

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, MAY 13, 2020

Via Zoom (virtual)

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76190627324?pwd=Wk1NNHZXclFBa0ozMFBSOFFjMU5uQT09>

Meeting ID: 761 9062 7324

Password: 6Ym9LA

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	Darlene McVeigh	Sarah Foley
Terri Garfield	Martha Otterbeck		

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

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: Bob Daley, Jodi Cabral-Croke, Cara Letendre, Josh Garcia, Andy Myers, Ann Pritchard, Jim Duggan, Jodi Fairman, Shelbi Macri, Cheryl Wright

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

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brian Forgue has been doing yard work. AP Tests are upon us. Kids are still working. He said Mrs. Crane said she would look into a student member on the committee in general.
- Mrs. Crane said she wants to talk about it. She will put it on the agenda for a future meeting. She would like to hear what the committee has to say. It would be a big change to have them vote. It would change the regional agreement. But they could potentially sit at the table.
- Brian Forgue has been thinking about that. So they could talk about things and suggest changes, it would be great if it could be added to an agenda.
- Mrs. Crane said she will put it on the agenda before the end of June.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITION

A. Budget Update

- Dr. Hopson said there is not much to update on the budget. He shared some ideas looking ahead. We are not sure what the state and feds are going to do with regional transportation, Chapter 70, rural school aide and loss in revenue. He thinks FY '21 is going to be easier and FY 22 will be more difficult. There will be no 9C3 cuts and revenue is down so there will be some reduction in state aid. In 2003 we laid off 38 staff and reduced staff members time. There are small things we can do but now, but we cannot cover a million dollar loss.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if we got a letter from Adam Hinds. He was going back to 08-09 and he was talking about a 29% reduction in unrestricted government aid. That would be \$379,000. That 30% loss equals a department in Huntington. They are planning to set up a call with Natalie Blais and Senator Hinds to discuss the issues. It is difficult to put together a budget for their annual town meeting with these moving pieces.
- Dr. Hopson agrees. At his superintendent's meetings they have outlined the same issues Mrs. McVeigh is talking about. It is like trying to hit a dartboard in the dark room not knowing what wall it's on. He offered the potential to do some furlough days to avoid laying off staff. Across the board 10% would be about \$900,000. That should make it so we don't have to lay off staff with holding electricity and heat costs. They are not looking at changing the town assessments at this point. The budget is up 1%. All regional schools will most likely be on a 1/12th budget.
- Mr. Myers said if the school goes to a 1/12th budget, would it be the same as last year.
- Dr. Hopson said it would be based on the statutory method, school populations.
- Mr. Myers asked to have the details on that go to the towns.
- Dr. Hopson and Ms. Fisk hope to have the basics for town meetings.
- Mr. Myers asked about negotiations with Lecrenski

- Ms. Fisk said if the 2680 Senate Bill would pass, it would allow us to do that. We are paired up with Worthington and Westfield. Our lead is on Westfield.
- Mr. Myers said they also use Lecrenski for vocational bussing.
- Mrs. McVeigh said we have followed Gateway's lead. Kathe Warden and Huntington have drafted a similar letter. Her selectboard is going to ask David Lecrenski to come to their next meeting. Even though they can't enter negotiations until the senate bill passes.
- Ms. Fisk said at this time Ron Rix has not heard back from David Lecrenski.
- Mrs. Balboni gets that there are no answers, but if we do go to town meetings, they are going to say what are we going to do with all this money you saved this year. Is there a statement we could provide for people. This is going to be a hot button because they don't understand.
- Dr. Hopson said because we are having our employees work, we have a budget going out. We are still heating the buildings. Our only real savings is in transportation. Any money we save this year we will ask the school committee to roll into next year. That is what we use to offset the assessments for next year. He has responded to several questions from Russell and Mongtomery.
- Mrs. LeClair said if there is anything she can do before annual town meetings she would be happy to help even with communications meetings.
- Mrs. Crane said Mr. Duggan asked us to pass a resolution asking our representatives to fund us appropriately.
- Jim Duggan said it would be in many people's interest. The federal government needs a new deal: activism and some pressure.
- Mrs. Crane said we will put it on the next agenda with information in the packet.
- Brian Fogue told Mr. Duggan, for what little it is worth, he is part of the student political action group and he would be willing to help out. He is sure the rest of the group would help too.
- Mrs. LeClair thinks adding student names will amplify it.
- Brian Fogue will tell everyone about it later tonight.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Recommendation to Participate in School Choice 2020-2021

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve the recommendation to participate in School Choice for FY '21.

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

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

B. Green Community Action

Sarah Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to participate in the Green Community Action.

- Ms. Fisk said the school would have to have an updated energy and vehicle efficiency policy and we would update school information on the Mass. energy page.
- Mr. Forgue said we bought it up last time, would it be in addition to the towns or part of the total would go to the district. Whatever we attribute to the school would come from projects they would have done in the towns. They don't always use the money they qualify for.
- Mr. Garcia said every community is entitled to up to \$200,000. For example, Blandford would have to agree to include the GRSD in their plan. The district will know more or less what they would be eligible for. When they apply next year Blandford doesn't have any more projects, so it will be able to go to the district. 4 of the 6 towns participate. So the max we would all receive would be \$800,000.
- Mr. Myers said it was his understanding if the towns grouped together it would increase the funds.
- Mrs. LeClaire thought the towns were eligible for less and if they grouped together they would receive more.
- Mr. Forgue tried to read through the information. Chester has a bunch of projects. He doesn't want to get into who contributes more.
- Josh Garcia said communities are eligible for \$200,000 each year. Community decides on the projects they want to fund. They could use \$100,000 for town and \$100,000 for the school. You won't know until you get the energy audit.
- Mr. Forgue thinks we can do a lot of good with it. The 4 towns work well together.

Sarah Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to participate in the Green Community Action.

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

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

- Mrs. McVeigh asked if the towns can be notified of this vote so the selectboards can talk about. The paperwork is a nightmare. If we pooled money for a green project for the school the school would be responsible for the paperwork.
- Mrs. LeClair said we can talk about it at the hilltown collaborative meeting tomorrow. She would be happy to help with paperwork.
- Mr. Garcia said PVPC will assist you. We are trying to be aligned with them to help with the reporting.

C. Policy Changes

- IC/ICE - School Year/School Calendar
- ID - School Day
- IE - Organization of Instruction
- IGB - Support Services Programs
- IGD - Curriculum Adoption

IHAM - Health Education
 IHB - Special Instructional Programs and Accommodations
 IHBEA - English Language Learners
 JB - Equal Educational Opportunities
 JC - Attendance Areas
 JCA - Assignment of Students to School
 JEB - Entrance Age
 JF - School Admission
 JFBB-1 -School Choice (Districts choosing not to Participate)
 JH - Student Absences and Excuses
 JHD - Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance
 JICFA -Prohibition of Hazing
 JICH - Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug use by Students Prohibited
 JIH - Searches and Interrogations
 JII - Student Complaints and Grievances
 JJA - Student Organizations
 JJH-R - Student Travel Regulation
 JLCC - Communicable Diseases
 JRA - Student Records
 JRD - Student Photographs
 JFABD - Homeless Students Enrollment Rights and Services

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the policies listed under C.

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

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

- Mrs. Cabral-Croke had a question about the communicable diseases. What changes we need to make due to Covid 19. It needs to be clear what the expectations of picking up your child are.
- Dr. Hopson said you probably won't ever get that from MASCC. We will have to wait to see if there is another update due to COVID 19.

D. Delete the following Policies

JLA - Student Insurance Program
 JLD - Guidance Program
 JP - Student Gifts and Solicitations

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the deletion of policies under D.

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

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

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to go into executive session at or before 8:15 p.m. or for the purpose of negotiations - paraprofessionals to return to open session.

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

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Foundation Update

- Cheryl Wright said they approved a new round of grant funds. They had approved a whole bunch of projects and some of the earlier ones were cancelled. They approved almost \$6,000 worth of projects for the next few months. They will have a bigger book project this summer, and a program for elementary teachers for reading currently is currently free but will have a fee later to help with the social emotional project needs of students.
- Mrs. Otterbeck thanked the foundation and their work.

B. Grant Approvals

- Mrs.Stewart said most of the grants are the same. We did lose a title grant that was phased out.
- Mrs. Garivaltis gave an update on that grant. It used to be about \$70,000 and it went to \$30,00 this year and now it is gone.
- Move to old business

C Approval of Student Activity Accounts (Enc.)

- Just the annual approval of activity accounts.
- Move to old business

D. Superintendent's Evaluation

- Mrs. Crane said they met tonight. Tomorrow the survey will go out with the updated goals and the support document for the survey. There were 9 participants last year. We would like to see more this year. It is an important job. This is your last chance to evaluate Dr. Hopson personally. Open tomorrow for two weeks. The deadline is May 27. Final assessment will be ready for June 10.

E. School Committee Goals update

- Mrs.Crane said the updated goals were in the packet. It was hard due to the look of our year changing so much. We've done pretty well considering. Please look at them and let us know if you have questions or additions.
- Mrs. LeClair looked at it and the communication goals looked pretty up to date.

F. Superintendent requests authorization for the District Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer under the provisions of M.G.L., Chapter 71, Section 16 (9), and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Gateway Regional Regional School Committee, to incur temporary debt, (borrow from time to time) in anticipation of revenue to be received from and source for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020. This is for short term borrowing in case assessments are not received on time, etc.

- Annual vote - move to old business.

VII. CONSENT ITEMS 4/8/2020 (Enc.)

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to approve the minutes of 4/8/2020.

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

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

XIII. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mrs. Foley was wondering if there was any thought or ideas for commencement or virtual alternatives.
- Mr. Finnie said he planned on sending out a letter. He is working on a plan for a drive through ceremony at the school. Folks preferred to have a social distance graduation, but it is not looking promising. There is a need to have closure in the spring. Faculty and staff are excited for the 5th. He is working on the details.
- Mrs. Crane said if you have a roll school committee could play or be present in some way let them know. They would like to be part of the solution not a problem.
- Mrs Crane remains impressed with everyone's hard work. The way teachers are participating with her son and what she has heard from other parents. She shares her appreciation for this difficult work which is out of the ordinary.
- Mrs. Foley is hearing and experiencing how different districts are doing things. Gateway has figured it out and students are getting what they need.

B. Chairperson

- Mrs. Crane said we need to add a couple of people to our warrant signing committee to help get through the spring and summer. Send her an email if you would like to be added.

C. Superintendent

Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Dr. Hopson gave congratulations and his appreciation to all staff. He also gave a shout out to Cheryl Wright who put together videos for students and Mrs. LeBlanc for a video for staff appreciation.

D. Business Manager

- Ms. Fisk said we will be applying for the CARES act \$120,000, MEMA funding, HEROES funding if it comes through and if anything else that comes through.

E. Administration

- Mr. Finnie thanked folks for the positive words and thanked the teachers association. We did decide to waive the requirement for getting AP credit even if you don't take the test. Just this year. Testing is underway. Some are taking it and some have chosen not to.

F. Town- None

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation –Met tonight.

B. Legislative Liaison - none

C. Policy Subcommittee - none

D. Building Liaisons - none

Move to executive session at 8:11 p.m.

Returned to open session 8:24 p.m.

Mr. Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to ratify the Paraprofessionals Contract.

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

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

X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

National School Lunch Program - May 27

3rd Quarter Transfers - June

3rd Quarter Report - June

XI. INFORMATION

Information

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

Warrant

AP#1071 \$144,927.58 PR#021 \$407,889.80

AP#1074 \$31,974.40 PR#022 \$383,624.77

AP#1075 \$132,431.18 PR#023 \$350,841.75

AP#1078 \$2,095.58

PR#023.1 \$10,262.00

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

8:35 or earlier

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to go into executive session at or before 8:15 p.m. or for the purpose of negotiations - paraprofessionals to return to open session.

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

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

A. Union Negotiations – Paraprofessionals

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

Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to adjourn at 8:26 p.m.

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

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L Stewart,
School Committee Secretary