

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Gateway Regional School District will provide and 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

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020

**Middle School 112/114
7:00 P.M.**

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

I. OPENING OF MEETING

BLANDFORD
Michele Crane
Terri Garfield

CHESTER
Jason Forgue
Martha Otterbeck
Shirley Winer

HUNTINGTON
Darlene McVeigh
Melissa Nazzaro

MIDDLEFIELD
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY

RUSSELL
Tara Balboni
Sarah Page
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY
Stacy Stewart

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

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit Principal
Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal
Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director
Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director
Jeanne LeClair, Communications

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
Brian Forgue

OTHERS: Andy Myers, Melissa Reed-Tyberski, Dennis Nazzaro, Melissa McCaul, Attorney McLaughlin, David Lecrenski, Peter Spotts

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

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brian Forgue said winter sports have wined down. Brett Bonenfant and Garret LaBranch qualified for western mass wrestling. Today Dr. Hopson announced out of district field trips have been cancelled to include the senior trip and talent show. Band concerts and the play will not have an audience. No one was pleased, especially not the senior class. It's their last high school everything. He has two questions. One, if by some miracle the corona dipped to a low number and is no longer a public health crisis, could some of the later activities can be reestablished. Two, is there a plan for seniors and those who already paid for things to get reimbursed.
- Dr. Hopson said yes, if the governor declares the state of emergency is over, we could reestablish activities. We essentially cancelled activities now in order to be able to get money back. If we didn't do that and the

governor extends the state of emergency, then we wouldn't get money back. An example is the DC trip. Graduation at this point is not cancelled. It will depend on the recommendations of the state. He suspects the governor will cancel athletics. We have done what the state has recommended.

- Mrs. Crane thanked Brian for sharing the real opinion. We really appreciate it.
- Dr. Hopson said one of the things that hasn't been brought up yet is what we are going to do with town meetings if this continues.
- Mr. Forgue said these are recommendations not mandates.
- Dr. Hopson said yes, but if we don't follow the recommendations and something happens, then that is another issue.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITION

A. SOA (School Opportunity Plan) Plan Public Input

- Dr. Hopson said because we are getting all this extra money \$5 extra per student since we've already been held harmless, we have to create a plan for what we are going to use the money for. We will apply the \$25,000 toward the full-day preschool and vocational program. It fits in their neat categories. Part of the state's requirements are to get public input.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the FY '21 School Calendar.

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

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

Abstain: Darlene

Absent: Martha

B. Recommendation for Regional Transportation Bid

- Ms. Fisk said we spoke to our attorney and the IG's office and the administrative recommendation is it is in the best interest of the district to re-bid the transportation contract.

Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to go back out to bid for the Regional Transportation Contract.

- Attorney John McLaughlin spoke on behalf of Lecrenski Bros. Dufour filled out their paperwork with horrible mistakes. His client pointed it out there were civil lawsuits and criminal accusations. Once Dufour was deemed nonresponsive, Lecrenski Bros. is the low bidder. His client shouldn't have to suffer through a re-bid. Someone came in here and tried to scam you. Now they know what our number is. That puts us in a terrible situation. They don't know why, but he has tried to contact Gateway's attorney and not heard back.
- Dr. Hopson said his inclination from the beginning was to re-bid. When we had contacted the IG's office we decided re-bidding is in the best interest of the district and the school committee has the right. Re-bidding puts everyone in a difficult position.
- Ms. Fisk said you have to look at the series of bids from over the years. We've had to re-bid before. Lecrenski's bid is not a perfect bid either.
- Dr. Hopson said we believe it is in the best interest.
- Attorney McLaughlin asked if they are going to have to deal with Dufour again.
- Ms. Fisk said you may.
- Dr. Hopson said the change to the bid process is we are requiring a check rather than a bid bond.
- Attorney McLaughlin is asking not to re-bid.
- Mrs. Balboni said re-bidding just makes it clean.
- Mr. Forgue asked what was the reason?
- Dr. Hopson said there was a question about the bid bond.
- David Lecrenski said his dad started the business in 1988. Under 30 b, you can negotiate the difference. He is very surprised not to be asked to negotiate.
- Attorney McLaughlin was also surprised.
- Dr. Hopson said the numbers are part of it. He half expected it wasn't in Lecrenski's best interest to negotiate.
- Dr. Hopson said we could postpone until the next meeting or vote approve pending successful negotiations.

- Mr. Forgue asked who would negotiate.
- Dr. Hopson said Ms. Fisk and David Lecrenski.
- David Lecrenski said they just unionized up here last year. He is dealing with that right now.

Mrs. Nazzaro withdrew her motion. There were no objections.

Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mr. Forgue to approve awarding the contract to Lecrenski Bros. pending successful negotiations between the district and Lecrenski Bros.

- Mr. Forgue said is it successful if we agree the target is at least to match.
- Mrs. McVeigh said we have had them for years. Have we had any issues?
- Ms. Fisk said we haven't had any issues with any of them

Mrs. Otterbeck arrived 7:32 p.m.

Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mr. Forgue to approve awarding the contract to Lecrenski Bros. pending successful negotiations between the district and Lecrenski Bros.

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

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Darlene, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Nays: Jason

C. Recommendation to authorize the Superintendent of Gateway Regional School District to enter into a Memorandum(s) of Understanding ("MOU") with the Department of Children and Families, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in order to obtain Federal Title IV-E reimbursement(s) for foster care transportation and to provide that payments for such foster care transportation under such MOU(s) may be made from such reimbursement(s) as a result of foster care transportation being provided without appropriation of said reimbursement(s), pursuant to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44, Section 70.

- Dr. Hopson this is for homeless transportation and we have to approve this in order to file for reimbursement.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Ms. Foley to approve the following Recommendation to authorize the Superintendent of Gateway Regional School District to enter into a Memorandum(s) of Understanding ("MOU") with the Department of Children and Families, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in order to obtain Federal Title IV-E reimbursement(s) for foster care transportation and to provide that payments for such foster care transportation under such MOU(s) may be made from such reimbursement(s) as a result of foster care transportation being provided without appropriation of said reimbursement(s), pursuant to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44, Section 70.

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

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

D. Athletic User Fees Discussion

- Dr. Hopson said given Mr. Myers' and Mr. Forgue's recommendations. He would entertain a motion to eliminate user fees over the next two years. The budget would have to go up to cover them. As we drain the account, we will have to budget for them.
- Ms. McVeigh said so we are saying for FY '21 there will be no user fees.

Mr. Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. McVeigh motion to drop all athletic user fees.

- Mr. Forgue said the unemployment number is still sticking with him. He sees no justification in going from \$10,000 to \$60,000. We could simply transfer \$26,000 from the unemployment to athletics.
- Ms. Fisk said you can at the end of the year. We budget for professional staff who may not be employed at the end of the year.
- Ms. McVeigh said we pay our own unemployment.
- Mr. Forgue said we are paying our own unemployment. We anticipate laying off that many staff members.

- Dr. Hopson said every year we do this and discuss whether we are going to keep staff who are nonprofessional, etc.
- Ms. Fisk said you will have to have a transfer in the 4th quarter.
- Ms. Fisk said we are going to try to cover transportation costs with our own transportation. If we can cover transportation
- Mr. Forgue asked what was the difference in the bus bids.
- Ms. Fisk said \$14,000 in athletics and \$13,000 in special ed. We are at \$11,378 and we just got our bill for January. We will be paying that from January to June.
- Mr. Myers gave kudos to the administration for eliminating athletics. It is great for marketing.
- Ms. Fisk said the best marketing would be free the preschool.
- Mrs. Papillon asked about the other recommendation of reducing cheering to a spirit team. They wanted to have more of an opportunity to perform the rest of the year.
- Ms. Fisk said we should leave it in as an athletic team, and just add an advisor for the spirit part.
- Mrs. Foley said if they are a spirit squad does it stop them from competing.
- Mr. Finnie said yes, but they haven't been competing for many years now.

Mr. Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. McVeigh motion to drop all athletic user fees.

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

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

- Mr. Forgue asked if we could vote on the gate increase.
- Dr. Hopson said no it is not a policy

7:30 VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Field Trip Ethics Statement

- Boston Harbor Cruise – Senior Trip – Chris Mosher for admission on the cruise of \$79.19
- No longer need this as all out-of-district field trips have been cancelled.

B. SOA (School Opportunity Plan) Plan Approval

Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to waive the two-meeting rule to vote on the SOA Plan.

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

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

Mr. Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. McVeigh to approve the SOA (School Opportunity Plan).

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

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

C. Extension of alternative learning days.

- Dr. Hopson said if you weren't on a pilot program before you couldn't use them. But if you have been part of the pilot plan, you can. March 15-June 1 days missed up to 5 have to be used up. After that we don't have to make them up. We are working with staff creating methods other than blizzard bags, so we can still educate students. We don't need to extend them.
- Brian Forgue does this new plan we have 5 additional days.
- Dr. Hopson said the plan is you have to go to the 185th day.
- Mrs. Balboni said to be mindful of social distancing. What about the kids who need care? She doesn't want kids' home without adults.
- Dr. Hopson said there are so many levels and so much is changing. As a leadership team they have been working with union. There are students We can only have an alternative lunch program anywhere except Chester. We have identified students that have services that are needed, or social or emotional needs. That would include us potentially bussing in the students. Trying to figure out how to make that work without

putting our staff at risk. Even working with HCHC the offices communicate between offices. There is a respiratory test that can be done. We have offered to pay for the test if it is not covered under health insurance, so we know.

- Mrs. Nazzaro do you think the recommendations would change for the lunch services.
- Dr. Hopson hopes that the state uses common sense. He said in a letter that went home, we have cancelled out of district field trips and the German trip coming here. We have kept after school activities and athletics are still on. Performances won't have an audience.
- Dr. Hopson said the state has not recommended to change athletic activities, but he suspects they will.
- Dennis Nazzaro said working with Huntington fire police, emergency management board of health. Consistent message to everyone priority. Get your information from state and CDC. If you contract it and are healthy, you will be fine. The concern is the young and elderly. Otis is out an ambulance and three EMT's.
- Mrs. McVeigh received an email from her corporate headquarters canceling all travel until June 30. They have increased screening protocols and they have changed cleaning protocols.
- Dennis Nazzaro said the first step was how to stop it, now how do we prevent it.
- Mrs. Otterbeck asked what that means if your student is coming home, are they going to be able to come back.
- Mr. Myers said the Maple Fest on Chester hill is cancelled.
- Mrs. McVeigh said Huntington is having annual town meetings discussions.
- Mrs. Garfield asked what the procedure is for reporting it.
- Dennis Nazzaro said it should be reported the CDC.
- Dr. Hopson said we have to ability to know which students are more susceptible. We are also working with GEA to identify staff that may be more susceptible.

D. Approval of the following Student Activity Accounts

- Class of 2025
- Class of 2026
- MS School Council

E. Deletion of the following Student Activity Account

- Class of 2019

VII. JOINT BUDGET SESSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS

A. Recommendation to approve the FY '21 budget in the amount of \$16,610,420.

Mr. Fogue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to approve the 2000 in the amount of \$8,162,114.

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

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Darlene, Martha, Shirley, Michele
Recuse: Lyndsey

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro to approve the 3000 in the amount of \$1,810,956.

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

Yeas: Tara, Sarah F., Jason, Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Martha, Shirley, Michele
Recuse: Darlene, Lyndsey

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro to approve the total FY '21 budget in the amount of \$16,610,420.

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

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

Mrs. McVeigh made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve assessments upon the alternative assessment method.

- Dr. Hopson said towns that would have a lower amount under the alternative, could vote the higher amount.
- Mrs. Nazzaro said we are increasing the alternative method based on the statutory last year. Towns that saw a savings last year, their 1.96% is already less. They are seeing a benefit. The perception is different.
- Ms. Fisk said you also heard from a town Montgomery who said they would rather pay the high amount. There were people who said on town floor they thought we were going to try this for five years.
- Mrs. Balboni said Russell interprets it as let's look at it for 5 years we will see what happens and then we will decide.
- Mrs. Nazzaro said Mr. Baldasaro from Chester said he felt like this is a lost cause. She still feels like she wants to try to continue to keep this alive and show the communities they still find value in it. She likes that Huntington voted the alternative method and vote the higher amount.
- Ms. Fisk said one thing that came up is to push legislators to have 4 town instead of all approve the alternative method.
- Mrs. LeClair agrees we should continue to fight for it.
- Mrs. McVeigh said the select board might be willing to pay, but not necessarily the towns people. She will do her best but \$140,000 is crushing. This doesn't even include voke numbers.
- Mrs. McVeigh said they will get the alternative and the statutory numbers.
- Ms. Fisk said yes.

Mrs. McVeigh made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve assessments upon the alternative assessment method.

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

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

- Mr. Myers said Chester was looking at their cherry sheet – chapter 70 this includes vocational and the line was zero. Last year it was zero. They called and they said there isn't a line for transportation reimbursement.

Mrs. Balboni left at 8:36 p.m.

- Ms. Fisk said you have to apply for it. It needs to be on your end of year report.
- Mrs. McVeigh will check with Huntington.
- Brian Forgue asked how much is being spent and reimbursed.
- Ms. Fisk said it's anywhere from 75-80%. They are getting better with consistency. We don't get reimbursed for anyone who lives less than 1.5 miles from school.
- Mrs. McVeigh said we don't get reimbursed for special education transportation
- Steph said,

VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 2/5/2020, 3/4/2020 (Enc's)

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the minutes of 2/5/2020.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 2 Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Sarah F., Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Abstain: Jason, Darlene

Absent: Tara

Mr. Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to approve the minutes of 3/4/2020

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 2 Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Sarah F., Jason, Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Lyndsey, Shirley, Michele

Abstain: Darlene, Martha

Absent: Tara

IX. COMMUNICATIONS
A. School Committee

- Mr. Forgue finds it disappointing that we charge gateway students to go to gateway events. He would like to have the administration to reconsider.
- Mrs. Papillon said the middle school play was great.
- Mrs. Garfield said her son subbed last week and loved it.

B. Chairperson – School Committee Ethics Follow-up**C. Superintendent**

Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Dr. Hopson is grateful the association has been working with the leadership team hand in hand to get things taken care of.

D. Business Manager

- Ms. Fisk said we met with a bunch of banks and selected Westfield bank as the bank we are switching to. They also agreed to come out and do community banking.

E. Administration - None**F. Town - None**

X. COMMITTEE REPORTING
A. Superintendent's Evaluation –Next Meeting 4/8/2020**B. Legislative Liaison - None****C. Policy Subcommittee**

- Policy met tonight and will have items for the next agenda

D. Building Liaisons

- Mrs. Crane said she and Mrs. Winer met with Mr. Garivaltis for their yearly get together

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#1055	\$75.65	PR#017	\$384,254.25
AP#1054	\$69,463.59	PR#018	\$347,171.01
AP#1058	\$182,188.92		
AP#1063	\$45.68		

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to adjourn at 8:47 p.m.

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

Yeas: Sarah F., Jason, Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Darlene, Lyndsey, Martha, Shirley, Michele

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy L Stewart,

School Committee Secretary
