

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR meeting of
Wednesday, February 9, 2022
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 9th day of February, 2022, in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers. Board President Stephen Bradford 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 Stephen Bradford; Board Vice President Keenan Sanderson; Board Clerk-Treasurer Bridget Mattson; and Board Members Diane Gubatayao; Jordan Tabb; and Paul Robbins Jr. Board Member Nicole Anderson was present via teleconference. Student Board Member Braxton Zink was also present.

Administrative staff present included Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson; Business Manager Katie Parrott; and Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

President Stephen Bradford opened the meeting by stating that the Board would not be making any statements regarding a recent high school basketball game, but would be awaiting the results of an investigation into what had occurred.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Superintendent finalists - Board President Bradford said that the Board had been hosting three finalists for the position of superintendent over the past two days. Interviews with each of the candidates had taken place that entire day, and the candidates had been invited to attend the Board meeting. The candidates were invited to speak. Michael Robbins from Toksook Bay, Alaska, Dr. Greg Fowler of Chandler, Arizona, and Ketchikan's interim superintendent Melissa Johnson each briefly commented.

Elizabeth Peratrovich Day - A proclamation recognizing Elizabeth Peratrovich was read. The proclamation was adapted from that issued by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough. Elizabeth Peratrovich Day is recognized on February 16.

Black History Month - A proclamation for Black History Month issued by Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy was read. The proclamation noted the roles African Americans have played in Alaska's history, and their contributions to the state.

CITIZEN REMARKS

Dave Timmerman stated that 20 local people died by overdosing last year, and three this year. He said the elementary curriculum regarding drugs needs to be scrutinized, and the school resource officer should be used to instruct on the subject.

Seventh-grader Sophia Cook spoke about why masks shouldn't be required in school, and stated it is time to get back to a normal existence.

Tiffany Cook expressed her support for the job that Melissa Johnson had done as interim superintendent, adding she knows how to do the job and knows the community.

Ruth Bullock shared her experience as a mother to non-white children, her observations of racial incidents at basketball games in other Southeast towns, and how those students were disciplined.

John Bullock, a senior at Kayhi, spoke about what he had witnessed at the Metlakatla/Ketchikan basketball games. He called for teaching and awareness of the history of Native Alaskans.

Senior Kayhi student Kollin Houthoofd spoke to the pep club's country theme on the referred to weekend. He apologized, stating it could have been seen as offensive.

Jerry Scudero, noting he was originally from Metlakatla, and had coached Kayhi basketball at one time, shared his observations. He suggested looking into what had occurred on each of the nights of the basketball games in question.

As a member of the pep club, student Braydan Heath said there was no intent for the country theme to offend anyone, He said he hoped everyone can work together and expressed respect for the neighboring communities and schools.

Kara (Jones) Farley stated she had moved to Ketchikan 16 years ago and appreciates the different cultures the community offers her kids. She spoke of false accusations of racism and asked why adults hadn't acted during the game, if they witnessed unacceptable behavior.

Christy Willis referred to comments on Facebook, denouncing them and stating it is the role of adults to shape kids. She also stated her support for Ms. Johnson to be the superintendent.

Teacher Kevin Johnson spoke about witnessing ugliness in the past days. He urged righting the situation, and called it a teachable moment. These are our students, he said.

Swedish-born Louise Loretan commented that she hadn't witnessed any racism, and shared her perspective and asked that accusations not be made. She said the district needs to get rid of mask mandates. Lastly, she stated support for Ms. Johnson as superintendent.

Danielle Montanus stated she had three kids playing basketball for Kayhi. She said she believes the controversy stemmed from the Friday game, and also referred to an incident with her son at the game.

Kristall Bullock, sophomore in high school, shared some of what she'd experienced in school as an Alaskan Native student. She said that even a few comments or individual behavior can be offensive.

Janalee Minnich Gage spoke of the need to learn history in depth, commented on racism, and said this a teachable moment.

Jeremy Bynum spoke on behalf of the Ketchikan Basketball Officials, providing a comprehensive explanation of an official's responsibilities, training and role. He also commented briefly on what had occurred to an official at the Friday game.

Helene Simpson of Hydaburg, accompanied by a friend, also from Prince of Wales Island, asked for cultural sensitivity and kindness to one another, and shared that certain comments or actions can cause deep hurt.

Teresa Varnell also commented on a need to understand the history of the indigenous people in understanding the harm of some behaviors. She asked people to be more understanding of each other, and to educate one another.

Clarence Peele said he is a parent of a mixed-race family and that the smallest of words can harm and impact children. Parents need to teach children how to love each other, he said.

Break

A break was called in the meeting at the conclusion of the public comments, from 7:27 to 7:37 p.m.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Committee reports: Board Member Diane Gubatayao commented on trauma-engaged training opportunities being planned by the Association of Alaska School Boards. She will bring more details to the Board in the future.

CLAIMS FOR INFORMATION - For Information - *Claims of February 4, 2022.* There were no questions or comments.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Student Member's Report: Student Member Braxton Zink first congratulated the Kayhi Ocean Sciences Bowl team for placing fourth overall in the state competition, noting it was the first time in two years that Kayhi had participated. He noted the various other activities occurring, and then commented on that day's student interviews with the Superintendent candidates. Braxton also addressed the basketball game situation that had been referenced that evening. He said the student body association understand the gravity and importance of the situation, although he indicated the majority of students had an outside perspective and were not involved.

Superintendent's Report

While the Point Higgins Elementary School principal set up for his school presentation, Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson reported on some subjects. First, she said she would not discuss what had occurred the previous weekend, as there was an active investigation ongoing. She commented on the senior auction which raised more than \$10,000 in its first hybrid version. She thanked the senior class advisors Sean Powell, Allegra Machado, Mary Miller, and Robin Hartman.

Point Higgins Elementary School Report

Principal Steve McLaren first stated the vision and mission that guide Point Higgins Elementary School, based on instruction, safety and trust. He then commented on the school's assessment performance and its attendance. Point Higgins' scores typically average about 10% higher than the rest of the district, he said. Attendance at Point Higgins, which has an enrollment of about 260 students, has been down, mirroring the schools in the district. However, the attendance rate is still about 87 percent, he said.

Next, Mr. McLaren spoke about Point Higgins goals which include: continuing to improve test scores in all categories on benchmarks and state assessments; keeping kids in school; continuing ALICE training; and continuing to improve school climate. Principal McLaren highlighted ways in which the school is trying to meet the latter goal, noting that school climate is especially critical now. Outdoor activities for students are encouraged; and staff recognition is also important, he indicated. Mr. McLaren noted staff is doing double and triple duty much of the time. Some of the specific activities he mentioned, accompanied by photos in his Power Point included: Spirit Week Friday, Fire Safety, the spelling bee, Battle of the Books, and participation in the arts council youth art walk. The school also will have an archery tournament this year, he announced.

Future maintenance projects at Point Higgins were also noted: finishing a parking lot resurfacing that couldn't be completed this past summer; and a roof replacement.

In concluding, Principal McLaren described several special projects. One of these was a wood-lasered replica of the Elizabeth Peratrovich commemorative coin made by Kayhi teacher David Lindquist. Mr. McLaren plans to use duplicate wooden coins based on the commemorative coin to recognize students who stand up for what is right or who make good choices.

Ms. Gubatayao asked if Point Higgins was also experiencing a learning decrease in the primary grades, as had been noted at other schools. Mr. McLaren affirmed this and addressed the subject briefly. Assistant principal Dan Olson commented on staffing shortages with paraprofessionals meaning the school has not been able to address the Response to Intervention (RTI) needs of students as it had before COVID.

Mr. Olson also spoke about an initiative he'd taken on, after being invited to do so by Interim Superintendent Johnson. As a retired veteran, he has applied for schools in the district to be recognized for the Purple Star program. The program essentially helps students of military families adjust when they move to a new school district.

Superintendent's Report continued

Interim Superintendent Johnson asked Linnaea Troina, COVID communications person, to describe the change in the district's COVID risk levels. Ms. Troina first noted that this change occurred as the local public health is no longer posting the number of community COVID positive cases, resulting in the district having to devise its own way to determine risk levels. The risk level for the district is now being based on: the number of COVID positive individuals, staff or students, reported as being in school for at least a portion of the day during their infectious period. The new risk levels for the district are: Low - 0 to 1 cases of staff or students; Moderate is 2 to 6 cases districtwide; Substantial is 7 to 12; and 13 or more cases would constitute a High level.

Ms. Troina further reported that two weeks ago the number of infectious people in the buildings was 70, and this past week it was 34.

CONSENT CALENDAR of February 9, 2022

- a. Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 26, 2022
- b. Motion to approve the special meeting minutes of January 27, 2022.
- c. ~~Motion to approve the special meeting minutes of January 31, 2022. - Not completed~~

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar of February 9, 2022.

Moved by: TABB; Second by: GUBATAYAO

MOTION APPROVED WITHOUT OBJECTION

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to approve the operating fund budget revision as presented.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

There was no discussion.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE

ROBBINS JR., TABB, SANDERSON, ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, MATTSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion to approve a purchased services agreement with Trebron Security LLC for Sophos Anti-virus subscription and cybersecurity services in the amount of \$150,027.50

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

Discussion

There was no discussion.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE

GUBATAYAO, TABB, SANDERSON, MATTSON, ROBBINS JR., ANDERSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

EXECUTIVE SESSION - Negotiations with TSLO

Motion to move into executive session to discuss labor negotiations with the Technology Staff Labor Organization, a matter the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the school district, as provided for by Board Bylaw 9321 and AS 44.62.310.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: SANDERSON

ROLL CALL

ROBBINS, ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, SANDERSON, TABB, MATTSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

The Board entered executive session at 8:28 p.m. The executive session ended at 8:38 p.m. and the Board resumed its regular session.

DISCUSSION

Thresholds for setting school district COVID risk levels: Board Member Robbins explained why he had asked for this discussion topic, questioning what it is that individuals are at “high risk” of? Omicron is not resulting in overloading of the hospital and the majority of masks being used in schools were ineffective, he said, in part. Board members then had a broad discussion regarding masks, mitigation measures, risk levels and associated topics for about 40 minutes. There were some suggestions for possible action by the Board. President Bradford advised that if the Board wanted to amend the district's COVID mitigation plan, a potential action needed to be on an agenda and properly noticed.

Drug abuse/overdose issues

Referring to a speaker that night, Board Member Tabb commented on the need to protect student's privacy. Ms. Gubatayao asked what the Board was going to do to address the overdose issue. Mr. Bradford suggested the superintendent be asked to report on what is covered regarding drugs in the elementary curriculum.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Robbins said that people shouldn't apologize for being emotional during their public comments. He condemned what he'd heard has happened on Face Book regarding students. He also said that governing bodies should not be using social media to make statements, and should wait until the conclusion of the investigation.

Ms. Gubatayao thanked district staff and Board Member Mattson for their work on the superintendent finalists' visit, and expressed appreciation to the candidates as well. She said she awaits the outcome of the investigation and hopes a teachable time will result.

Board Member Nicole Anderson also expressed thanks for the work on the superintendent finalist process and to the three candidates. Commenting on a citizen's remarks earlier, she stated that Ketchikan is at a higher risk of losing students and staff to drugs than to COVID, and energies need to be focused accordingly.

Student Braxton Zink said that if an individual knows someone who is feeling down or in need of help, they should talk to them and tell them that they are cared for.

Keenan Sanderson first expressed dismay with people making statements online about students and the media's reporting on the same. He stated his appreciation for the superintendent candidates and said he'd enjoyed the interviews. He also commented on his experience in Seward over the weekend as the coach to the Ocean Sciences Bowl team. He recognized the seniors on the team: Ellie Pickrell, Kaydence Dyson, Kai Biagi, and Morgan Davis.

Board Member Jordan Tabb commented on listening to the speakers that night share their pain, and that he hopes to see healing. He spoke about examining the issues, actions and words that could be hurtful to another. Lastly, he commented on those who had participated with feedback during the superintendent finalist process, and said the Board's decision will be challenging.

Board Member Mattson said she was appreciative of the due diligence of administrators and staff to find answers, and that there are district policies to guide in that process. She also stated her gratitude to that evening's speakers, especially the students. Ms. Mattson also commented on the process to select a permanent superintendent, thanking the staff and students who participated, as well as the candidates.

Mr. Bradford thanked district staff, and Ms. Mattson for her work as the liaison in the superintendent search process. He thanked the speakers that evening, noting that they were respectful, even while having differing views and emotions.

ADVANCE PLANNING

There was some discussion about possible dates for government to government meetings with the Ketchikan Indian Community.

ADJOURNMENT

With no objection to a motion to adjourn, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Minutes approved as distributed at the February 23, 2022 regular meeting of the Board of Education.

BOARD PRESIDENT
Stephen Bradford