

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular meeting of
August 12, 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 12th day of August 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; Curriculum Director Alonso Escalante; Special Education Director Terri Crofcheck; and Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

Vision and Mission Statement

The school district's vision and mission statements were read by School Board President Bridget Mattson.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda for the regular meeting of August 12, 2020.

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: BECKER

ROLL CALL

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

OATH OF OFFICE – Student Board Member Henry Clark

Henry Clark took the oath of office as the student representative on the School Board, and was seated at the table. He is the incoming Student Body Association president for Ketchikan High School.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Board President Bridget Mattson announced that Carter Thomas would be recognized for his Eagle Scout project the following day. Carter's project is a display at the front of the Kayhi building honoring Ketchikan military veterans.

CITIZEN REMARKS

Elizabeth Nelson, parent of a high school student, advocated for masks to be mandated in school. She also described the safety precautions, including masks, being used at the recently completed ArtsCool which had almost 40 students participating.

Frankie Urquhart, parent and teacher, asked for all safety precautions in the Smart Start plan to be made mandatory. The opening of school represents the first large group gathering in Ketchikan since things closed down, she said. She also asked that annex sites be secured now.

Parent and teacher Jennifer Simpson stated that masks, social distancing and hand washing all need to be in place for school to start. She shared some personal experiences in speaking about COVID and its impact. Ms. Simpson also commented on the difficulty for social distancing at most schools without an annex.

Valerie Brooks, teacher at Houghtaling Elementary School, spoke about teachers trusting the Board to do the right thing in respect to school re-opening. She cited some recent information about the COVID-19 virus in Alaska and the age groups it is affecting. Annexes are needed to allow for social distancing; and Houghtaling will need to split most of its classes, she said.

Kayhi teacher Sarah Campbell referred to the actions related to the Smart Start Plan on that evening's agenda. She addressed why she feels the Smart Start plan is not a contingency plan. She spoke of the need to provide for physical distancing at school and using annexes to do that at the elementary schools. She also commented on the supplemental staffing that paraprofessionals would provide.

Carol Stanton, who stated she's entering her 25th year as an educator this year, commented she is fearful of the pandemic based on what is occurring with school re-opening in some other states. Full student capacity and attendance at schools will require annexes and safety measures, such as face coverings, temperature checks, regular hand washing and cleaning, she said. She asked the Board to open schools safely.

Robin Hartman said she teaches more than 100 students a day as an English teacher at Kayhi. She said that even one COVID case would affect a number of people or perhaps mean quarantining. She noted her personal circumstances which could put her family at risk.

Peter Stanton, a Kayhi and Tribal Scholars teacher, spoke about schools being unique in a pandemic due to the number of people brought together. More than 600 people are in Kayhi when in session, he noted. He urged masking, hand hygiene, social distancing, and temperature and symptom checks every day, for school reopening. He also said elementary schools need to have annex sites.

Teacher and parent Penny Hamlin spoke in support of all safety precautions. She shared her experiences working in Japan and mask-wearing during COVID-SARS. She called for the community to work together.

Norma Thompson, Revilla teacher, spoke of her concern for her students, and the difficulty many had at the end of the last school year. She hopes the students can come back into the school safely, with safety measures in place. If there is an increase in COVID, the district will have to go to a higher risk plan, she said. Ms. Thompson also commented on the district not being able to pivot quickly without annex sites in place.

Sid Hartley commented on divisiveness over the school restart plans. She stated she feared retaliation as a school district employee for exercising her first amendment rights. Ms. Hartley also commented on administrative changes in the school district.

Schoenbar Middle School teacher Gerri Davis stated she felt the Board didn't care about teachers. She spoke about the changing science regarding COVID-19; children's infection rates; and stated that about 1 in 4 teachers are in a high risk category for COVID. She asked for enforcement of mask wearing. Ms. Davis also said that reopening at 100% makes social distancing impossible.

Parent Tiffany Cook stated she supported safety measures; and spoke of being an essential worker as a first responder since the beginning of the crisis. She said she supported wearing masks, if that is what it takes for full school. She spoke about a recently begun mask drive for the schools and students. The Emergency Operations Center has also supplied masks for this purpose, she said.

Elementary age student Ally Jones stated she supported mask wearing by kids, and shared some reasons why.

Nicole Anderson commented on quality education for students being necessary; and stated she'd assist in making masks to enable kids to be in school. She asked for the district to prohibit the wearing of vented masks; however, as they expel the wearer's exhalation.

Parent Liz Jones spoke about respecting educators, noting they have families too. She stated support for the Smart Start Plan; and wearing of masks for all who attend school. She suggested homeschooling for families who are uncomfortable with mask-wearing. Annexes should be secured now so the district is ready to use them if needed; said Ms. Jones, and cited student capacity issues at Houghtaling. She concluded by commenting on the frequent administrative changes at Houghtaling over the recent years.

Sarah Harney, parent of five children in the district, said she'd been one of the parents asked to participate in the Smart Start planning. She stated she was okay with annexes if they were run by certified staff. Ms. Harney said she has a daughter who is one of the fragile children in the community; adding it's not too much to ask people to wear masks. She also asked for an overall "sick child" policy and for its expectations to be known to parents.

Referring to some of the speakers' comments that night, Christy Willis said she is anti-mask and has a right to that opinion. Many parents supported full-time back to school, she said. She commented on the low cases of COVID in the community and said Ketchikan has to function and have an economy. Ms. Willis said she thought the Board had listened to the majority of speakers, indicating that COVID was not a problem. If it becomes a problem, there is a plan to implement, she indicated.

Halli Kenoyer, who teaches art at Ketchikan Charter School, stated she's a little nervous about going back into school. However, she indicated she felt that the Smart Start plan provides for a best case scenario, and that the district had to work with problems that weren't anticipated. She'd like to see the plan tweaked if needed, she added.

Mark Woodward said that he and his wife had resigned their teaching positions with the district last spring to go overseas. They've just found out those overseas positions have been cancelled. Mr. Woodward said he'd been approached about homeschool services due to his former position with the Digital Academy and the homeschool program. He made some suggestions and proposed some questions regarding how those programs will work for the upcoming school year.

Parent Amanda Martin said she is a nanny who would never think of putting a mask on a child and stated she defies mask rules. Ms. Martin also said that social distancing was laughable. She indicated those students concerned about the virus should be the ones attending the annexes or opting for online classes; and school should operate as it did pre-pandemic for the rest of the students.

Board member Sonya Skan was excused from the meeting at this point, due to feeling unwell. Board President Mattson allowed her to first make some comments. Ms. Skan responded to some of what she'd heard from speakers that night. She also stated that a contingency plan to her means being ready.

Colleen Smith, Houghtaling Elementary School teacher, spoke in support of annex use to provide for social distancing, noting her particular class' typical enrollment. She also spoke of the advantages of having paraprofessionals to work with teachers. She also said kids will learn to wear masks and equated it to other safety issues for which children practice with school drills.

Break

A meeting break of about 10 minutes was taken at 8:05 p.m. before the meeting was resumed with additional citizen comments.

Parent Angela Blandov expressed appreciation that the new principal for Tongass School of Arts and Sciences had contacted her, as her children attend school there. She shared her concerns with her preschool age son having to wear a mask in school and to be distancing himself from other children. Ms. Blandov said she is concerned for the mental health of young children with the social distancing and mask requirements.

Becky King relayed a statement from her 14-year-old daughter who favors going to school 5 days a week. Then Ms. King, a Ketchikan Charter School kindergarten teacher, spoke in support of KCS' school plan, differentiating it from the district's Smart Start plan. If masks help everyone with their right to public education, let's wear them, said Ms. King; adding that even kindergarteners can learn to do so.

Kayhi Teacher Terri Whyte shared that she'd been fearful to go back to school at 100%. She expressed appreciation for the safety measures being planned for school.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Board Member Paul Robbins Jr. commented on some of the public comments.

Board Member Diane Gubatayao reported that there is a new COVID-19 dashboard on the Borough's Emergency Operations Center webpage. She also said she'd been told there was a new COVID-testing machine in Ketchikan.

Claims for Information – From June 30, July 10, July 24, and August 8, 2020 - There were no questions.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Superintendent Beth Lougee first addressed the July 29 school board vote with the Smart Start Plan as a contingency and school at a minimal level. There had been some confusion with the vote; she said, stating that safety measures have always been a part of re-entering school. The draft plan will be updated with changing situations, and likely that will occur as children return to school, said the superintendent. Building principals are back and communicating with their teachers, she said.

Superintendent Lougee reported she’d been working with staff on leave and travel issues, such as telework agreements; and that the district is advertising for a district nurse and a nurse to work for the special education program. In addition, the district plans to hire certified nursing assistants (CNAs) for any open health aide positions.

She also briefly updated the Board on the plans for district office staff to move to the Borough's White Cliff Building. The business office staff will move, with other directors and the superintendent remaining at the Kayhi location.

Business Manager's Report

Business Manager Katie Parrott’s report included that: the budget was closely watched as the fiscal year was closed out; no word has been received on the district’s application for the Governor’s Emergency Relief Fund; the district is preparing for the audit. Ms. Parrott noted the business office move was an action item on the agenda that evening.

Other Director Reports

Curriculum Director Alonso Escalante stated since his return to work the previous week he'd been working on readying the virtual school as an option for families. As of that day, 13 families had signed up.

Special Services Director Terri Crofcheck said the department is making plans and waiting on some decisions, such as where children will go to school and those children’s disabilities and needs. She did comment on the preschool schedule: there will be two sessions daily, morning and afternoon. Ms. Crofcheck anticipates many children being screened for preschool during the first week of school, as the spring screening did not occur.

****PUBLIC HEARING – POLICY****

Motion to adopt Board Policy 3510 – Maintenance in second reading.

Moved by: HEUTTE; Second by: BECKER

Public hearing/Board Discussion: There were no comments made by the public or by Board members regarding the policy.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) - AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

Motion to adopt Board Policy 5141.42 – Professional Boundaries of Staff with Students in second reading.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Public hearing/Board Discussion: There were no comments made by the public or by Board members regarding the policy.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) - AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar of August 12, 2020

- a. *Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of July 15, 2020*
- b. *Motion to approve the special meeting minutes of July 29, 2020*

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: BECKER

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) - AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to approve the lease agreement with Ketchikan Gateway Borough, as presented, at a cost of \$24,849.

Moved by: HEUTTE; Second by: TABB

Discussion

It was stated that this lease at the Borough's White Cliff building is to house staff from the district's business office.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) - AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

Motion to approve the FY22 Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District to be submitted to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: BECKER

Discussion

Ms. Parrott briefly spoke about the various funding resources and reimbursement levels for capital projects.

Board Member Tom Heutte commented on the biomass boiler which was on the CIP list. He noted that a biomass boiler installed in the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center had been removed as it didn't work properly. Superintendent Lougee reported that Director of Maintenance Al Jacobson had been in contact with the state regarding the possibility of grants for the biomass boiler. A biomass boiler would be considered a backup for the other two boilers, she said.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) - AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

Motion to approve the purchase of history and geography curriculum from Northwest Textbook Depository for Schoenbar Middle School in the amount of \$39,163.82.

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: TABB

Discussion

Superintendent Lougee said there was about \$70,000 remaining in the curriculum budget, in response to a question from Ms. Gubatayao.

ROLL CALL

**Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) - AYE
HEUTTE, ROBBINS JR., BECKER, GUBATAYAO, TABB, MATTSON – ALL AYES
MOTION PASSED**

Motion to approve the purchase of literacy and reading curriculum from Heinemann Educational Books for Tongass School of Arts & Sciences in the amount of \$40,895.82.

Moved by: HEUTTE; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

There was no discussion.

ROLL CALL

**Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) - AYE
BECKER, ROBBINS JR., HEUTTE, GUBATAYAO, TABB, MATTSON – ALL AYES
MOTION PASSED**

Motion to approve a one-year contract extension for the 2020-2021 school year to Tongass Business Center for copier services, in the amount of \$45,100.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

Mr. Robbins Jr. expressed thanks to Tongass Business Center for reducing its price without reducing services for this coming year, referring to the information on the agenda statement.

Ms. Gubatayao stated it is good to deal with a local business for these services.

ROLL CALL

**Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) - AYE
HEUTTE, GUBATAYAO, ROBBINS JR., TABB, BECKER, MATTSON – ALL AYES
MOTION PASSED**

Motion to approve the purchase of 400 Chromebooks from OETC in the amount of \$104,091.

Moved by: HEUTTE; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

Ms. Gubatayao noted that usually with this amount of a purchase there would be multiple bids. Business Manager Parrott said that OETC is a purchasing cooperative which obtains quotes from multiple sources on behalf of the customer.

Mr. Robbins Jr. noted price per unit was only \$220.

Ms. Parrott also said the purchase was being funded through a combination of CARES Act through the state and supplemental funds through the Borough.

ROLL CALL

**Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) - AYE
TABB, GUBATAYAO, ROBBINS JR., BECKER, HEUTTE, MATTSON – ALL AYES
MOTION PASSED**

Motion to approve the Continuity of Learning recommendations for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Smart Start 2020 Plan.”

Moved by: TABB; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

Mr. Tabb stated he appreciated the superintendent and building administration teams taking the direction of the Board to start school at 5 days a week with 100 percent capacity and integrating it into this continuity of learning plan.

Ms. Gubatayao stated there wasn't much difference in the part between low and medium risk in this particular plan, so it didn't require a whole lot of adjustment.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

Motion to approve the Conditions of Learning recommendations for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Smart Start 2020 Plan.

Moved by: HEUTTE; Second by: BECKER

Discussion

Ms. Gubatayao stated it was disappointing that some of that night's speakers hadn't felt the board was considering health and safety protocols. Safety protocols had been a priority since they were first mentioned at the May 27 meeting, she said.

Mr. Heutte said that when the Board voted two weeks previous not to adopt the Smart Start plan, the district was left with no plan. He indicated the recommendations, if approved, would provide guidance.

Board Member Leslie Becker asked at what point would masks no longer be a requirement.

Superintendent Lougee responded by stressing the Smart Start plan was a draft which will come back to the Board as circumstances change. She added that the testimony that evening showed that everyone needs to feel safe, and the district's staff is keeping up on what those safety requirements are.

Ms. Becker stated that if the Board is voting on this document, it is not a draft. She indicated if it is to be considered a draft it should be labeled accordingly.

Mr. Heutte stated that the district and community needs a school plan to go forward.

Discussion ensued regarding the Board's previous meeting vote for school at a minimal risk scenario and what could be inferred from that vote, including use of annexes.

Superintendent Lougee stated her interpretation of the July 29 vote was to start school at 100% and as normal. However, based on the Smart Start planning protocols that the district administration has been trained on, health and safety protocols to operate school had to be adjusted, including providing for social distancing, she said.

The superintendent said she is seeking approval to secure annexes for the schools that need them to provide social distancing. If the district does not have annexes and situations change, schools may have to close for an extended period to make adjustments, she cautioned. She also commented on why the mask requirement was included in the plan as well.

Ms. Gubatayao commented on the difficulty for parents to make decisions when information on schools and their capacities was still limited.

President Mattson responded that the parental survey regarding schooling options is open until August 28. However, the Board needs to take action that evening, in order for parents to in turn make more informed decisions.

There was more discussion regarding the previous Board vote, particularly regarding securing annexes and whether that fell under a minimal risk plan.

After that discussion, Mr. Robbins said he would be amenable to approving the recommendations as written with the considerations expressed by fellow Board Member Tabb. Mr. Tabb had spoken to how the method of learning and instruction would not change with the use of annexes; but would provide additional spacing for students. Mr. Robbins stated he was agreeable, if the paraprofessional was not at one area with the students, with the corresponding teacher at another site.

Superintendent Lougee confirmed that schools will start at the minimal 5 days a week with teachers in front of students. Building administrators are planning to utilize grade “bands,” she said. A grade would be divided into bands to utilize an annex.

Student Henry Clark asked why some of the measures discussed that evening weren’t already incorporated into the plan documents. As a student he would like to start school with firm details, he said. Superintendent Lougee responded that the plan before the Board was up to date at this point; and the goal is to have as solidified a plan as possible by the time that students come to orientation.

Ms. Mattson commented that she views the documents as a “draft” in the sense that they can be adjusted as science regarding COVID changes, for example.

Mr. Tabb commented on one of the emerging COVID-related factors being appropriate ventilation as was noted by at least one speaker that evening.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

Motion to approve the Capacity of Learning recommendations for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Smart Start 2020 Plan.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

Student Henry Clark asked why the facilities use and sanitation funding section on the recommendation spreadsheet was left blank. Superintendent Lougee answered that the section will be filled in as the district receives data such as quotes on renting annexes.

Ms. Gubatayao stated she feels the district has done a good job of providing educational alternatives for those families that feel they need to keep their children at home for health reasons.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

Motion to postpone the discussion items to the next regular meeting.

MOVED BY: TABB; SECOND BY: ROBBINS JR.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Henry Clark (preferential vote) – AYE

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

MOTION PASSED

(The discussion topics were Strategic Plan review and update; and Board evaluation.)

CITIZEN REMARKS

There were no remarks at this second opportunity for citizen comments.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Robbins Jr. apologized for speaking out of order during the "Information and Reports from Board Members" segment on the agenda, instead of waiting until "Board Member Comments." He commented that a Duke University study indicates that neck gaiters may not protect a wearer from expelling droplets, but may actually increase the occurrence.

Ms. Gubatayao remarked that the Board has been concerned about health and safety issues for school all along. She also expressed her concern with the students who live in poverty, as federally defined, which she said is about 48 percent. Some of those students were ones that schools lost contact with when schools shut down. She said she hopes the decisions made that night will re-engage those students and bring them back into the schools.

ADVANCE PLANNING

Government to government - A tentative date of August 19, 2020 has been suggested by Ketchikan Indian Community for government to government consultations.

ADJOURNMENT

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