

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.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2020

Via Zoom

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72966983016?pwd=MkFjRlBmTGw1QUxJa1RHTEhnY1E3QT09>

Meeting ID: 729 6698 3016

Passcode: dTu2w8

7:00 P.M.

(A PORTION OF THIS MEETING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION)

I. OPENING OF MEETING

<u>BLANDFORD</u>	<u>CHESTER</u>	<u>HUNTINGTON</u>	<u>MIDDLEFIELD</u>
Michele Crane	Jason Forgue	David Lubbers	Sarah Foley
Terri Garfield	Martha Otterbeck	Edward Renauld	

<u>MONTGOMERY</u>	<u>RUSSELL</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>
	Tara Balboni	Stacy Stewart
	Sarah Page	
	Lyndsey Papillon	

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION
 Dr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent
 Stephanie Fisk, Business & Finance

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

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
 Jeanne LeClair, Communications
 Darlene Rehor, Elementary Assistant Principal

OTHERS: Ruth Harper, Ramonda Thieme, Theresa Brownlee, Amy Thornton, Hannah Sullivan, Jodi Cabral -Croke, Val Zeh, Andy Myers, Denae Dostal, Kathy Gallagher, Kim Sakaske, James Duggan, Lynn Russell, Cathy Servaes, Cara Letendre, Bob Daley, Peter Spots, Linda Hyjek, Jenna Kakimoto, Kristin Henrichon, Chris Tamburrino, Melissa McCaul, Kristina Cortis, Susan Lebarron, Bill Brown, Cheryl Wright, Jodi Fairman, Laura Macklin, Susan Addis, Joe Hough, Sara McNamara, Val Zeh,

- Mrs. Crane opened the meeting after everyone signed the disclosure. She welcomed the new members and asked them to introduce themselves and talk about why they wanted to join the committee.
- Mr. Renauld from Huntington, was impressed by Mrs. McVeigh for serving on both in Huntington and as a Huntington school committee member and thought he would try it.
- David Lubbers, also from Huntington, said his daughter went to a school that she was not so impressed with. He wanted to help because school and education is very important for kids

7:05 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit) - None

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brian Fogue has a good friend who is a senior on the cross country team. He would like to know if we are going to have a team. Students want fall sports to happen. The state has said it is safe enough. He would like to talk about how to make that happen.
- Mrs. Crane said that is an agenda item later on tonight.

IV. REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE

A. Chairperson

Mrs. Garfield made a motion seconded seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to nominate Mrs. Crane as Chair

No other nominations. Mrs. Crane accepted

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, David, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Ed, Michele

B. Vice-Chairperson

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to Nominate Mrs. Otterbeck as Vice Chair.

No other Nominations. Mrs. Otterbeck accepted.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, David, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Ed, Michele

C. Secretary (Stacy Stewart)

D. District Treasurer (Deborah Kuhn)

F. Counsel for the Committee (Dupere Law Office)

G. Negotiator for the Committee (Dupere Law Office)

- Mrs. Crane asked if we could take the Secretary, District Treasurer, Counsel for the Committee and Negotiator for the committee as one vote.
- There were no objections.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to approve the Secretary, District Treasurer, Counsel for the Committee and Negotiator for the committee.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, David, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Ed, Michele

E. Legislative Contact

- Mrs. Papillon is willing to take on the role of legislative contact.

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield that Mrs. Papillon be the legislative contact.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, David, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Ed, Michele

H. Sick Bank Committee - Mrs. Crane, Mrs. Balboni, Mrs. Foley

I. Negotiations Committee - Mr. Forge, Mrs. Crane, and we will check with Mrs. Nazzaro and Mrs. Austin.

J. Superintendent's Evaluation/Search Committee - Mrs. Crane, Mrs. Balboni, Mrs. Garfield, Mrs. Page, Mr. Fogue and Mrs. Papillon.

K. Policy Committee - Mrs. Crane, Mrs. Papillon, Mrs. Foley, Mrs. Garfield, Mr. Renauld

L. Warrant Signing Committee - Mrs. Crane, Mrs. Balboni, Mr. Fogue, Mrs. Foley, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mrs. Otterbeck.

M. Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) Representative

- Mrs. Crane said meetings are virtual so that should help. She will check with Mrs. Nazzaro

- Mrs. Crane will send an email reminding people of liaison slots and include the list in the next packet.
- Mrs. Foley has volunteered to be on the Gateway Education Foundation.

V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS - None

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. School Reopening Plan Approval

- Dr. Hopson went over in person, hybrid and fully remote depending on the status of covid. We worked with the association to come up with an agreement to move to the hybrid model and we will continue to move forward. We may need to go to all remote if there are increases in covid or we may be back in school if the restrictions are lifted by the Governor.
- Mrs. Crane asked Dr. Hopson to talk about the evaluation process between the District and the GEA.
- Dr. Hopson said the GEA and school committee negotiations came up with two points for evaluating. The average of our communities plus contiguous communities must be less than 5% every week. The other is the new state rating of red, yellow, green or white. If the average is red we would move to remote. The state has come up with guidelines for regional schools. They take the town with the highest population. You would use the average of that town. The superintendent would have the authorization to make decisions if numbers go up. He said we need to vote on the plan as submitted.
- Mrs. Foley said determination is decided by the average of communities, plus contagious communities and the state has us using Huntington with the red, yellow, green, and white guidelines.
- Dr. Hopson said it is what is in the plan. Only that it is safe to move forward . as we progress , only if we hit that level as long as we remain covid safe.
- Mr. Renauld asked if bussing was part of the plan.
- Dr. Hopson said based upon DESE recommendations a 72 passenger bus allows us a small number of students on the bus at a 3 foot distance.
- Ms. Fisk said a 77 passenger bus holds 23 and a 71 holds around 20 and goes down from there.
- Dr. Hopson said that is the biggest challenge.
- Mr. Renauld asked why it was pushed out to a 2 mile radius. Parts within the 2 miles are without sidewalks. Especially in the winter. If we had to hire another bus is that possible.
- Ms. Fisk said reimbursement is up to a mile and a half. DESE's recommendation is 2 miles.
- Mr. Renauld said as businesses start to open two people are working not everyone will be able to get their kids to school. The state does not even do a good job keeping the sidewalks clear. If we could find a way to keep the status quo it would be worth looking into.
- Mr. Lubbers is concerned it is going to cost a lot of money for PPE's and learning equipment. He would be happy to do anything to help with cleaning.

- Ms. Fisk said MEMA has made money available through filing for PPE and cleaning supplies. There is a grant for \$190,000 that is specific to covid expenses and there should be another. There is also a remote learning technology grant to help with hotspots, for students, remote learning software, and chromebooks.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to approve the reopening Plan as submitted.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, David, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Ed, Michele

B. Vaccination Requirements

- Dr. Hopson said December 31 is the deadline for all students to receive the flu shot. There are still exemptions. The state has come up with the requirement but leaves it up to school to track it. Which students have the vaccination and which students have an exemption.
- Mrs. Papillon said in the past they have offered flu shots at the school based health center, are they still doing that.
- Dr. Hopson would think because the school based health center will be open he would assume they would.
- Brian Fogue if the state put guidelines in place if a parent didn't want or won't have their child get the vaccination and they are not under the exemption, what is the process for going back to school
- Dr. Hopson said it is a good question. There has been no guidance from the state.
- Mrs. Otterbeck has heard that as well, what is our responsibility as a school district.
- Dr. Hopson would think the state would come up with something.

C. Revised School Calendar Approval

- Dr. Hopson said our school calendar had teachers coming back for tomorrow, but the state offered 10 days of inservice. The first 5 are professional development, then the traditional opening day and classroom prep, and then 5 days for teachers to hone their skills on remote learning and then five days of remote learning.

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to approve the revised school calendar.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, David, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Ed, Michele

VII. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy

- Ms. Fisk said this is a piece of the green community grant. This is the first piece. Our vehicles are over the weight so they are exempt, but in the future we may have to follow them.
- Move to old business for the next meeting.

B. Athletics

- Dr. Hopson said that there is the potential to have Gateway Fall Athletics under MIAA and DESE and we would do this under their recommendations even if we go fully remote as long it is not due to COVID.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Garfield to waive the two-meeting rule to vote on fall athletics for the 2020-2021 school year.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, David, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Ed, Michele

Mrs. Garfield made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve the Gateway Fall Athletics season including under fully remote as long as it is not covid related under DESE, MIAA regulations/guidance and local board of health guidelines.

- Mrs. Papillon asked what fully remote as long it is not covid related means.
- Dr. Hopson said it's if we don't have enough teachers.
- Mr. Forgue said Melissa Reod had asked for us to include her in our regulations.
- Mrs. Foley said MIAA has made recommendations to modify sports. For us it is cross country and soccer. How does that look for players and will there be people in the stands?
- Mr. Bonenfant said It is being addressed tomorrow by the president and executive director at MIAA and we should hear September 1. There is a 50 spectator limit for outdoor not inclusive of players staff and officials. We have thoughts. Maybe no spectators until we see how things go. Players will have to adhere to rules as far as wearing a mask.
- Mrs. Garfield heard of some of the MIAA rule changes. It just seems dramatic. How many schools are participating at this time. It is up to the school and school committee. Do we have any idea of the schedule and how it will work.
- Mr. Bonenfant said he has heard directly from Easthampton. Lots of school committees are meeting later this week and next week. He should have more information next week. The MIAA cannot start until September 18. Games would start October 1 and end November 20 with no state tournament. Schedule has not been devised yet. PVIAC has created a document using cohorts of schools. Franklin county will only play Franklin county.
- Mrs. Foley asked if he was able to comment on schools not playing.

- Mr. Bonenfant said only had a conversion with one person and would rather not say yet. No one yet officially.
- Mrs. Garfield has concerns about sports teams and the need for sports to play this fall. There has been such work in making the academic area safe so kids can return and stay in school. She is concerned about the small group and the risk level. Soccer is such a contact sport. It is going to be impossible to keep these kids apart. It is a concern that this is where the outbreak may be. We cannot control what people do after school, but this is school sanctioned.
- Mr. Forgue said he runs the youth programs. They are going to have 3 times as many kids as the school will. When you talk about a small group it is 30% of the population. It will be pretty diverse. They are increasing the potential, but the benefits outweigh the potential.
- Mrs. Balboni agrees with Mr. Forgue. She doesn't want anyone to be at risk but the whole child with sports is just as important. Sports have been open, camps have been open in cohorts and there have not been outbreaks. It is risky, but there haven't been any outbreaks. There is a difference between inside and outside. In our state people are being relatively sensible.
- Mrs. Papillon agrees with Mrs. Garfield and understands where Mrs. Balboni and Mr. Forgue are coming from. In her heart she wants them to have opportunities to grow and in her head, she spent her July planning like many. If you are having cohorts in school and then mixing them in sports why have them. She cannot do her job because you cannot mix cohorts, but they can for sports.
- Mr. Lubbers said we need to be creative, can we put it on students to create their own sport where they stay away from each other. Inventiveness is important for education.
- Brian Forgue understands Mr. Papillon and Mrs. Garfield's concerns. Any student activities where they are meeting is a risk of covid and the students understand covid is dangerous yet they still want to overwhelmingly do this. They want to have the comradery of the teams. A sense of normalcy. Every student is going to take this seriously. We should take the precautions but students need to play fall sports.
- Trish Carpenter agrees with Mr. Forgue. Students are going to find alternative places to play to continue. If you don't have sports you are also talking about losing scholarships for children because no one sees them.
- Mrs. Dostal coaches girls cross country. She agrees they cannot control students all the time, as a coach she can be there to monitor masks and social distancing she is worried they are starved for socialness. This is a good thing. If you don't give them the opportunity they will find other ways to congregate.
- Linda Hyjek agrees with Mrs. Dostal. So many of those kids students in Cohorts A & B live in two different areas and houses. She is speaking as a parent and a teacher. The kids need it.
- Kristen Henrichon has 1one student at Gateway who is looking forward to cross county. We've all made concessions since it all started. We are taking precautions. As long as we are adhering to the guidelines by DESE and MIAA we should approve this program.
- Mr. Forgue believes all the guidelines will be similar to wearing masks, etc. This is going to be a creative version of soccer with the guidelines. The guidelines are there for

a reason. It was said earlier we will have bus limitations earlier, how are we going to set these up. Is it varsity and JV or only varsity? It Needs to get out to families early.

- Mr. Bonenfant said yes there are limitations on the bus. Lecreanski will transport us. We will be stuck with what the state says. 24 with a coach on a 77 passenger bus. Guideline of no more than 25 on the playing surface. We might have to look at other ways to keep them engaged in the program if they cannot travel. We want to stay equitable. Parents who can drive vs those who can't, boys versus girls. Parents will have to transport students to the facility to get them on a bus at school to get them to an event.
- Mr. Forgue said the 25 only includes those who are rostered for the team. If they are not on the roster, they are counted as spectators not players.
- Mr. Bonenfant said that is correct. Has opened up sign ups again with a September 4 deadline. People who want to play need to sign up.
- Mr. Otterbeck said we need parents to buy in and help follow the rules as well. We are asking adolescents to make good decisions consistently and follow rules.
- Mrs. Garfield asked if there are protocols for before and after games where they are exposed to other kids.
- Mr. Bonenfant said the state has put a lot of protocols in place to help with this. He hopes protocols similar to as if kids are going to school, no hand shakes, etc.
- Kristina Cortis said we are in unprecedented times right now, we do have an unprecedented number of seniors on the boys soccer team this year.

Mrs. Garfield made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve the Gateway Fall Athletics season including under fully remote as long as it is not covid related under DESE, MIAA regulations/guidance and local board of health guidelines.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, David, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Ed, Michele

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to go into executive session at 8:32 p.m. for the purposes of GEA - MOA negotiations to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, David, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Ed, Michele

Went into executive session at 8:32 p.m.

Adjourn to public session 8:48 p.m

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to approve the MOA with the GEA.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, David, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Ed, Michele

VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 6/24/2020 (Enc.)

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the minutes of 6/24/2020.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 2 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sara F., Jason, Terri, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Michele

Abstain: David, Ed.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mrs. Foley had a meeting with her selectboard to share what our reopening plan was. They have a question about testing for staff and students. She didn't believe any testing was being done.
- Dr. Hopson said they opened up emergency testing for those areas with large breakouts. But we are not having anything at school.

B. Chairperson

- Mrs. Crane thanked everyone for their work over the summer, school committee, staff, and volunteers.

C. Superintendent - None

Central Office Update (Enc.)

D. Business Manager - None

E. Administration

- Mr. Finnie seconded what Mrs. Crane said. It was helpful having others involved in the planning.

F. Town

- Kristina Corits asked about the mandatory flu shot for students - is everyone in the building included, staff too.
- Dr. Hopson said unfortunately the state and DESE did not recommend anyone but students.
- Kristina Cortis said that isn't logical.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation/Search - 9/9/2020 via zoom at 6:00 p.m.

B. Legislative Liaison - None

C. Policy Subcommittee

- Dr. Hopson will put together a few policy dates and send them out to the new policy committee.

D. Building Liaisons - Will address at the next meeting.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XII. INFORMATION

Information

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

Warrant

AP#1089 \$212,877.61	PR#03 \$95,273.81
AP#1090 \$35,182.39	PR#04 \$100,801.09
AP#1001 \$44,302.08	
AP#1092 \$19,168.61	
AP#1004 \$152,681.77	
AP#1010 \$81,554.29	

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. GEA MOA Negotiations

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to go into executive session at 8:32 p.m. for the purposes of GEA MOA negotiations to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, David, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Ed, Michele

XIX. ADJOURNMENT at 9 p.m. unless extended by majority vote.

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to adjourn at 8:56 p.m.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, David, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Ed, Michele

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy L Stewart,
School Committee Secretary