

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
LISTENING SESSION
Meeting of January 29, 2025
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers**

CALL TO ORDER: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: ROLL CALL

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Board of Education met in a listening session on the 29th day of January, 2025, in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers. Board President Michelle O'Brien called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

The following members were present to establish a quorum and due notice had been published:

President Michelle O'Brien, Vice President Jordan Tabb, Clerk-Treasurer Katherine Tatsuda, Members Judy Leask Guthrie, Tom Heutte, Keenan Sanderson, Ali Ginter.

Administrative staff present included Superintendent Michael Robbins, Business Manager Daniel Schuler, and School Board Clerk Chloe Hall.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

M/S: Sanderson/Tatsuda

ROLL CALL

Tatsuda, Heutte, Guthrie, Sanderson, Tabb, Ginter, O'Brien

The agenda was approved.

CITIZEN REMARKS

Bridget Mattison addressed the audience as a representative of herself as a community member, and thanked the Board for their time. Mattison shared several concerns about the budget issues, and the budget process moving forward. Matson encouraged a broader dialogue and urged the district leaders to focus on stability, budget management, and the community's involvement in decision-making.

Lisa Delaet, community member, expresses her concerns about the special education services within the proposed changes. Delaet asked the board for careful consideration of these plans, advocating for the best interests of students and transparency regarding decisions made.

Kimberly Divelbiss, community member, shared her thoughts on the elementary restructuring plan, emphasizing her concerns regarding its impact on students. Divelbiss spoke on the need for the school district to be transparent and to involve the community in ongoing discussions regarding educational restructuring. She believes that with collaboration, meaningful solutions can be developed.

Almarie Cook, parent in the district, thanked staff at Houghtaling Elementary for all of their work with her child. Cook advocated for community collaboration to prioritize the children's well-being and maintain their learning environment.

APPROVED MINUTES

Listening Session

January 29, 2025

Jason House, President of KLO, spoke on Board Leadership, urging the board to make the difficult decisions. House urged the board to make a decision in a timely manner, sharing that the longer the board waits to make a decision, the harder it is for building staff to begin planning for a successful tomorrow.

Matthew Boyd, 4th grade teacher at Point Higgins Elementary, shared his concerns about the proposed budget options and transparency regarding the proposed plans. Boyd asked clarifying questions on the dollar amount that is going to be saved for each of the proposed plans.

Rob Arnold, Ketchikan resident, thanked others for their comments. Arnold shared his thoughts on improving fiscal responsibility and managing school resources, and emphasized the need for community involvement in decision-making. Arnold urges the board to work together with the community to find solutions.

RECESS from 4:30-4:40

Michelle Ekman, parent and community member, spoke against school specialization and offered alternative budget saving ideas.

RECESS from 4:42-4:49

Timothy Cook, Ketchikan resident, expresses concerns about the current state of the school system, addressing the budget management and its impact on students. Cook asks the board to improve financial transparency and protect student engagement and learning.

President Michelle O'Brien shared a letter written by a community member and parent, Emily Henry. Henry expressed gratitude for the board's time and commitment to the district. Henry urged the board for a third solution. She shared that separating schools by grade would create logistical challenges for the families and disrupt sibling support and eliminating physical education and music would deprive children of valuable experiences.

President Michelle O'Brien shared a letter from community member and parent, Allison Jones. Jones wrote regarding the recent budget crisis proposals. Jones expressed gratitude for teachers and staff, and shared her concerns about specific changes in the proposed plans. Jones urged the board to consider the long-term effects of their decisions on students and families, reinforcing that protecting children's needs should be the priority.

President Michelle O'Brien shared a letter from parent and community member, Alicia Birch. Birch wrote to the board advocating for the importance of specials teachers and programs. Birch expressed strong concerns regarding two proposed budget cuts, and urged the board to reconsider these proposals, emphasizing the need to protect educational integrity and family unity.

RECESS from 5:05-5:10

President Michelle O'Brien shared a letter from community member Tiffany Cook. Cook strongly urges the board to reject the restructuring plan, advocating for a more community-focused approach to education that prioritizes the needs of students.

RECESS from 5:15-5:20

Jolene Thomas, teacher at Houghtaling Elementary, emphasized timely decision making, so district staff have time to prepare.

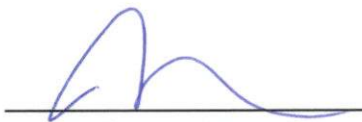
RECESS from 5:24-5:35

Jennifer Kloxin, teacher and parent, expressed her concerns about the budget decisions facing the school district and the proposed options for restructuring. Kloxin encourages thoughtful consideration of the proposed budget decisions and stresses that collaboration and communication will lead to better outcomes for students.

ADJOURNMENT at 5:45 p.m.



BOARD PRESIDENT
Katherine Tatsuda



Board Vice President
Jordan Tabb



Clerk Treasurer
Tom Heutte