SITKA SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
December 1, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.
Sitka School District

Superintendent: Frank Hauser

CALL TO ORDER

The Sitka School Board meeting was called to order by President Morrison at 6:04 p.m. at Harrigan Centennial Hall, 330 Harbor Dr., Sitka, AK 99835.

ROLL CALL

Members present were Paul Rioux, Blossom Teal-Olsen, Todd Gebler, Andrew Hames, and President Amy Morrison. The meeting was quorate.

APPROVAL OF PROPOSED AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Hames moved, Ms. Teal-Olsen seconded to approve the board agenda and consent agenda as presented. The motion PASSED by a unanimous roll call vote of all members present.

SPECIAL REPORTS

- GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT

  Rebecca Himschoot – City of Sitka Assembly Member

  Ms. Himschoot expressed appreciation for the School Board reporting at the last Assembly meeting.

RECOGNITIONS

The Board recognized Emma Gassman – Fourth Place 100 Backstroke at the State Swim Meet.

The Board also recognized eight (8) SHS students who participated in All-State Honor Band and Choir, noting that Dylan Dumag was selected 1st chair bass in choir, and Tyler Adres was selected 1st chair alto sax.
Public comment was given on the issue of the District’s COVID mitigation plan and masking in the schools.

**SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS**

- **Casey Demmert - KGH** – Parent-Teacher conferences were very well attended, with 97% of families participating: 36% attended virtually, and 64% attended in-person. An AmeriCorps volunteer has initiated a story-telling group that is branching off into a creating a podcast. November also featured a school-wide gratitude bracelet project with Mrs. Horton. The beads were inspired by a traditional Pilgrim poem, which was rewritten by Jule LeBlanc, SSD Cultural Director, to reflect Tlingit values. 5th grade students are learning about giving back by participating in the Giving Tree project at Wells Fargo. MAP assessments continue. Kids are enjoying the snow on the playground.

- **Sondra Lundvick – SHS** – Happy to recognize the All-State music students, including the two 1st chair musicians. Activities at the school are entering a busy season. Wrestlers are going to Juneau, basketball and cheerleading have started in preparation for the holiday basketball tournament, December 16th-18th, with boys and girls teams from Bristol Bay, Glenallen, and Petersburg participating. First semester ends January 14th. Second semester schedules will be finalized before winter break. SAT testing, Saturday school being offered for those students who would like to complete outstanding work before Winter Break.

- **Tyler McCarty on behalf of Jill Lecrone - BES.** Students are enjoying school so much that three students asked if they could stay longer. Baranof Bear Paws incentives are a big hit – students are very proud of themselves in earning them. Silent auction has begun, spearheaded by Caitlyn Hull. Mr. Hole taught the students the “Turkey Tango,” which was then performed by the whole school outside.

**REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS**

**Sarah Lawrie – SSD AmeriCorps Coordinator.** This is Ms. Lawrie’s fifth year as AmeriCorps Coordinator. The program is grant funded through Serve Alaska Commission, with no cost to SSD. The mission of the Sitka AmeriCorps Program is to mitigate the effects of high Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) scores prevalent in rural Alaskan communities, through developmental relationships and enrichment activities. The program is also concerned with learning loss recovery from COVID-19. The members serve with youth in schools, non-profit organizations, and
mental health facilities, forming developmental relationships through academic interventions and enrichment activities.

**BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

- **Mr. Gebler** – Described receiving a ‘firehose of information’ at the AASB Annual Conference last month.
- **Ms. Teal-Olsen** – Expressed thanks to Superintendent Hauser and school administrators for the full, complete tour of all the schools. She said it was in-depth and very informative. She enjoyed seeing all the kids in the schools. As a follow-up after the tours, she was asked to be interviewed by some of the PHS students. Ms. Teal-Olsen attended the Sealaska Heritage Institute STEAM planning committee for their culturally responsive event. She said it looks like it will be a great event for families within the district.
- **Mr. Hames** – Reported that the AASB State Conference was great, and thanked AASB and SSD in supporting the local school board attending. Highlights of the conference for him were sessions on professional boundaries, and lessons learned from COVID-19, presented by the Alaska Teacher of the Year. Mr. Hames enjoyed having some ‘hot topic discussions’ with board members from other areas of the state. PHS invited Mr. Hames and Superintendent Hauser for Quarter 1 Academic Achievers meeting. PHS students were recognized for their achievement: academically, musically, athletically, etc.
- **Mr. Rioux** – Reported on the AASB Conference – learned how communities across the state are dealing with education issues, family support issues, mental health, and anxiety. He stated that it was good to talk to others about what’s working and what’s not. Paul recently attended the Assembly meeting and commented on Andrew Friske’s presentation regarding ‘Sitka Kids’ and the Sitka Community Recreation Initiative.
- **President Morrison** – Expressed her regrets for having to miss the AASB Conference but had the opportunity to watch her children compete in the volleyball tournament. Ms. Morrison and Mr. Hauser have been asked to be interviewed by Ms. Richter’s English class at SHS. Ms. Morrison informed the board that she will not be here for the next board meeting, and that Mr. Hames will run the meeting in her absence. In referring to the number of emails the board has received in the past few days, Ms. Morrison noted a common thread. We all care about the students of SSD, but might not all agree about what that looks like. From COVID mitigation to curriculum. Ms. Morrison expressed the desire to focus on what we do agree on.
SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

- **Superintendent Hauser** highlighted KGH this month.
  - Mr. Hauser reported on the collaboration between the KGH library and science teachers that resulted in a “Balloons Over Broadway” presentation, modeled after the book by the same name. Students learned how to code an Ozobot to move their balloons down a simulated parade route, created using green screen.
  - Staff are working to support students’ social and emotional health this school year, celebrating kindness throughout the school day. Staff are creating a schoolwide positive community. KGH Counselor, Janine Brooks is teaching Second Steps social skills lessons.
  - Students participated in a virtual art activity, making form-line turkeys, guided by Tlingit artist Mark Sixbey.
  - The Girls on the Run are training for a 5k race December 11th, while at the same time, learning lessons emphasizing empathy, inclusiveness, standing up for themselves and others. Girls on the Run is supported by SAFV, Youth Advocates of Sitka, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, and Sitka Counseling.
  - 4th grade choir and 5th grade band are preparing for upcoming mini concerts.
  - AmeriCorps member, Jonathan Pijar, is expanding his unit on storytelling with students to begin teaching them about creating a podcast for storytelling.

- Superintendent Hauser acknowledged the Daily Sitka Sentinel for its excellent reporting on SSD sports.

- STEM at SSD was highlighted with a report on the collaboration between Dr. Molly Greer and BMS teacher, Caitlyn Woolsey, with Summer Science Camp. Their work was featured in the Pacific Northwest National Lab Newsletter.

- Strategic Plan update – the team has been working on finalizing the Action Plans and hope to have them ready to implement in February.

- COVID update – there are zero (0) cases associated with SSD buildings. Superintendent Hauser stated that the district
has set a goal of moving to ‘masks optional’ in mid-January. He emphasized that this is a goal, not a deadline. The SSD mitigation plan is still in effect and masks are still required in the buildings per city ordinance.

NEW BUSINESS

- **ACCEPTANCE OF AUDIT**
  
  Superintendent Hauser reported that there were no findings with the auditors and cited that as an excellent outcome. Mr. Hames made the motion, and Mr. Rioux seconded to accept the audit report as presented. The motion PASSED with a unanimous roll call vote.

- **DISCUSSION OF FORMALIZING SCHOOL BOARD GOALS**
  
  Superintendent Hauser explained that District goals were set during the Strategic Planning process. The goals decided upon are:
  - 100% of Sitka school district students will have at least one year of measurable growth every school year.
  - 100% of our students will graduate.
  - 100% of all middle and high school students will have a post-graduation plan.
  - 100% of students will have access to mental health supports.

  **Board discussion:**
  
  Mr. Rioux asked more about the next steps in the process regarding the Action Teams. Mr. Hauser answered that the Action Teams are finalizing the Action Plans that, when implemented, are designed to move the district closer to meeting the stated goals.

  Mr. Rioux also asked about the staff representation on the Action Teams. Mr. Hauser replied that all teams, but one, have staff representation. Mr. Hauser has been closely following all teams and progress.

  Ms. Teal-Olsen asked what the current graduation rate is. Mr. Houser replied that the 2021 graduation rate was 98%.

  Mr. Hames explained that the 100% targets were decided upon by the Strategic Planning team who felt that holding the district to a high standard was imperative.

  Mr. Rioux commented that he favors the goal that all students in middle and high school have a post-graduation plan.

- **BOARD BOOK PRESENTATION**
  
  Mr. Hames moved, and Mr. Gebler seconded to approve the MOU for purchase of BoardBook. BoardBook allows school boards to compile meeting documents, agendas, and minutes in a concise and user-friendly format.

  **Public comment:** Mike Vieira, SEA President looked for assurance that open meeting laws would not be violated by use of the BoardBook software. Mr. Hauser informed the board and Mr. Vieira that there is no direct communication within the software that would violate open meeting law.

  The motion PASSED with a unanimous roll call vote.
• **AASB POLICY ONLINE SERVICE**

Mr. Gebler moved, and Ms. Teal Olsen seconded to approve the MOU for purchase of AASB Policy Online Service. Policy Online provides publication and support for District policy manual, is linked to District’s website, easily accessible by administration, staff, and the public, and is easily searchable. The motion PASSED with a unanimous roll call vote.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Hames moved, and Mr. Rioux seconded the adoption of a motion which, after discussion and amendment, was adopted as follows: to go into Executive Session, in accordance with and under the provision of AS 44.62.310 (c)(2)(4); the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the district, and subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion. The matters to be discussed are Superintendent Evaluation Quarterly Check-In and Contract Negotiations. Mr. Hauser is invited.

Public comment: Mike Vieira, President of SEA, who sits outside the negotiating process to enable him to communicate between the committee and the school board without influencing the discussion in any way. Representing the committee, he offers the board an opportunity to ask questions about the ‘big picture’ of the process without focusing on specifics. Mr. Vieira expressed that the negotiating meetings have been going well. There was no further public comment and no comment from the board.

The motion to move into Executive Session to discuss Superintendent’s evaluation quarterly check-in and union negotiations, as amended, was passed at 9:02 pm.

Mr. Hames moved to reconvene, and Mr. Rioux seconded the motion. The motion passed with no objection.
Back in regular session at 9:57 pm
President Morrison stated that in Executive Session, the Board discussed the Superintendent’s evaluation quarterly check-in and union negotiations.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

• **THE NEXT REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 5, 2022 AT 6:00PM – CENTENNIAL BUILDING**
ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:57pm.

Amy J. Morrison, President

Paul G. Rioux, Clerk