

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR meeting of
Wednesday, September 8, 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 8th day of September 2021, in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers. Board Vice President Diane Gubatayao 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 Vice President Diane Gubatayao; Board Members Paul Robbins Jr.; Nicole Anderson; and Douglas Gregg. President Kim Hodne and Clerk Treasurer Bridget Mattson participated telephonically. Board Member Jordan Tabb was absent and excused.

Administrative staff present included Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson; COVID Communications & Public Relations Director Linnaea Troina; and Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda for the regular meeting of September 8, 2021.

Moved by: ANDERSON; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

The agenda was approved without objection.

OATH OF OFFICE - Braxton Zink, Student Board Member

Braxton Zink took the Oath of Office as the new student representative on the School Board. He was seated and began participating as the student board member.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Presiding Officer Diane Gubatayao recognized public health nurse Arizona Jacobs who had attended the meeting, thanking her for her support to the school district during the pandemic.

Proclamation for National Recovery Month

A proclamation for National Recovery Month was read and presented to Danielle Duckworth. Ms. Duckworth spoke about the purpose of National Recovery Month and how it was being recognized locally.

CITIZEN REMARKS

Student Piper Caskey spoke in support of lockers at Schoenbar Middle School being available for students.

Rachel Breithaupt expressed her concern with the vaccination rate of staff at the various schools to inform her decision of where to enroll her child.

Parent Lauren Munhoven asked for an amendment to the Strong Start plan so masks wouldn't be required in physical education.

Amanda Winder called for masking to be a personal choice and stated that it is the kids who are suffering and they need to be free of this restriction.

Christy Willis commented in opposition to the community and district's response to COVID and said that kids were being put in the middle of the issues and were being harmed.

Louise Loretan expressed concerns with COVID testing for student athletes at the high school, and also asserted that high school students had been segregated by their vaccination status.

Seventh-grader Sophia Cook advocated for students to have lockers at Schoenbar.

Student Avaka Artzen described the difficulty of participating in physical education when having to wear a mask.

Jocelyn Cobbs, a Schoenbar student, talked about why not having a locker is difficult for her friend with a medical condition.

Sharli Arntzen contended that the district was creating and enforcing arbitrary rules regarding mitigation measures and provided examples.

Susan Webb, a Schoenbar Middle School office employee, said that student lockers aren't feasible at this time, and that the administration's decision should be supported.

Parent Deja Kolean commented on the district needing to provide better options at school for children who cannot be vaccinated, stating they should not be separated from their peers due to that status.

Break

A five-minute break was taken at about 7:10 p.m. to reset the meeting room's audio and video equipment as issues were being reported with the web streaming.

Written public comments which had been submitted to be read aloud were then read.

Houghtaling reading specialist Valerie Brooks advocated for continued masking and other mitigation measures to be employed in school.

Parent Jamie Doyon wrote that masks should be required in school, including in physical education, until all school-aged children can be vaccinated.

In her written comments, Heather Muench asked that the Board keep its mask requirements for school.

Norman Dupre, grandparent, supported a mask requirement in the schools, writing that they protect students, staff and families.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Board Member Gubatayao reported that she and Board Member Doug Gregg are being trained in contact tracing to assist with the district's efforts.

Clerk Treasurer Bridget Mattson reported on meeting with the auditors at the conclusion of their onsite financial audit and shared their positive comments.

CLAIMS FOR INFORMATION

There were no questions or comments regarding the claims.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Student Member's Report

Braxton Zink gave his first report as the student Board Member, noting that it is only the second week of school. High school students are now learning their schedules and clubs and extracurricular activities are starting up, he said.

Superintendent's Report

Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson reported on the following:

- Her appreciation to district employees for their work to begin this new school year.
- The district has complied with financial controls and procedures, according to the initial findings of the Altman Rogers Co onsite financial audit. Some changes will be made to accounting procedures regarding student activities.

- The district has been notified of its share of the remaining FY 22 ARP ESSER¹ funds, which is approximately \$1.45 million.
- On September 3, notification was received of the state's approval of the district's FY 22 budget.

Ms. Johnson then briefly spoke about the Strong Start 2022 school plan. She emphasized the goal is to keep students and staff safe while holding school in person. This was challenging during the first week of school, she stated, with as many positive COVID cases as were logged during the whole first semester of the 2021 school year. She said the Alaska education commissioner has informed school districts of their need to do their own contact tracing as public health staff are overwhelmed. Two contact tracing persons have been designated at each school and will take a course offered by John Hopkins University. There will also be contact tracers working specifically with the school bus company. Staff have been reminded that in the high-risk level, masks are mandatory in all areas at all schools, including physical education. The Strong Start committee will meet on September 21 to review the current plan.

Interim Superintendent Johnson then asked Ketchikan Emergency Manager Abner Hoage and Ketchikan Public Health nurse Arizona Jacobs to share their expertise regarding COVID mitigation efforts, in answer to several questions she posed. Board members also asked questions. In the discussion which lasted about 20 minutes, topics included: the efficacy of mask wearing; the delta variant's impact on the schools; CDC guidelines regarding COVID mitigation in school; and associated topics.

****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 revise Board Policy 6155- Challenging Courses by Examination.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR; Second by: ANDERSON

Public Hearing/Board Discussion

No comments were made by the public or the Board.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar of September 8 2021 (consisting of the following):

- Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 11, 2021.*
- Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 18, 2021.*
- Motion to approve the offer of a teaching contract to Florence Taruc.*
- Motion to approve the offer of a teaching contract to Margaret Gore.*
- Motion to approve a long-term substitute teaching contract for John Sullivan.*

MOVED BY: ANDERSON; SECOND BY: ROBBINS JR.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

¹ American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to approve the out-of-state travel request for a Kayhi yearbook team trip to the Balfour Yearbook training workshop in Seattle in early October.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: ANDERSON

Discussion:

Board Member Nicole Anderson stated this was a great opportunity for the students.

Ms. Mattson said she appreciated seeing the mitigation plans required for this workshop, as they will allow the students' involvement while keeping them safe.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

Motion to approve purchase of social studies materials for Kayhi's U.S. and World History, Street Law, and AP U.S. Government classes at a cost of \$38,007.36.

Moved by: ANDERSON; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

Discussion:

Board member Douglas Gregg asked if this was part of a regular curriculum update. Ms. Johnson responded that it was; and the purchase was moved up as the current materials were in poor shape.

Ms. Gubatayao commented on the necessity of the updated materials, and stated the appropriate review process had occurred.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

Motion to approve the purchase of 785 Chromebooks from OETC in the amount of \$255,363.20.

Moved by: ROBBINS; Second by: GREGG

Discussion:

Board Member Gregg asked if this purchase was part of the technology upgrade plan. Ms. Johnson responded affirmatively, adding it was part of the 1 to 1 Chromebook program for students.

Ms. Johnson also answered a question from Board member Robbins about student and parental responsibility for the safekeeping of the computers.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

Motion that the Board of Education approve the application to the Easy ARPA Library grant program, as presented.

Moved by: ANDERSON; Second by: GREGG

Discussion

Ms. Gubatayao stated she was excited as, if received, the grants would benefit each school in the district in providing more materials for the libraries.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE

ROBBINS JR., ANDERSON, MATTSO, GREGG, GUBATAYAO, HODNE - AYES

MOTION PASSED

DISCUSSION

School lockers at Schoenbar - Board member Nicole Anderson explained her reason for requesting this topic be addressed by the Board. Board members discussed the subject for about 45 minutes. Schoenbar Middle School Principal Sheri Boehlert explained her administrative decision during the discussion.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Gregg commented on the positive audit news. He noted he remembered when School Board meetings weren't streamed, referring to the technical audio issues that had occurred that night. Mr. Gregg also said he is optimistic that the community will support the schools by practicing mitigation efforts.

Mr. Robbins asked that concerns about issues occurring at specific schools be taken directly to the appropriate school administrators, noting he'd heard some concerning allegations made at the podium. He encouraged continued comments to the Board about the Strong Start plan, noting it will be reviewed monthly by the superintendent and committee.

Mr. Hodne stated he appreciated the input that night, and people should continue to bring their concerns to the Board.

Ms. Mattson thanked the administration and staff for caring for students, particularly in the pandemic. She expressed appreciation for the public comments, especially by the students. She also commented that the efforts to have in person school shows how much the community, Board and district care for the students.

Ms. Anderson thanked Carlos Weimer for providing training on Narcan, and commented on the impact of addiction and opioids in the community. She thanked the students who spoke at the podium and for those who wrote letters to the Board.

Ms. Gubatayao also commented on the Narcan training and noted someone she knew had died of an opioid overdose. She said she appreciated the students who came to the podium, and those who had written letters. Commenting on the mask-wearing in physical education issue, she stated she hoped for a fair resolution.

ADVANCE PLANNING

Ms. Gubatayao reported that Association of Alaska School Boards officials have suggested that the Superintendent search be restarted in December.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Minutes approved as distributed at the September 22, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Education.

BOARD PRESIDENT

Kim Hodne