of the Board of Education.*

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BOARD PRESIDENT  
Bridget Mattson