

Gateway Regional School District

Blandford-Chester-Huntington-Middlefield Montgomery-Russell

12 Littleville Road Huntington, MA 01050

Phone(413) 685-1000 Fax: (413) 667-8739

April 4, 2018

Re: Regional Amendment Request

Town Selectboards via email and hardcopy

Dear Town Officials,

This letter will fulfill a request from Ruth Kennedy (Russell Finance) that an official request from the district to each town be made to place the amendment on your annual town meeting warrant. This amendment was developed by the school committee in conjunction with town officials from all six towns with collaboration by MARS and the DESE. This was approved by the school committee at the March 14th meeting.

The amendment was sent to town officials via email on March 19th with the following 'cover email':

Good Morning,

This is the wording approved by the school committee to be placed on town warrants as a request for amending the regional agreement. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Dave

I appreciate all the collaborative work we've done on this effort to stabilize assessments, develop a reasonable budget and look at potential future collaborations. If you have any questions on the amendment please let me know.

Sincerely,



Dr. David B. Hopson
Superintendent

---District Vision Statement---

The Gateway Regional School District will provide an exemplary education that challenges all students in an instructional setting appropriate to their needs.

Article

To see if the Town of _____ will vote to accept the Amendment to the Gateway Regional School District Agreement: Section IV D Assessment to Member Towns. Said Amendment is on file at the Selectmen and Town Clerk Offices.

Motion

To see if the Town of _____ will vote the Alternate Assessment Method (known as Assessment Stabilization Plan) from the Gateway Regional School District in the amount of \$_____.

(AMENDMENT TO EXISTING SECTION)

SECTION IV APPORTIONMENT AND PAYMENT OF COSTS INCURRED BY THE DISTRICT

DELETE: Section (D) Apportionment of Capital and Operating Costs

Capital and operating costs shall be apportioned annually for the ensuing fiscal year on the basis of each member town's public school population. For the purpose of this subsection, public school population shall be defined as the number of children residing in a member town and receiving education at the town's expenses. Each member town's share for each fiscal year shall be determined by computing the ratio which that town's public school population on March 1 of the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the apportionment is determined bears to the total public school population from all the member towns on the same date. In computing a town's public school population, the pupils referred to in subsection (D) of Section X shall be excluded.

REPLACE WITH: Section (D) Assessments

1. The District shall prepare one budget that shall include the funds necessary to support the operating, transportation, and capital/debt needs of the District.
2. The assessment apportioned to each member town, shall be comprised of the following categories of costs, itemized and calculated as follows:
 - a. The operating portion shall consist of all District expenditures less transportation, capital, and debt. The operating portion shall be calculated based on the Alternative Method as calculated as outlined in Subsection 3 below or based on the Statutory method calculated as follows:
 - i. From the operating costs subtract Chapter 70 state aid, the total required minimum local contributions from the member towns, and other general fund income.
 - ii. The remaining amount is the amount over the minimum required local contributions.
 - iii. The amount over the minimum required local contributions shall be assessed to the member towns based on the March 1 student enrollment for the current fiscal year. For the purpose of defining enrollment related to the assessments, pupil enrollments shall be defined as the number of pupils in all grades Pre-Kindergarten through twelve (PK – 12), inclusive, residing in each member town and receiving education at member towns' expense.
 - b. The transportation portion shall be calculated by reducing the District's transportation costs by the amount the District anticipates receiving in Chapter 71 Transportation reimbursement and additional amounts from the Transportation Reserve Fund. The remaining amount shall be allocated to the towns based on enrollment on March 1 of the current fiscal year.
 - c. The debt and capital cost portion shall be allocated by enrollment based on the March 1 enrollment of the current year.
 - d. The total assessment to each member town shall be the sum of the minimum local contribution, the above minimum local contribution, transportation, and capital/debt, as calculated above.
3. Alternate Assessment Method
 - a. The Alternate Assessment shall create an equalized percentage assessment

to each member town.

- b. The member towns' combined operating, transportation, and capital/debt assessment shall be apportioned annually for the ensuing fiscal year by increasing each town's prior fiscal year assessment by the percentage of the total District assessment increase. The starting assessment shall be calculated using a five-year average as approved by the Regional School Committee or otherwise agreed upon by the Regional School Committee.
 - c. When using the Alternate Assessment Method, each town must meet its Minimum Required Local Contribution. If the equalized percentage assessment results in a member town(s) not meeting its Minimum Required Local Contribution, then the town(s) so affected shall have their assessment increased to the Minimum Required Local Contribution amount. The remaining towns shall have their assessment reduced in an equal manner.
4. Committee Budget Vote
 - a. The Committee will have the option to vote the Alternate Assessment Method each year starting with FY '2019.
 5. Assessment Method
 - a. The member towns may choose to participate in the Alternate Assessment Method on a pilot basis for five (5) years beginning with FY '2019 with an annual vote at each town meeting on the assessment. The Alternate Method outlined in this section will end with FY '2023 unless the Regional Agreement is amended otherwise.