

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**REGULAR meeting of
Wednesday, February 24, 2021
with continuation on Thursday, February 25, 2021**

Remotely held via Webex video conferencing platform¹

CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Board of Education met in regular session on the 24th day of February, 2021, participating remotely via the videoconferencing platform WebEx. Board President Kim Hodne called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

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

Administrative staff present via videoconference included: Business Manager Katie Parrott; and Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

Announcement:

President Kim Hodne announced that the meeting would need to be abbreviated and continued to the next evening. This was due to inclement weather and to allow for staff at the Assembly Chambers to get home safely. He also noted power outages had been occurring in various areas of the Borough which also could potentially affect the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda of the February 24, 2021 regular meeting.

Moved by: SKAN; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Motion to amend the agenda to place the Superintendent's report between Items 4 and 5, immediately following Citizen Remarks.

Moved by: HODNE; Second by: TABB

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE

TABB, ROBBINS JR., GUBATAYAO, ANDERSON, SKAN, HODNE - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED

Several Board members reported that there was no audio on the live streaming of the meeting. A break was taken so staff at the Assembly Chambers could troubleshoot. At approximately 6:17 p.m., the meeting resumed.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

This part of the agenda was started, when it was again reported that the audio of the meeting was still not working.

¹ The meeting was held virtually due to an increase in the community's COVID risk level to High and the resulting closure of Assembly Chambers to governmental meetings.

Motion to suspend the meeting until Thursday, February 25, at 6 p.m. *

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: ANDERSON

**(Clerk's note: The intent of the motion was compatible with the more formal and precise parliamentary procedural motion to "fix the time at which to adjourn".)*

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE

SKAN, GUBATAYAO, ROBBINS JR., ANDERSON, TABB, HODNE - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED

At 6:27 p.m., the continuance was approved for February 25, 2021.

CONTINUATION - Thursday, February 25, 2021

CONTINUATION CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Board of Education continued its February 24, 2021 regular session on the 25th day of February, 2021, participating remotely via the videoconferencing platform WebEx. Board President Kim Hodne called the continued meeting back into session 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; Vice President Sonya Skan; Clerk-Treasurer Bridget Mattson; Board Members Diane Gubatayao; Jordan Tabb; Paul Robbins Jr. and Nicole Anderson. Student member Henry Clark was present.

Administrative staff present via videoconference included: Business Manager Katie Parrott; and Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

Resumption of agenda

Board President Kim Hodne announced that this meeting was a continuation of the regular meeting of February 25, 2021. At that meeting, no action had been taken but the agenda was reordered so that the Superintendent's Report items would occur following Citizen Remarks.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Henry Clark - DDF student of year - Henry Clark was recognized for being named the Debate, Drama, and Forensics (DDF) student of the year for Alaska. Board Member Diane Gubatayao commended Henry for his debate skills, which she'd personally witnessed having judged some DDF competitions.

Other recognitions- Ms. Gubatayao also announced that the Wellness Coalition had set up "wellness/meditation centers" at Schoenbar Middle School and Ketchikan High School for use by school staff.

Proclamation -Elizabeth Peratrovich Day - The district's cultural coordinator Teresa Varnell presented comments in recognition of Alaska civil rights leader Elizabeth Peratrovich. She noted that February 16 is observed annually to celebrate her legacy. In part, Ms. Varnell said that Elizabeth Peratrovich should be remembered as being a dynamic trailblazer and campaigner for the equal rights of Alaska Natives.

CITIZEN REMARKS ²

Jason Gentry, who is a parent of two Kayhi students, asked that the 100 percent learning model be reinstated immediately. However, he said, if that wasn't possible until the following Monday, his contingent request was that the spectator allowance rule which applied under the 100 percent model go into effect for the weekend.

² Citizens were invited to comment either verbally by participating in the Webex meeting, or by submitting written comments to be read aloud by the Board Clerk at the meeting.

He explained that this allowed for two spectators for each athlete. Mr. Gentry also commented on the community's 2 percent positivity rate threshold and its effect on the school risk level.

Alma Parker, coach of the Kayhi dance team, spoke briefly about how the 50 percent school risk level had affected the Kayhi dance team members as athletes and students. Four members of her dance team each spoke about their experiences as students and dance team participants this year, and how the 50 percent capacity schedule had impacted them. The individuals who spoke were Nena Jones, Jhenna Day, Avery Thomas, and Olivia Berg.

Submitted written comments from read aloud next by the Board Clerk.

Cindy Castor wrote of her concerns that the travel quarantine and testing directives might be changed. Ms. Castor, who is a health aide at Fawn Mountain Elementary, asked that the standards not be relaxed.

Deborah Spigai, parent and a staff member at Fawn Mountain Elementary School, wrote of her concern that the current COVID protocols in place in the district might change, particularly those concerning travel. She urged Board members to attend a webinar that Friday being conducted by state health officials regarding COVID protocols for Alaska schools. Ms. Spigai described an example of what could happen to a struggling student if they couldn't attend school due to a potential lessening of COVID safety protocols.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Community COVID and School Risk Level

Abner Hoage, incident commander, with the Emergency Operations Center provided an update on the COVID situation in Ketchikan, and explained EOC's risk indicator matrix as compared to CDC indicators. The positivity rate that day had dropped below the 2 percent threshold to 1.94 % and was expected to be 1.85 percent the following day, reported Mr. Hoage. As he presented information on Ketchikan's risk indicators and that of the CDC for schools, he emphasized that the indicators are specifically adapted to Ketchikan's needs. He also stressed that the EOC wants to keep schools open. He pointed out the community risk level had been at Level 3 for 19 days, there had been relatively few times this year in which the level had led the school district to go to a 50 percent capacity. He credited the district's mitigation effort and school plans with the few cases occurring in the schools. Mr. Hoage advised the Board to use caution in its approach to determining its school risk level.

Pediatrician Dr. Timothy Horton, who is part of the medical team that advises the district, shared some perspective on Ketchikan's unique and relatively sheltered experience with the pandemic. Dr. Horton said he has been a pediatrician for about 25 years, and moved here in August of last year from Georgia. He described the pandemic's toll in the rural Georgia town where he'd practiced to what had occurred in Ketchikan. In the Georgia town, the infection rate was 30% in the first 3 months of the pandemic, he said. The town's mayor died of COVID in the first three weeks of the pandemic and there were 150 deaths by December. In addition, by the time he left, the whole medical staff had been infected with COVID, he said. Dr. Horton indicated that, statistically, based on Ketchikan's population, our town should have had nine deaths. Further, he said, if Ketchikan had implemented the current CDC' recommendations, those deaths would have doubled.

Dr. Horton concluded by cautioning against moving too quickly to another risk level, and noted that spring break could result in a spike in cases. He also praised the expertise in Ketchikan regarding the COVID situation, specifically commending EOC's Hoage.

Administrative recommendation

Acting Superintendent Parrott followed up with the administrative recommendation regarding the school risk level. After detailing the collaboration with EOC, public health, and school administration that informs decisions to change school risk levels, she said that administration needs to be able to switch the school risk level more quickly when needed.

Ms. Parrott also addressed the planning that was occurring for the activities occurring at Kayhi that weekend; and noted that at 50 percent capacity, there would be no spectators for the basketball games. She also reported that travel protocols were being reviewed, especially in light of Spring Break coming up.

Discussion with the Board regarding the administrative recommendation ensued. It was clarified that the administration planned to move all schools to 100 percent capacity starting Monday, March 1, if there were no objection by the Board.

Several Board members asked if any arrangements could be made to allow for limited spectators for Kayhi's weekend sports events; and suggested recruiting volunteers to help with screening and other mitigation issues. Acting Superintendent Parrott said she would follow up on that request with the Kayhi administration.

Break

A ten-minute break was taken in the meeting from 8 to 8:10 p.m. before resumption of reports.

Board member Skan was excused from the rest of the meeting at this time, due to feeling ill.

Fawn Mountain Elementary School Report:

Principal Nick Higson started his presentation by stating how fortunate he and all his staff feel to be in school and doing their jobs this year. He noted that this year is his first year as principal at Fawn Mountain, coming from working as an administrator at Houghtaling last year. The school has an enrollment of 257 students this year. He reported that although about 40 Fawn Mountain students had gone to other programs or schools including Fast Track earlier in the year, about 25 of those students had since come back. Mr. Higson described some of the changes made at the beginning of the year in order to meet the school's COVID-related mitigation plan. These included staffing changes such as moving librarian Beth Brandt-Erichsen back into the classroom as a fifth-grade teacher; adding a second grade and moving the RTI teacher Janae Merrill into a classroom as well. Principal Higson reported on the school's goals, including that of providing a safe school environment. He Principal Higson provided fall versus winter AIMS Web scores at 1st and 4th grade, and showed that students overall had gained ground. In addition, Mr. Higson spoke about programs focusing on students' social emotional needs; and noted that the smaller classrooms this year had allowed staff to better foster relationships.

Student Member's Report:

Student Member Henry Clark reported that many students were frustrated with the 50/50 capacity status both due to its impact on their education, but also on activities. He noted that the 50/50 model effectively means students are in school only two days a week, and many are feeling pressure to keep up academically. Regarding activities, Henry said that the ACDC team is getting ready for the state tournament. He also reported that Braxton Zink will go to Anchorage to compete as the local winner of the American Legion oratorical competition.

Graduation Rate Improvement Committee

Technology Coordinator Bill Whicker presented an in-depth report on the work of this committee, which he said was formed by Superintendent Lougee to focus on dropout prevention. The presentation is the result of months of data research and meetings over Zoom, and brainstorming solutions to improve outcomes for students, said Mr. Whicker. The presentation included five years of data on district graduation for both the traditional 4-year timeline and for those taking 5 years to graduate; enrollment trends over this past year between brick and mortar high schools and Fast Track and virtual courses. Fast Track Homeschool Coordinator Lori Ortiz provided additional information during the presentation, including on how many students were not on track to graduate, and the impact during the past year on Fast Track's enrollment. In concluding the presentation, the committee listed proposals including: adding an additional full-time Fast Track teacher; assigning full-time online teachers with flexible schedules; and assigning a special education teacher to serve Fast Track, RYC and Tribal Scholars.

Information and Reports from Board Members

Ms. Gubatayao reported briefly on the finance committee's meeting the previous day, which focused on the budget survey.

Claims of February 19, 2021 for Information - There were no questions from Board members.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar containing the regular meeting minutes of February 10, 2021 and the special meeting minutes of February 11, 2021.

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to approve a three-year engagement contract with Altman, Rogers and Co. for auditing services.

Moved by: GUBATAYAO.; Second by: MATTSON

Discussion

There was no discussion.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

DISCUSSION

Government to Government invitation from KIC - Discussion on meeting with the Ketchikan Indian Community Tribal Council in March.

Smart Start health screening protocols - A matrix was supplied to the Board regarding the health screening protocols used with students.

School Closures - An attachment was provided in a packet showing how it is determined whether to close a school after a positive case.

At 9:53 p.m., the following motion was made:

Motion to extend this meeting until 10:30 p.m.

Motion by MATTSON; Second by: GUBATAYAO

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

School Closure discussion continued

The administration's decision to change the school risk level due to the community risk level was briefly discussed again. Ms. Parrott reiterated that the administration recommends aligning the school risk level with the lowered community level and returning affected schools back to 100 percent, starting Monday, March 1.

Several Board members requested that the administration also determine if it was feasible to lower the school operation level by the weekend to allow some spectators at activities.

Governor's lifting of travel-related mandates - Brief discussion on retaining district policies regarding quarantines and other travel policies.

BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Anderson said she was grateful that the community risk level had been lowered. She said she would help with efforts to make it possible for weekend extracurriculars to have spectators. She also noted vaccinations are available to educators.

Mr. Tabb thanked everyone for being part of the discussion. He also said that Ketchikan has one of the best school plans in the nation as it has enabled its students to be in school.

Ms. Gubatayao thanked Dr. Horton and Mr. Hoage for the information provided that evening. She also thanked the students who had shared their experiences during public comment.

Henry Clark said he is very impressed with the district's handling of COVID and school itself, and expressed appreciation that he can be in school. He has family in the lower 48 that have not been in school at all this year, he said.

Mr. Robbins Jr. commented positively on the job that the EOC had done in Ketchikan and for the district's school plan which has allowed its school to operate. Many children in other places have not set foot in a school at all this year, he noted.

Mr. Hodne said he is glad the community is not afraid to reach out to the Board. He also commented on the effort to enable spectators to come to the basketball game that weekend.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 p.m.

Minutes approved as distributed at the March 10, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Education.

BOARD PRESIDENT
Kim Hodne