

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.

JOINT BUDGET/REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2022

Middle School 112/114

7:00 P.M.

7:00PM I. OPENING OF MEETING

Call to order: Sarah Page, Chairperson

BLANDFORD

Terri Garfield
Keri Morawiec

CHESTER

Jeana Briggs
Jason Forgue

HUNTINGTON

David Lubbers
Pegg Dragon
Edward Renauld

MIDDLEFIELD

MONTGOMERY

Michael Lafleur
Michael Morrissey

RUSSELL

Tara Balboni
Sarah Page
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Kristen Smidy, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Business & Finance

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit Principal
Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director
Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director
Darlene Rehor, Elementary Assistant Principal

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Joseph Pisani

OTHERS: Cara Letendre, Ruth Kennedy

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 were excited to still be able to have reindeer games. It ran normally and was an overall success with a feeling of unity with the students and staff. Seniors won
- Connor Hourihan won the dance contest. The music department recorded their concert and it is on the website. He is planning on sending another form out to students. He will ask further information about the hot topics from the first survey; study hall advisory, longer lunches, there are realities. Semi-formal as of right now it might not be the normal February time due to current guidelines. May move it later in the year. High school is in midterm week. Reindeer games really helped with student spirit.

7:15PM

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

7:20PM

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Massachusetts Virtual School Cap-Revisit Discussion

- Mrs. Smidy said she knows the school committee took a vote on this last year. The Department of Ed, there is a state wide 2% cap on students going to virtual schools. Tuition and takes students. 8 students enrolled at the virtual which is over the cap at 1.09. There were two additional students who tried and couldn't get in. But they dropped out. The School Committee could leave it at 1%.or vote to have it at 1.5 or 2%. The virtual schools could admit them but they wouldn't get funding. They have to be over 16 or have parent permission in order to drop out.
- Ms. Dragon 8 students 1.09% They were high school students.
- Mr. Lubbers said students dropping out is not a good thing.
- Mrs. Smidy said this year students have it particularly hard. Students are just getting into their groove.
- Mr. Fergie said they made the decision for a reason and nothing has changed.
- Mrs. Smidy said the dropout rate for virtual schools is over 50% its

B. Regional Agreement Updates

- Mrs. Smidy said there was a working meeting focused on the alternative assessment calculations. We discussed 4 options. One was reviewed and adjusted to be a fair representation of populations and make sure towns shared huge spikes but were responsible for their students. It will include statutory and for alternative a 1.5% increase and anything over that was proportioned evenly between all the towns. She is hopeful this will help alleviate the spikes. She has sent it to DESE for their approval.
- Ms. Fisk said we threw a few options together. 1.5% and we will also run the 2.5% which she is doing now. It is important to take out those spikes. The other piece is looking at the per pupil cost per town and closing that gap. The concept has been sent to DESE.
- Mrs. Smidy said after we hear from DESE we will hold another meeting.

- Mr. Morrissey said the rolling average kind of addressed the spike. We are looking at the length of the rolling average maybe 2 or 3 years. The cap is where we are going to address the disparity from what we have been running into.
- Ms. Fisk said when the state budget comes out, it will be our fifth year of calculations in the pilot.
- Ms. Page said after that meeting she felt positive like we were heading in the right direction.
- Ms. Dragon said the population is the enrolled student numbers.
- Mrs. Smidy said yes, those students that are enrolled.
- Mr. Forgue said in the first instance you're not going to lower the rolling average mathematically. Raising the cap jumping to a 2.5% increase when the school represents a 60% of their town budget. A 2.5% target the towns will have a harder time then what you originally proposed.
- Mr. Morrissey the 2.5% isn't actually the increase.. When you add 1.8 % and 1.5% you are already going beyond the 2.5. It's what you go on beyond the increase.

7:35PM VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. 2022 Senior Class Trip

- Mrs. Smidy said they have decided to stay in state and do a day trip to the Great Wolf Lodge. She is supporting it. It is a team building experience. It doesn't need school committee approval as it is under 150 miles.

B. Grant Approval

- Mrs. Smidy said Mrs. LeBlanc just applied for it for the accelerating literacy learning grant. It is to purchase English materials, pay teacher stipends to choose the curriculum and programmatic professional development.
- Move to old business for a vote at the next meeting.
- DPH workforce grant for \$79,000 was brought up at the last meeting and is being used to hire a resource nurse,

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the DPH Workforce Grant.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Mike M., Ed, Sarah

Recuse: Lyndsey

- Ruth Kenedy when you get this grant and hire someone, is it only for two years.
- Mrs. Smidy said new hires are considered non-professional status in the first three years. We made it clear it is a two year position and after that it will be cut.

7:40PM VII. JOINT BUDGET SESSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS

A. FY '23 Budget

a. Department/School Level Overview

- Mrs. LeBlanc gave an update on curriculum.
- Mr. Lubbers asked where the money comes from.
- Mrs. LeBlanc said they have done a lot of work finding grants.
- Mrs. Smidy said we have used rural aid for purchases. This allows us to add the instructional materials without adding it to the budget.
- Mrs. Coburn gave an overview of the elementary budget went over how they chose the current math program. We added an additional preschool, we added an adjustment counselor, and a reading specialist.

8:05PM VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 12/8/2021 (Enc.)

Mr. Forgue made a motion seconded by Ms. Dragon to approve the minutes from 12/8/2021.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Mike M., Lyndsey, Ed, Sarah

8:10PM IX. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee - None

B. Chairperson

- Ms. Page said we need an executive session at or before 8:10 p.m. for the purpose of union negotiations secretary contract. We will not be returning to open session.

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to go into executive session at or before 8:10 p.m. for the purpose of Union Negotiations - Secretaries not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Mike M., Lyndsey, Ed, Sarah

- Ms. Page said it is time for the School Committee Yearbook to collect money for their yearbook ad. We run a full page ad for \$180 which works out to \$15.00 per person. People can pay Ms. Page via, cash, check (payable to: GRHS Yearbook), or Venmo.

C. Superintendent

Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy said she added the central office update yesterday, mask mandates have been extended through February and there are new covid updates. Despite covid staff and students are moving forward. She added a SkillsUSA field trip that the Early Education Care students want to participate in. That will be on the next agenda.

D. Assistant Superintendent

- Ms. Fisk said the 2nd quarter report will be in the next packet. The budget is being worked on. The first state budget will be out on the 26th.
- Mr. Forgue asked if there were any indications what it would be.
- Ms Fisk said foundation is up 4.5%. The Governor could increase that if he wanted to. It's been pretty quiet. Revenue on the state side is good. We are trying to keep it to about 2%.

E. Administration - None

F. Town Officials - None

Mr. Renauld Mrs. Briggs left at 8:00 p.m.

- Mr. Lafleur asked about the sign out front and why it isn't being used. Wendy Long's interns used to do it. It just needs to be reassigned.

8:25PM X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- Mrs. Garfield said the entry plan is moving forward and there was some discussion on the next steps. Next meeting is prior to March 9, 2022. The superintendent evaluation will be much less cumbersome, and more clear and straightforward.

B. Legislative Liaison - None

C. Policy Subcommittee

- The next policy meeting is before the January 26th meeting.

D. Building Liaisons - None

E. CES Update

- Mr. Lubbers met with Executive Director Todd Gazda and Deputy Director Karen Ruter. He has been pushing their professional development and they are expensive - they don't make any money on them. How can we get our teachers at Gateway to take the courses for less money. Mr. Gazda referred him to one of their directors of development - she is a wiz at saving money. He is going to back off - teachers are over stressed. CES has over 800 employees. They have the biggest budget at 35 million. They employ the smartest and the best. DESE had made it clear that Kurt has it under control - tired support on findings.

8:30PM XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

1. Ratify secretary contract
2. Bring School Calendar to the next meeting - January
3. High School Budget presentation

8:35PM XII. INFORMATION
Information

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

Warrant

AP#1047 \$35.55	PR#013 \$411,405.08
AP#1046 \$134,343.57	PR#014 \$409,827.14
AP#1049 \$175,378.84	

8:40PM XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Union Negotiations - Secretaries

Entered executive session at 8:10 p.m.

Mr. Morrissey left the meeting

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to go into executive session at or before 8:10 p.m. for the purpose of Union Negotiations - Secretaries not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Mike M., Lyndsey, Ed, Sarah

8:45PM XIII. ADJOURNMENT at 9 p.m. unless extended by majority vote.

Mrs. Garfield made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to adjourn at 8:12 p.m.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain Absent 3 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Lyndsey, Sarah

Absent: Jeana, Ed, Mike M.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy L. Stewart
School Committee Secretary.