

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

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2021

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73739693923?pwd=OG5zeFh1YnE4WmRVSW5ieTd3SmZFdz09>

Meeting ID: 737 3969 3923

Passcode: Ha13b9

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 Fogue	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	

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

OTHERS: Andy Myers, Jim Duggan, Daniel Mckellick

Mrs. Crane opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. after everyone checked the disclosure form.

II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit)

- Daniel McKellick has an athletics concern. The hockey program is tied to our basketball program and whether those students are playing. Students are responsible to pay the hockey fee if Southwick actually takes to the ice. He is concerned Gateway students will have to pay and not not be able to play.
- Dr. Hopson asked how much money is paid per kid.
- Daniel McKellick said last year's ice bill was \$1,500 and he has two. The season is definitely going to be shorter. Southwick is taking safety precautions and doing it right. He is hoping that if they open it up and actually take to the ice, that our students aren't excluded and that he only gets a 1/12 bill.
- Mr. Forgue thought it was contingent on what Southwick is doing.
- Dr. Hopson said it depends on if we are remote or in person. He would have to check with them about moving fall sports into the second fall season which is in the end of february or early march. If they can't play for a couple weeks the season is essentially over. Dr. Hopson will check on the ice fees and potentially moving the season.

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brian Forgue said the second quarter and first semester wraps up this week and we are still fully remote. Numbers are coming down so he hopes we will be back in school soon. He has heard from his dad that Mr. Finnie is looking to see what clubs could be formed next year that don't exist yet. It is not the same online. If students want a club they will create one themselves. Remote learning has made it a complicated and interesting school year. Students seem to be doing fine and making due.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITION - None

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of Additional FY '21 Grants

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to approve the additional FY 21 grants.

- Mr. Lubbers asked why would anyone want to not approve a grant.
- Dr. Hopson said sometimes there are grants that have nothing to do with what we are doing to move the district forward. We wouldn't ever show you a grant we didn't want.

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to approve the additional FY 21 grants.

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

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

B. Recommendation to restrict enrollment to not exceed 1% to Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools.

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to restrict enrollment to 1% to Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools.

- Mrs. Nazzaro asked for a synopsis as she was not able to attend the last meeting.
- Dr. Hopson said the state has given school districts the option to limit enrollment to Massachusetts virtual schools to 1%. Currently, we have 1.3% of our students attending. We don't have to keep track. The virtual school and the state does. This does not stop us from allowing students to take virtual classes.

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to restrict enrollment to 1% to Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools.

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

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS - None

VII. JOINT BUDGET SESSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS

A. Questions on Preliminary FY '22 Budget

- Ms. Fisk has put together a chart on the census. You can see where they were from March 1, 2020 to now. Of course they will change by March 1, 2021. The preliminary numbers came out today with an additional \$30 per student. Regional transportation is about \$20,000 less. Charter was what we anticipated budgeting. Minimum contribution has a twist. There is a new pot of money SR2. The towns that have an increase may be able to apply their proportionate share to the 75%. Two towns have an increase. There are some pretty big swings. A 19% decrease to 11.5 increase even though the average is 1.8%. The rural school aid part of that is holding right now. It is about half as much as we would receive this year. It is nice to have that hold.
- Mrs. Nazzaro said if that maintains does apply to Gateway. Towns with an increase will essentially be held harmless of their proportionate share.
- Ms. Fisk said \$541,000 for Covid related services, PPE, etc. 74% is about \$406,000. That town could get a portion of their minimum contribution. The problem with the twist is if we've gone through the budget process and they change minimum contribution. In her opinion if they are going to go with this they need to stick with it.
- Mr. Renauld was looking over stuff and based on the information on the Cleargov expenditures and estimated funding, Huntington is going up 12%. They are going to 3.3 million.
- Ms. Fisk said your minimum is only a portion of your assessment.
- Mr. Renauld said it's looking like just under 2 to 3.3% and that is a \$360,000 increase for them.
- Ms. Fisk has them at a 1.4 increase.

- Mr. Renauld is looking at cleargov.
- Ms. Fisk said your minimum had gone down by \$50,000 and your census has gone down almost 8%, so you would have a drop in every category.
- Mr. Renauld said they are still going up with the drop. They had to spend \$165,000 out of stabilization to pay for the school budget. Just to break even they still have to come up with the \$165,000 and the money is just not there. Huntington is not the only town that has these issues. He has talked to Natalie Blais and has a call to Senator Hinds' office. They are doing some studies on declining enrollment. He isn't saying they won't be able to afford it this year or next year, but it is not sustainable. They are not growing, there is no population increase.
- Mrs. Nazzaro said part of the reason they wanted to go with the universal assessment was so towns could afford it.
- Mr. Renauld said Huntington had the most growth this year, but it isn't going to put a dent in it. He supports education and he loves this school and he is happy his kids go there. It gets harder every year.
- Mr. Forgue is interested to see what Montgomery thinks with the second year of an increase. It might be another opportunity to say this is what we tried to do and why.
- Mr. Renauld agrees if it benefits Montgomery they will probably sign on. The first year Huntington was going to benefit the least and they voted it anyway.
- Andy Myers asked if the minimum contribution is available.
- Ms. Fisk said it is on the DESE website
- Andy Myers said it might be good to see the assessments by town based on the January census.
- Ms. Fisk said it was good that Chester approved the high amount and banked the money for the next year.
- Andy Myers said yes, they set up a stabilization education fund.
- Mr. Forgue asked if some of the new covid relief package money goes toward public schools and how would we account for that additional money.
- Dr. Hopson said the leadership team is working on that now You can't supplant. There are a lot of things we know and we are deficient in areas because we have been remote -both regular and special education students, social emotional needs . We could hold after school busing to catch kids up, or extend summer programs, etc. The money can't be used to offset assessments. One of the options was pool testing, however it doesn't allow us to bring kids back in sooner, we will make it official that we will not be engaging in pool testing.
- Brian Forgue asked where it is written that you need to have a unanimous vote for the alternative method.
- Ms. Fisk said it is part of the regional agreement and it would have to be a legislative change. She will get the law to him.

VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 1/13/2021 (Enc.)

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the minutes of 1/13/2021.

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

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

Abstain: Melissa

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to go into Executive Session at or before 8:00 for negotiations - union not to return to open session.

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

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

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mr. Forgue said the school council started discussion on club options and alternative options for end of year activities. If you have any ideas, please share them with the school council. Jason Finnie, Jason Forgue or Kerri Morwoviac.
- Mrs. Foley asked what is the latest on school closure, the numbers come out on Thursday. Do we have any projections?
- Dr. Hopson said the numbers are down but still higher than 5%.
- Mrs. Nazzaro has been doing some communicating with some middle school teachers. She feels so bad for them, they are talking to blank screens. None of them are on camera. They had a rule in her house about having your camera on but it is really hard to enforce. It has got to be so disheartening.
- Mr. Renauld said for Huntington's town report they usually use work from a Huntington artist. They are thinking of using student work. They could get in touch with the town assistant - Jennifer.

B. Chairperson

- Mrs. Crane is working on the ad for the yearbook. Chester selectboard sent a letter and we are waiting for a response. If he doesn't respond maybe we could send a letter.

C. Superintendent

Central Office Update (Enc.)

D. Business Manager

- Ms. Fisk gave Brian Forgue mass general law 71, 16 B and 603 cmr41 as the laws pertaining to the alternative assessment method.

E. Administration

- Mrs. Coburn said they kicked off with iReady assessments this week. Kids are all doing it remotely. The data is actually really useful. Some classes have finished. Whole school, classroom, to individual student view.
- Mr. Forgue asked what the number at the end meant.
- Mrs. Coburn said it is a lexile number. What she gets is where it is correlated in a certain grade level. It is broken down by categories. It gives us a prescription for teachers to use on how to help students.

- Mr. Finnie said they just started today. Once testing is complete they will have the ability to give parents a report.

F. Town - None

X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent Search –Next Meeting 1/27/2021 via Zoom

- Mr. Forgue said there are many good candidates, a larger number than he expected. They are working on narrowing that down. There are still 4 more applicants expected. They will start working on interviews next week.

B. Legislative Liaison - None

C. Policy Subcommittee - None

D. Building Liaisons - None

Move to executive session at 7:56 p.m

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.

Warrants

AP#1051 \$10.58	PR#15 \$351,472.85
AP#1049 \$34,805.67	

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to go into Executive Session at or before 8:00 for negotiations - union not to return to open session.

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

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

A. Negotiations - Union (GEA)

XIV. ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mr. Renauld to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

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

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

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy L Stewart
School Committee Secretary