

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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

All visitors attending the school committee meeting should sign in at the security booth.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2021

Middle School 112/114

7:00 P.M.

7:00PM I. OPENING OF MEETING

Call to order: Sarah Page, Chairperson

BLANDFORD
Keri Morawiec

CHESTER
Jeana Briggs
Jason Forgue

HUNTINGTON
David Lubbers
Pegg Dragon
Edward Renauld

MIDDLEFIELD

MONTGOMERY

RUSSELL
Tara Balboni
Sarah Page
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY
Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION
Kristen Smidy, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Business & Finance

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Martha Clark, High/Middle Assistant Principal
Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit Principal
Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal
Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director
Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director
Emily Loux, Communications
Chris Parker, Technology Director
Darlene Rehor, Elementary Assistant Principal

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
Joseph Pisani

OTHERS: Mike Lafleur, Mike Morrissey, Nick Balboni, Stephen Luchini

7:00PM

II. PUBLIC INPUT - None

(Guests attending the meeting may address the committee on topics not on the agenda. There is a three minute time limit per guest)

7:10PM

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Joseph Pisani said they had spirit days in the past couple weeks; spooky day before halloween, dress in purple day, etc. Clubs are going well, a few, including red cross started today. A lot of classes talked about how we've already completed 25% of the school year. He received a decent amount of data from the survey. He asked how excited they were to be back in the building 58% gave a rating of three or higher. He asked how they are feeling about the school year. The answers were stressed, motivated, great, nervous. They are a little drained but pleased to be able to learn again in a somewhat normal setting. Sports had a lot of interest. The arts program had slightly less. Hopefully, it will improve in the future. There is a lot of interest in clubs. The hot topic is the 6 versus 7 block schedule. 57.4% were for seven and 42.6% said six blocks. Felt if they were able to take language you could also fit in gym and band or arts. 74.2% percent wanted more school and class wide events; more assemblies, spring fling, and reindeer games. How students felt communication: fifty out of seventy-three answered a 3 or above. They would love to see more newsletters and Instagram posts. We had a student ask about a newsletter or google classroom about basic information, an example is what is reindeer games, etc. 89.6% would love a longer period for lunch. If there were any classes we don't offer they would like to see. Starting language or Spanish earlier so they could take other classes or further in language. Home economics or a consumer class like paying taxes were other suggestions.
- Mr. Lubbers said he is doing a great job and appreciates it. The more information you give us the better choices we can make.
- Ms. Page is super impressed.
- Mr. Fogue suggested a survey question of how the students would respond to a longer day to accommodate a longer lunch.

7:15PM

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

7:20PM

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Hockey Co-op Update

- Mrs. Smidy said it is still there and staying as the executive committee is voting to approve it on November 9. Agawam and Gateway have approved it.

B. Superintendent Travel Out of State for Professional Development Approval

- Mrs. Smidy said she mentioned at the last meeting her contract states the school committee must approve out of state travel for the superintendent. She is requesting to travel to Nashville for the AASA Conference. This conference will cover negotiations, building post secondary options and impact. It has really rich pd and learning possibilities.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve the out of state to the AASA Conference in Nashville, TN for professional development for Mrs. Smidy.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, David, Lyndsey, Ed, Sarah

7:30PM VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Locker Update

- Mr. Finnie has communicated with Dawn VonDeck. 7th and 8th graders have been assigned lockers. They just need to mitigate how often they go to them. All high school students have been asked to reach out if they needed a locker.

B. Approval of Grants (Enc.)

- Ms. Dragon said the 151 grant was listed twice.
- Mr. Forgue had a question about ESSER grants. We placed people in positions to last through FY 23 - 24. What is the plan to keep them?
- Ms. Smidy said she and the leadership team have been talking about strategizing to avoid the fiscal grants cliff. We are hiring the coach as a non-contract position. Two positions were hired where people are retiring, and one position we need to re-evaluate to determine if we will keep it after ESSER. A lot is being used for programming, so we wouldn't have to pay unemployment. There could be allocations around rural school aid. We could get a relief packet to extend it another seven years.
- Move to old business

C. Superintendent Goals

- Mrs. Smidy said this is the first reading. They were shared in the packet. It includes professional practice goals and a variety of indicators. She welcomes feedback from the committee.
- Mr. Forgue has a request/suggestion and that is to put tier one and tier two in order of importance. His primary concern is the learning gap in learning; he would like to see that as tier one instead of tier two.
- Mrs. Smidy said as a leadership we are figuring out the foundation. It is listed as a second but it is worth addressing.
- Mr. Forgue said Mr. Finnie addressed it at the school council. He has to imagine the gaps are severe, especially this year. Maybe we can normalize and jump back. Even in preschool kids are not coming in with the same level of functioning.

- Move to old business

D. Updated Building Use Policy (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy said there have been some last minute changes made today with the classes.
- Ms. Page said to look at the one Mrs. Smidy sent separately and not the one in the folder. She said youth organizations serving Gateway kids are going to be class A.
- Mrs. Balboni asked if fees apply when people come for tournaments.
- Ms. Page said we want to include all student activities.
- Mrs. Balboni asked are any sports or clubs starting now that us voting next month will hinder.
- Ms. Fisk said the policy already lets the superintendent waive fees. She said the other recommendation is that we move the booster club and Foundation to Class A.
- Ms. Dragon said we also didn't put a lot of stipulations in. We are hoping everyone will act appropriately. We will react to it in the future if need be.
- Mr. Forge said he cut the lock at the advice of the police chief.
- Ms. Fisk said the ambulance now has a key to the gate.
- Mr. Lubbers said let's look toward the future
- Move to old business.

7:45PM VII. CONSENT ITEMS 10/13/2021 (Enc.)

Mrs. Morawiec made a motion seconded by Mr. Renauld to approve the minutes of 10/13/2021.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, David, Keri, Lyndsey, Ed, Sarah

7:50PM VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

B. Chairperson

- Ms. Page said Mike Morrissey and Mike Lafleur will be sworn in shortly and will be joining us as school committee representatives from Montgomery.

C. Superintendent

Central Office Update (Enc.)

Capital Plan

Tour Invitation

- Mrs. Smidy said she sent the superintendent's update to the selectboards last time, so she will continue doing that. There is an invitation to town officials to join us for some

tours of the buildings. Wednesday December 8 and Monday December 6. She asked selectboard and finance please let us know if you will be attending.

- Mrs. Balboni said the next meeting is the joint budget meeting. This is where we start to go through the budget. This is a good one for the elected officials so they are up to date.
- Mrs. Smidy added the draft capital plan. This is something that she wants to put in place. It's a ten year plan but only an estimate for example the roof is in 5 years and it could last 8 years. It is a wish list if we get some more of these grants.
- Mr. Forgue why in year six. We have tried to create a revolving account, under the circumstances, where we have some money coming in. Why wouldn't we try to use that.
- Ms. Fisk said the school payback will end that same year. Focusing ESSAR funds on student achievement and regression. A lot of the things they are targeting we have already done.
- Curriculum software is the new Math program. It is a six year program. We will no longer have the online portion of the program, so we will need to look into it.

D. Assistant Superintendent

FY 22 First Quarter Report (Enc.)

- First quarter update a few staff here and there to replace. Some contract service coming in. New preschool teacher and para. Revenue looks decent. Interest rates have gone down. Transportation was funded at 95% last year hoping to cover some of those costs. Oil had been up since we budgeted, still hasn't locked in because it is so high.
- Mr. Lubbers asked what about putting solar panels on the property.
- Ms. Fisk said look at the roof knowing it is going to have to be replaced. Also looked at the parking lot, and we went with net metering.
- Mrs. Balboni said we invested in a solar field that is not on the property.
- Mr. Forgue asked if we ever received a response from the letter Ms. Smidy sent to our state representatives.
- Ms. Smidy said no.

E. Administration

- Mr. Finnie said that parent teacher conferences are Monday and Tuesday. Middle school is pretty full.
- Mr. Garivaltis said we are moving forward with a 4th preschool program. They are interviewing candidates. One candidate is an existing staff member. We have seen regression with all students. It is apparent in preschool and early childhood.
- Mrs. Coburn said that sharing is a huge issue at that level this year.
- Mrs. LeBlanc talked about the Math program. K-8 staff has been working hard. It is a lot of work and teachers are working incredibly hard to implement this. We also have a consultant coming in to work with him.

F. Town Officials - None

8:05PM IX. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- Addressed under new business action items.

B. Legislative Liaison

- Mr. Renauld thinks all Gateway towns will have the same state representatives in a couple of years.

C. Policy Subcommittee - None

D. Building Liaisons

- Mrs. Balboni said boys soccer is going to the state championships tomorrow night in Gardner.

E. Regional Agreement

- The Regional Agreement Subcommittee met on the 27th to finalize language to vote on the way it stands right now to be sent to DESE for feedback.
- Mrs. Smidy said the two major changes included feedback we had already received regarding membership and makeup of the school committee and weighted vote. There is a full vote perception that needs to be cleared up. We also need to address the alternative assessment language. We can't remove it because we agreed to do the pilot but can make it more clear. FY 23 the pilot will end and in FY 24 a new one could be voted. Montgomery gave updates for 4 B that aligned with the statutory language.
- Mr. Renauld feels like he would also like to read the exact copy.
- Mrs. Smidy said the changes were very minor and went over them, so they were understood by all.
- Mike Morrissey said the document had shall contain and he asked to change it to may contain. Put the language in there.

Mr. Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to approve the regional agreement as written.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, David, Keri, Lyndsey, Ed, Sarah

F. CES Update

- Mr. Lubbers said you can see how many opportunities they have for teaching our teachers to teach our students. They are brilliant and we should take advantage of their services. They have online courses for free. Funded by the state of Massachusetts which he will find out about. Executive, finance and policy. If our teachers want to, they can participate in these. Maybe we can get money from the Barr Foundation.

- Mrs. Smidy said there is language in their contract to enhance their learning.
- Ms. Page said to maintain your license you do have to take professional development. It is nice to have this kind of support.
- Mr. Lubbers had been in contact with the woman who works for the collaborative. She is focusing on special education. He suggested that Mr. Garivaltis meet with her. She is interested in fixing people.
- Mr. Garivaltis said he works with Sherry Smith on a regular basis.
- Mr. Lubbers said it wasn't Sherry

8:25PM X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

8:30PM XI. INFORMATION

Information

Reminder: First Joint Budget Meeting is December 8, 2021

The warrant signing committee had reviewed the following warrants, found them to be in order, and approved them.

Warrant

AP#1029 \$29.81	PR#009 \$402,408.68
AP#1030 \$180,043.05	

8:35PM XII. ADJOURNMENT at 9 p.m. unless extended by majority vote.

Mr. Renauld made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to adjourn at 7:58 p.m.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, David, Keri, Lyndsey, Ed, Sarah

Respectfully submitted,
 Stacy L Stewart
 School Committee Secretary