

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular meeting of
Wednesday, May 27, 2020
*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 27th day of May, 2020, with Board Members participating remotely via videoconferencing.¹ Board President Bridget Mattson 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 Bridget Mattson; Clerk-Treasurer Diane Gubatayao; Board Members Leslie Becker; Jordan Tabb, Paul Robbins Jr. and Thomas Heutte. Vice President Sonya Skan was excused from the meeting.

Administrative staff present via videoconference were: Beth Lougee, Superintendent; Business Manager Katie Parrott; and Clerk to the Board Kerry Watson. Other staff on the video conference were: Schoenbar Middle School Principal Sheri Boehlert; and fellow Smart Start 2020 Team Members: Bob Hewitt; Melissa Johnson; Linnaea Troina; and Gara Cefeske.

Vision and Mission Statement

The vision and mission statements were read by School Board President Bridget Mattson.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda of May 27, 2020

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: HEUTTE

ROLL CALL

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

MOTION PASSED

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Board President Bridget Mattson read a statement congratulating the graduating class of 2020 and thanking those who had supported them.

Superintendent Beth Lougee provided recognition of the 11 school district employees who are retiring this school year. Those employees are: Judy Christensen, Adell Bruns, Gerald Boatwright, James Connelly, Kathryn Carl, Ole Sullivan, Angel Williams, Lane Johnson, Laurie Northrup, Katy Hook, and Madonna Brock.

Board Member Diane Gubatayao commended staff at Revilla High School for its organization of its “drive by” graduation.

CITIZEN REMARKS²

Written public comments submitted for the meeting were read aloud.

In her letter, parent Taylor Lee stated her objection to a possible distance delivery of education in the fall. She explained why online education had not worked well for her child, and why she felt it had been detrimental to other students and families as well, such as loss of learning. Mrs. Lee wrote that Ketchikan had done well with a low case count and asked if the school district could petition to reopen its schools even if the state mandated a continued closure. She stated she was eager to hear the plans for next school year.

¹ Meeting “location” was remote via ZOOM video conferencing, due to the COVID-19 pandemic mandates on social distancing and public gatherings, and the closure of the Assembly Chambers.

² Citizens wishing to provide public comment did so via email, with the understanding that those comments would be read aloud by the Board Clerk at the video conferenced meeting.

Sharyl Yeisley expressed concern with using Zoom or other online platforms in the upcoming school year. She described how Zoom meetings had been problematic for both her child with an IEP and an older sibling. Both she and her husband are essential workers, wrote Mrs. Yeisley, so the older child was homeschooling and babysitting at the same time. She also commented on societal issues, such as domestic violence, increasing as a result of the pandemic and restrictions put in place. Mrs. Yeisley stated that children need to be in school learning, and advocated for modifications that would allow students to be on campus safely.

MJ Cadle urged in-school classes at the beginning of next school year. She wrote in part that children need the socialization they get from school, and cited various reasons why online classes do not work for all families. Ms. Cadle stated that reopening school is critical to helping children get over the fear that she wrote was currently being drilled into them. She concluded by asking that schools start again, and to set an example of life over fear.

CLAIMS – May 15, 2020 – There were no questions.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Schoenbar Middle School Annual Report

The first report under the Superintendent's Report section was the Schoenbar Middle School's annual report presented by Principal Sheri Boehlert. This year, the middle school, with an enrollment of 248 students, had the smallest cohort of any grade level in the district in its eighth grade with only 95 students, said Ms. Boehlert. She provided some other demographics, including an average daily attendance of 94.4 percent. Her comments on the approximately 30 students with chronic absenteeism elicited questions and comments from several Board members at the end of her presentation.

Throughout the presentation, Principal Boehlert highlighted how the school's school improvement plan priorities were addressed. Those areas are: safety; meaningful relationships; high standards; social emotional learning; and responding to individual needs.

She also provided comments on the School Climate and Connectedness Survey and PEAKS assessment data. The assessment was not administered in the district this school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so Ms. Boehlert shared data from the previous year. She also gave a glimpse into a schedule for both seventh-graders and eighth-graders. In seventh grade, students take core classes, an exploration block and can choose some electives. In addition to the core classes, eighth-grade students are required to take health and Pathways, a career type exploration; and have more elective choices.

Ms. Boehlert also described extended learning programs, support or enrichment. Students can choose one enrichment course each quarter. The most popular this year was one in which students design cars powered by Co2 cartridges.

The school's emphasis on Positive Behavior Supports, safety of the facility, and engaging parents - all part of the STEPP plan - were also noted. The middle school is the first stepping stone for students to be involved in school sponsored activities and competitive athletics, the principal also noted. Any travel for these activities is paid totally through student fund-raising and Schoenbar's program is the most robust of middle schools in Southeast, if not Alaska itself, she said.

Lastly, she noted the usual school activities and events that were missed this year due to the pandemic, but described some virtual programs that were planned.

Summer School 2020

Superintendent Lougee commented on the planned June 15 to July 23 elementary summer school. She said it will provide robust learning opportunities, with the possibility of some physical education, music, and art enrichment offerings. Currently, 60 students have enrolled for the elementary age school and more are anticipated. The duration will be two weeks longer than in previous years; however, Ms. Lougee indicated that students are not required to attend the whole length of the session. As noted at previous meetings, a 7-12 grade summer school will also occur, as will the extended school year program from July 13-August 13 for students with IEPs who qualify.

Smart Start 2020

Before asking Ms. Boehlert, who is a Smart Start team member to provide the main presentation, Superintendent Lougee provided some opening comments on the state's direction for the reopening of school. She stressed that the plan for the start of school in the fall will be based on state mandates and what is occurring with COVID-19 in the community. School start-up will be conducted in a manner that students, staff and families feel safe, she said, based on guidelines from the CDC and other applicable agencies. Regular updates will be made to the plan throughout the summer based on evolving information from those applicable federal, state, and local agencies. Superintendent Lougee also briefly noted that preliminary planning has been occurring on how to accommodate K-12 students if additional facilities are needed beyond the schools as a means to spread out. Day care availability is another issue that is being looked at.

Ms. Boehlert then described in depth how the Smart Start team has been planning for school re-entry, since being given the task at the beginning of May. After planning initially started, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) provided a framework with which school districts are to plan for school in low, medium and high risk environments. In each of those levels, districts must address, "conditions for learning," "continuity of learning," and "capacities for learning." To meet that criteria at each risk level, 9 different plans had to be built, said Ms. Boehlert. She noted that much of the continuity of learning work had already been done by the education team.

The team is viewing the risk level as the risk of COVID-19 spread in the community. For example, schools were closed in Alaska by state mandate when it was felt that a high risk existed for COVID-19 spread, she explained. As the team received more guidance from DEED, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and state health experts, the plans were adjusted and fine-tuned. She particularly noted the CDC guidelines for determining whether a school could be safely re-opened. Although the protocols were stringent, she noted that the CDC allowed for some flexibility if a community's unique circumstances warranted such and decisions were made in consultation with state and local health officials.

Ms. Boehlert provided examples of what school delivery might look like at a high, medium, and low risk, with the caveat that the scenarios were still in draft form. In brief:

- High risk - Distance delivery, but on essential content material, with students and staff at home. There would be no assessments.
- Medium risk - Instructional delivery would be a mixture of on-site and asynchronous at home for students, but all staff would work at their school site. To enable this, students would be divided into 4 different groups. Only one group would attend school on site one day, while the other students in the three remaining groups would do off site distance learning at home. Each Wednesday, all students would be at home, for a mixture of asynchronous learning and home room meetings,, with professional development time for teachers in the afternoon. The Wednesday professional development schedule is similar to what was occurring this school year before the COVID-19 situation. Assessments would be possible. This structure enables managing twenty-five percent of a school's students onsite at one time.
- Low risk -- Students onsite at one time would increase to 50% capacity, combining two of the four groups in the medium risk example, with attendance on site twice a week. The off-site asynchronous time would be handled the same. Likewise, the Wednesday schedule would remain the same as in the medium risk environment. The model could be adjusted up to 75%, with students attending onsite 3 days a week, if deemed safe to do so.
- Minimal risk - Ultimately, pointed out Ms. Boehlert, the goal is for all staff and students to be onsite. This plan would retain the Wednesday schedule of students learning at home, and staff PD in the afternoon.

In each of the risk scenarios, she also briefly addressed how students with IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) would be served.

Ms. Boehlert also elaborated on the rationale for continuing the Wednesday schedule even at the minimal risk level. She said everyone was caught off guard with schools needing to be closed suddenly and education delivery having to change quickly. Providing Wednesdays for training and preparation allows for the possibility of having to switch back to a riskier level, she said. Staff will have time to plan and prepare for any eventuality.

Despite uncertainty, the Smart Start 2020 Team determined it needed to let teachers know soon of the re-opening scenario to provide for planning time. It decided the medium risk environment was the most appropriate

option at this point based on community risk and state guidelines, reported Ms. Boehlert. She added that Dr. Anne Zink, the state's chief medical officer, had also recommended this level for schools recently, so the team felt validated in its decision.

In concluding, Ms. Boehlert asked for the Board's approval that evening of a timeline for the start of school for staff and students. The Smart Start Team's proposal is that the student start date occur a week later than originally scheduled, providing district employees with an additional week of training time from August 31 to September 4. In the currently approved calendar, the teachers already have professional development and a work day during the week of August 25 through 28. The emphasis for that first week now will be on building level training and planning for how to open the schools safely, said Ms. Boehlert. Considerations range from how to screen students entering the building to social distancing measures, and who should wear masks. The second week of staff training would focus on additional Canvas training (the learning managing system) with a work day on September 4. After Labor Day, students would begin, under the separate group scenario, with orientation for one group at a time. In its draft timeline, three weeks of a medium schedule are being proposed, with how to proceed beyond that to be evaluated.

Board questions and comments

Board Member Paul Robbins Jr. first stated appreciation for the presentation and the depth of planning for the various risk levels. However, he questioned starting school with only 25% capacity, citing Ketchikan's stable COVID-19 situation.

Team members responded. Ms. Boehlert again cited Dr. Zink's recommendation of a medium risk start point; but also spoke about the tremendous amount of planning that would have to occur for a full 100% attendance at school. Even if the community is COVID-free, the district still has to follow the guidelines of social distancing, and the other health mandates, she indicated. Linnaea Troina, another team member, added comments about the students and families needing time to get familiar with online platforms in the event that the district needs to revert back to more distance delivery. She advocated for a more gradual building up to a full capacity. She commented about not wanting the district to be the reason for another outbreak of COVID-19 in Ketchikan.

Ms. Gubatayao expressed support for starting at the medium risk level. She also noted that people could be asymptomatic and spread the disease, so she agreed with a cautious approach.

Board Member Tom Heutte commented that COVID-19 was a deadly and highly contagious disease, and commended Ketchikan for flattening the curve. He agreed that schools had the potential to be a source of spreading the virus, so he said he supports a cautious start to school. He also complimented the team for its work on developing a plan that is flexible.

Ms. Gubatayao asked if formal approval of the timeline and plan could wait until the Board's next meeting of June 10.

Ms. Boehlert spoke about how the Smart Start 2020 Team and education team had been working diligently for several months, and said staff needs to have guidance on next year before they leave for the summer in 6 days. She indicated delaying a decision until the next meeting would hamper the teachers.

Board Member Jordan Tabb commented that there are children and families that need extra support due to socio-economic factors, child care issues, and for other reasons. Having a plan in place for next fall now will allow the district and community agencies to plan to help those at risk students and families, he said. Mr. Tabb also commented that the COVID-19 situation in Ketchikan could change, and the plan allowed flexibility to deal with the uncertainty.

Superintendent Lougee urged approval of the draft plan that night. Although it is a draft, the district needs to end its year with a starting point for next year, she stressed. Approval being sought is for the extended professional development time, and for an orientation time and start date for students. She also commented that there are families and staff who are in situations where they may not be able to physically be in a school building at the beginning of the school year. Ms. Lougee said district planning teams will be meeting throughout the summer and re-evaluating the plan in light of any new developments.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar of May 27, 2020

- a. *Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of May 13, 2020.*
- b. *Motion to approve a teaching contract with Bradley Crowe (KHS-Band).*
- c. *Motion to approve a teaching contract with Deborah Lasse-Zink (Revilla Junior High-ELA).*

Moved by: HEUTTE; Second by: GUBATAYAO

ROLL CALL

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

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to approve the E-rate Category 2 project and related expenditures to Presidio Network Solutions in the amount of \$35,751.32.

Moved by: HEUTTE; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion to approve the 2-year contract renewal for Edgenuity, Inc. in the amount of \$68,000.

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: HEUTTE

ROLL CALL

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

Motion to approve the FY21 grant applications and receipt of all awards for continuation grants as presented, in the total amount of \$1,769,236.

Moved by: BECKER; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

Ms. Gubatayao questioned approval that evening, citing the federally required consultation with tribes regarding the grants, particularly the Indian Education Act grant.

Superintendent Lougee explained that at this point the Board was being asked to approve the amount of the grants, not what will be written into the grants. The district will be entering into those consultations, including the government to government consultation regarding the IEA grant, as the grants are written.

Ms. Gubatayao asked if the Board would be informed regarding those consultations as the body which is the government entity. President Mattson said the planning for the consultations had begun, but was derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion to approve the Central Office classified staff salary schedule for FY 21-23 as presented.

Moved by: TABB; Second by: BECKER

ROLL CALL

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

Motion to approve the NGSS National Geographic/Cengage Learning 9-12 Science Curriculum for the following courses: Foundations of Astronomy, Forestry Science, Oceanography, Introductory Chemistry, Anatomy and Physiology.

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

Discussion

Superintendent Lougee confirmed that this was the high school recommendation which was pending when the science curriculum for other grade levels was approved at an earlier Board meeting. She noted that some new courses are being recommended, as reflected in the motion. Oceanography will continue to be offered as a dual credit class, with some new materials being purchased. The Quality Education grant will provide some funding for this purchase, she said.

ROLL CALL

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

MOTION PASSED

Motion to approve the timeline presented in the draft Smart Start 2020 plan: *This approval is intended to allow district staff and administration to prepare for a flexible, Continuity of Learning plan in order to appropriately and safely respond to the risk presented by COVID-19 in accordance with guidance from the State of Alaska Department of Health and other relevant authorities.*

Moved by: TABB; Second by: HEUTTE

Discussion

Board Member Leslie Becker asked about the fiscal impact of this action.

Superintendent Lougee replied that she did not know an amount that evening, but that expenditures were being tracked and the district was looking at how it could spend CARES Act funds. She also mentioned discussions with the Borough to use some of the municipality's CARES funds for district programs such as summer school or food service.

Ms. Becker said that while she agreed with having plans in place, COVID is not going to be the end to this. She stated that the momentum of education was being derailed, while children were not the population affected by the virus. Ms. Becker added that she realized the district needed to give direction to staff, so she would support that effort. However, she said she thought the district was engaged in a fear situation that would have a bad result in the community.

Mr. Robbins commented that it would be irresponsible to approve an action if it would have a large expense associated with it without knowing that. He indicated, however, that the Superintendent and administration had enough feedback to proceed with a broader plan.

Mr. Tabb asked for confirmation that the Board was being asked to support a timeline for students to start later than previously established. He also agreed with Ms. Becker's comment that this will not be the last time the world will have to deal with a pandemic, and commented on preparation being crucial.

Superintendent Lougee confirmed that the team was seeking approval of the timeline to provide extra time to prepare staff and for orientation of students.

Responding to the fiscal questions, Business Manager Katie Parrott said about \$475,000 in COVID related expenses have been tracked to date. The normal school district budget is still in operation, she noted. District staff is still employed although some restructuring has occurred, so she pointed out that salary and benefits still accounts for about 85% of the operating budget. Ms. Parrott expects there will be some minimal costs associated with summer planning for next year, and for sanitizing of buildings and other safety measures. Ms. Parrott noted the district could push COVID funds into succeeding fiscal years to free up its operating fund. The funds the Borough receives for CARES Act, meanwhile, have to be spent by December of 2020, she said. Discussions are occurring on leveraging of the CARES Act funds received by the two entities. She indicated that any additional costs of this reopening plan above normal operations could likely be covered by CARES Act funds.

There were some additional comments regarding the CARES Act funds and impact on taxpayers.

Ms. Gubatayao complimented Ms. Parrott and Ms. Lougee for their budget management. She stated her concern was not the cost, but with health. She stated support for passing a timeline so teachers would have some direction on how they would be supporting their students in the fall.

Ms. Mattson clarified the motion's intent: It would not add teacher days or pay, but would change the student start date and how they would be interacting with school, she said.

ROLL CALL

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

MOTION PASSED

DISCUSSION

Board Safety Goal regarding School Climate and Connectedness survey results: *Postponed. The public can see school specific survey information on individual school websites.*

Special Education Task Force – The 22-member task force is defining strengths and areas for improvement in special education. A smaller group has met to narrow those areas of focus.

Advisory Committee Dates for 2020-2021 (Safety, Transportation, Calendar, Insurance, Wellness) *Postponed until the next Board meeting.*

Re-entry plan for summer workers (district office and summer school). *June 8 is the tentative date for the start of re-entry into school buildings for applicable summer employees. Protocols for limited entry and screening will be followed. A Central Command contact person will keep working through the summer.*

District Office realignment plan – Due to the needs of Kayhi, a space needed to be found for district specialists (physical therapists, occupational therapists and others). These personnel will be moved into the kitchen area in the district administrative office area which has now been gutted. The special education director and her administrative assistant and several other district staff offices will move to other areas.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

Administrative Assistants & IBEW Maintenance:

Motion to enter an Executive Session for an update on negotiations with the Administrative Assistants and negotiations with the IBEW-Maintenance, matters the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the school district.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: TABB

ROLL CALL

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

MOTION PASSED

The Board entered the executive session at 9:34 p.m. At 9:54 p.m., the Board re-entered open session.

Extending meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Gubatayao and seconded by Mr. Tabb to extend the Board meeting to 10:30 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously on a roll call vote, after which the motion for the second executive session was made.

Contract with First Student

Motion to enter an Executive Session to discuss the contract with First Student, 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: ROBBINS JR.

ROLL CALL

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

MOTION PASSED

The Board entered this executive session at 9:59 p.m. The session ended at 10:12 p.m., and the Board re-entered the regular session.

ADJOURNMENT

After the date of the next School Board meeting was noted, a motion was made and seconded for adjournment. With no objection, the meeting adjourned at 10:13 p.m.

Minutes approved as distributed at the June 10, 2020 regular meeting of the Board of Education.

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD
Bridget Mattson