

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/JOINT BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2020

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77784727054?pwd=dWhzWTl6SkwyK0p3TndSY253blg3dz09>

Meeting ID: 777 8472 7054

Passcode: WTKP2x

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	Melissa Nazzaro	
		Edward Renauld	

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

<u>CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION</u>	<u>ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL</u>
Dr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent	Martha Clark, High/Middle AP
Stephanie Fisk, Asst. Superintendent	Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit Principal
	Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal
<u>STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES</u>	Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director
Brian Forgue	Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director

OTHERS: Andy Myers, Nick Balboni, Matt Bonenfant, Amy Porter, Shelbi Macri, Jim Duggan

- Mrs. Crane opened the meeting after everyone agreed to the disclosure statement.

II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit) - None

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brian Forgue said in-person learning has continued. The most that he has noticed is that students have taken advantage of not having to come in. They are still doing classwork and participating in discussions. Major news is that student council elections were held a couple of weeks ago. Fundraisers are starting. There are still vacancies in student council for the freshmen and sophomores. He should be bringing a sophomore or freshman to the next meeting to continue after he graduates.
- Mr. Lubbers has a couple things to say regarding the harassment statement when it comes up on the agenda.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITION - None

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Superintendent's Search Parameters

- a. Job Descriptions
 - b. Posting Brochure
 - c. Timeline
- Dr. Hopson said the school committee needs to vote to hire a full time superintendent under the job description.
 - Mr. Forgue said we are ready to post and receive job candidates.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the job description for the superintendent on a full-time basis.

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

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

B. Student Input on Harassment Statement

- We shared the changes that the students wanted to make.
- Dr. Hopson was able to incorporate the first part of the recommendations to Parker and Brian's suggestions. He is waiting to see what they want before he sends it to legal counsel as it is an hourly rate.
- Brian Forgue said he did receive what Dr. Hopson incorporated.
- Dr. Hopson said they changed the definition, and then asked how the bullying piece gets put in.
- Brian Forgue said when they originally drafted the changes they thought just below the bullying plan it could state that the policies for harassment are in the handbook. To make sure they are sent through the proper channels.

- Dr. Hopson said if Brian and Parker can just take a look at it he can get it to the legal council prior to the break.
- Brian Forgue said the student union is meeting tomorrow at 3:00 p.m. as well.
- Mr. Lubbers shared it with a bunch of people and most are in the gay community. One of them suggests changing intentional to impactful. The forth paragraph where it states prostitutes it should say or sex workers or females perceived as sexually active.
- Brian Forgue said that is just some explanation wording to describe the policy in layman's terms. Prostitute is not going to be in the general policy.
- Mr. Lubbers said his friend is extremely smart and it was important to her.
- Mrs. Crane said we will be talking about this again at the next meeting.
- Mr. Finnie said PBIS encourages positive behaviors, it doesn't take away from positive behaviors.

VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Winter Athletics

- Dr. Hopson said Mr. Bonenfant has put together a proposal for Basketball. We met with the board of health this week and have blessed it. The recommendations give us options to stop sports, not play if we are in the red, and not play until the 18th. The governor's recommendation may impact winter sports and we will only play varsity sports at this point. The first practice won't be until the 4th. If everyone is comfortable with the recommendations, we will need to vote on it.
- Mr. Bonenfant said soon there will be new guidelines. It may call for increased deliberate contact modification. To clarify, wrestling was moved to the spring season by MIAA.
- Mrs. Foley asked what happened to the ski team. We polled the three returning parents. We were going to be the guest schools. One parent responded and said they wouldn't abide by the guidelines. There won't be a ski team this year.
- Mr. Lubbers said we need to air on the side of caution two people die every minute.
- Dr. Hopson agrees with Mr. Bonenfant's parameters. We have had 8 student cases although none of them were exposed in school or showed symptoms when in school. A small number of cases start in school. Mr. Bonenfant has restricted the number of spectators. We can always pull back and if we had an outbreak or had to close it would be cancelled. Overall it would be a positive thing offered at Gateway.
- Mr. Bonenfant said with the rollback to level 1 down we were down to 25 players on a playing field, 1 spectator per player who is under 21 years old. Home spectators only if they are allowing spectators.
- Mrs. Balboni said both her sons play basketball. Is it worth the risk to have 4 games against 2 cohorts. It is short and weird. Soccer was something else, but not quite basketball.
- Mrs. Crane asked if there would be a benefit to allow the kids to practice.
- Mr. Bonenfant said that practice gives them something, but we don't know the answers or what the modifications are going to look like. If we decide not to allow basketball and it is not that bad then we lose out. The season goes to February 21.
- Mrs. Foley said we have been through one season, were there a significant number of players who didn't play because of covid.

- Mr. Bonenfant said we had one cross country player that he knew about.
- Mrs. Foley asked if Mr. Bonenfant would feel comfortable having his child play under the modifications
- Mr. Bonenfant said we had a situation with girls soccer where we had a parent of an opposing player who tested positive. We knew within 24 hours and we postponed the game to make sure it didn't spread.
- Mr. Lubbers said he played football in high school. He knows how much athletics means to students. He thinks Mr. Bonenfant has it down pat and wishes well.
- Mr. Forgue said he is a little nervous as to how this is going to be set up only having varsity teams. From what he sees in the notes we only see varsity, which is unfortunate for kids not ready to play at that level. It is a weird game situation and it's going to get weirder as we move forward in phase 1. He would want to hear up front, do you intend to only have varsity and at what capacity.
- Dr. Hopson said it was his and Ms. Fisk's recommendation they only have enough for varsity, but it means there is less than 15 and there is an equity issue for boys and girls. You could end up with a mixed gender team.
- Mr. Bonenfant said it is a max of 15 for either varsity or junior varsity. He would recommend adding junior varsity if the numbers increased, but many schools would not allow a separate team in the gym and neither would we. They are minimizing the exposure.
- Mr. Forgue asked how many people opted out due to there only being a varsity team. We all know there were a number of sign-ups after the soccer deadline.
- Mr. Bonenfant said directly he received only one email, he thinks there were a handful.
- Mr. Lubbers said when he joined the committee he said we needed to rethink everything. He suggested changing the rules of sports. Basketball was founded in Springfield. We need to change the rules so every kid can participate. He is an idea person, but someone else needs to figure it out.
- Mr. Renauld said we have to give an opportunity to these kids. The parents of these kids can make a responsible decision. The staff can make it as safe as possible. Some of these kids who are seniors, it could be their last chance to play competitive sports if their parents are willing to take the risk, and we keep them safe. There is an acceptable risk and it is up to the parents.
- Mrs. Papillon said she had a hard time with the soccer vote. Soccer was an outdoor sport played with your feet. Basketball is an inside sport with a ball using your hands. She doesn't high five her students. So we don't shake hands and we are going to pass a ball to 4 plus people. When someone contracts the virus sometimes it is too late that is the nature of the beast. For parents to make an informed decision, they have to rely on other people's decisions and due diligence. You are at the mercy of other people.
- Mr. Forgue said we would have continued trends but the vaccine talks are positive. Basketball is different from soccer. There is more intimate contact. He took a hard look at the rules and documents sent to him. The basketball is switched out quarterly, participants and spectators are limited, and their responsiveness is great. Varsity only is good but we should be prepared to stop it.

- Mrs. Garfield agrees with Lyndsey, soccer is a different beast, but having said that, she thinks that basketball should go on guarded with as much protocol as possible, fewer team members. This is for the students, it is necessary for their physiological health. This is their last year, they need to get on the court, they are too physical and the transmission is much lower in kids. She is sure Mr. Bonenfant will make parents understand the risk, but there is a lot of benefit. She has been in school in a regular setting and they have had zero cases. They are playing intramural sports one team at a time. Kids are just happier.

Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to suspend the two-meeting rule to vote on Winter Athletics.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

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

Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to allow Varsity Basketball under the guidelines outlined including that administration retains the right to cancel if needed.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays 1 Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Terri, David, Melissa, Sara P., Lyndsey, Martha, Michele
Nays: Jason
Absent: Ed

VII. JOINT BUDGET SESSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS

A. State of the District

- The state of the district was included in the packet.
- Ms. Fisk provided a synopsis of the district for new and veteran members. The last few years we've also had our SBA debt which will be washed away shortly. This is an apples to apples comparison as there aren't any school choice or charter figures.
- Andy Myers asked when those figures will be out.
- Ms. Fisk said we go by the March figures for the budget but should have preliminary figures at the end of January. Minimum contribution will also come the end of January
- Dr. Hopson said those can change as it is based on the governor's budget.
- Ms. Fisk said we are still waiting for the FY '21 budget to be signed. She will be using Cleargov to post the budget again.
- Andy Myers asked if we have a target for the budget.
- Ms. Fisk said we would like to keep it at the 2% mark again.
- Andy Myers said one of the biggest decreases was in preschool. Are we planning to have them all back in the fall?

- Ms. Fisk said yes. We limited the numbers due to social distancing. There are no role models this year.
- Andy Myers said it looks like we had an increase in incoming school choice.
- David Lubbers said he looked at ratings for Gateway in the commonwealth and we are sort of in the middle. It is not great and it could be better. If you want to improve, we need to ask people what they think about the school and if there is any way that we can improve.
- Dr. Hopson said it only factors in MCAS scores. It doesn't factor in sports or the whole child. We have done a lot with beefing up ELA and literacy, we have a curriculum director and are bringing more resources. There are a lot of irons and things ongoing. It is interesting we were much better off because of assistance from the state. Then you go without assistance and your standings change. We're almost back to assistance again until they determine we don't need it.
- Mr. Lubbers said local businesses flourish when you have a great school system.
- Jason Forge asked how are town allocations.
- Dr. Hopson said there is no difference between remote and hybrid. Homeschool students are not part of the factor.
- Ms. Fisk said there are 33 new home school students this year.

VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 11/18/2020 (Enc.)

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the minutes of 11/18/2020.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 1 Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

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

Abstain: Melissa

Absent: Ed

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to go into executive session for the purpose of Negotiations; Union and Non Union at or before 8:30 p.m. not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

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

Absent: ED

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mrs. Nazarro attended the Collaborative meeting. The main purpose of the meeting was to go over opportunities they offer and to go through the end of the year audit. They

voted on the annual report. Goals are Instructional leadership/student Learning, Meeting member district needs/promote CES programs and services, ensure stability and growth during uncertain times and develop new multi year strategic plan. Gateway and Worthington were only new schools. There was a very interesting presentation from migrant organizations.

- Mrs. Crane asked if she could share her notes and we can send them to the committee. The annual report was about 75 pages. She may cut and paste the highlights.
- Mrs. Foley asked if Middlefield turned in their assessment.
- Ms. Fisk said no they did not.

B. Chairperson

- Mrs. Crane has had three people have paid for the yearbook ad.

C. Superintendent - None

Central Office Update (Enc.)

D. Business Manager

- Ms. Fisk gave a shout out to the Huntington Board of Health. They have been fantastic working with us and going to bat for us, especially Melissa Reid.

E. Administration - None

F. Town - None

Went into Executive session at 8:20 p.m.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

- A. Superintendent Search –Next Meeting 1/27/2021 via Zoom
- B. Legislative Liaison - None
- C. Policy Subcommittee - None
- D. Building Liaisons - None

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#1035 \$149,106.93	PR#11 \$371,809.39
AP#1038 \$155,309.02	PR#12 \$362,109.16
AP#1041 \$15.29	

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

8:35 or earlier

A. Negotiations - Union (GEA), and Non-Union

XIV. ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to adjourn at 8:25 p.m.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

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

Absent: ED