

**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.

**JOINT BUDGET/REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2020**

**Via Zoom (virtual)**

**7:00 P.M.**

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72711362061?pwd=cGppMFB3S0FON25SVmpSWEhMZ0RlQT09>

Meeting ID: 727 1136 2061

Password: BCYu99

**(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     | Melissa Nazzaro   | 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  
 Martha Clark, High/Middle AP  
 Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit Principal  
 Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal  
 Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director  
 Jeanne LeClair, Communications  
 Darlene Rehor, Elementary AP

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES  
 Brian Forgue

OTHERS: Cindy Heroux, Dan Shea, Chris Bell, Cathy Servaes, Theresa Lynch, Kathy Gallagher, Linda Gallagher, Ramona Thieme, Amy Mason, Bob Garriepy, Amy Thornton, Karen Golann, Angela Dalton, Brad Brusseau, Diane DeFalco, Nancy Blume, Jenna Kakimoto,

Rachel Millin, Liz McCormick, Peter Spotts, Jodi Fairman, Jim Duggan, Bill Brown, Ruth Harper, Tasha Hartley, Chris O'Malley, Susan Rhoads, Terri Orr, Kim Sakaske, Denae Dostal, Elizabeth Hamoui, Missy McCaul, Theresa Brownlee, Donna Morrissey, Heather Cabral, Bob Daley, Mike Mason, Sarah Thompson, Sara McNamara, Matt Bonenfant, Kathy Murray, Lynn Russell, Chris Parker, Ann Pritchard, Renee Mosher, Ginny Lee, Cheryl Wright, Andy Myers, Val Zeh, Julie Gagnon, Kris Baker, Chris Bresnahan

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

### **III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT**

- Brian Fogue said nice things have been happening for the seniors. The message on the fence, google meet classes which are nice because they can see everyone, classes are winding down. He is trying to remain as social as possible.

### **IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITION**

#### **A. National School Lunch Program Update - Tasha Hartley**

- Mrs. Hartley said this year we gained a new manager in Chester, Kendra Gregerson. They have attended many staff training sessions. She attended nuts and bolts of nutrition in Framingham. They held their first annual civil rights training in November, which will now happen every year. Held her first NSA sponsored by General Mills about the importance of meal sizes. Food services has joined a new collaborative. They started in NH, then expanded to Eastern Mass and now Western Mass. It was created for school food services directors and is run by food services directors. They know the wants and the needs. The bid is online. It has saved her a lot of time and effort. Out entitlement for FY '19 was \$26,499.76 and increased by \$3,357.98 a total of \$29,857.74 Next year it will be \$2,9738.09 We awarded \$6,000 for DoD Fresh program an increase of \$1,000 from last year. She diverted \$4,624.04 for processors and an increase of favorites like max pizza, General Tso's chicken. The average daily participation dropped by 2% for lunch but had an 8% increase for breakfast. Grab and go breakfast has increased it. Chester had an 8% increase, Littleville 13 % increase. Middle/High had a 31% due to a behavioral issue. If kids were in the cafeteria they had to eat breakfast. Decrease in lunch was mainly at the elementary level. There was an actual increase in lunch at high/middle school. Unpaid meal debt is \$1,972. Since letters and emails went out \$715 was paid down. Currently we are at \$1,257. She plans on keeping school bucks open over the summer. She also made everyone aware checks can be sent too. Looking at having to raise lunch prices for the next school year. She thought school lunch accounts with a negative balance were required to establish new lunch prices. If there was a zero or positive balance we would be exempt. We were always in the positive, but recently she found out to be in compliance difference between free and paid meals. Target is \$3.09. Our lunch prices have not increased in five years. She thought about increasing in small increments, or making it up at once to bring us up to target then look for other ways. Elementary would increase to \$2.85 and ms/hs to \$3.25 which is a big jump. She is open to any other recommendations.

- Mrs. Hartley said for the not so normal, she commend her entire staff who selflessly stepped forward to feed the community. They started 5 days a week at 2 locations, she felt they needed a site at the Gateway location too. Ms/hs was not approved at the time. The state passed waivers to approve them. Lunch/breakfast and breakfast is provided. They now have two teams. They are now open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and are serving 130 to 140 kids each day. This will be discontinued on Friday June 12. Fall will continue with a grab and go model. She will be in training throughout the summer. One of them is a 4 day workshop Stronger together back to school series.
- There were many chats with congratulations and thank you's to the cafeteria workers.
- Mrs Crane asked about the online payments to my school bucks.
- Mrs. Hartley said there are more and more families going onto it. There have been complaints about the charges, but there were charges on the other one. There have been more responses to paying automatically.
- Mr. Forgue asked about the 13% increase in high/middle school lunch prices. Is she trying to wipe out that balance?
- Mrs. Hartley said per Peter McLaughlin the target would be \$3.09. They have to average out what it covers. It's the price difference between what is paid and a free reimbursement. Her thought was a .25 increase at the elementary because of the smaller portions. The high/middle school has more options and larger portions.
- Mrs. Crane asked if there is a way to do a more gradual increase.
- Mrs. Hartley said in order to be in compliance we need to meet that price/target. She wanted to get us in compliance then look for other ways to stay in compliance.
- Amy Thornton asked if Littleville becomes Title I will they be free?
- Mrs. Hartley said it has nothing to do with Title I

**V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Grant Approvals**

***Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to approve the Grant Proposals.***

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

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

Absent: Melissa

**B. Approval of Student Activity Accounts**

Melissa Arrived 7:42 p.m

***Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the student activity accounts.***

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

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

### **C. School Committee Goals**

- We will come up with new goals at the August meeting.

**D. 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.**

***Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the following vote: 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.***

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

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

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. Student Participation in Meetings**

- Mrs. Crane said Brian Forgue asked us to consider a student increase or more formal participation in meetings. Since the time she has been here there has always been a student council representative. A voting student participant would require a change in the regional agreement. She asked Brian to give his thoughts.
- Brian Forgue said he was considering having either an elected student or the student council representative to be a member of the committee with a voice who sits at the table with the rest of the committee. They would be able to speak when Mrs. Crane asks for comments. He is looking for more formal and frequent ways to have student representatives work with other members on certain issues to go on future agendas. He would also like a constant member to discuss policies for students.
- Mrs. Papillon thinks it's a great idea. She knows other meetings and municipalities have something similar. It would be nice to have their voice at the table. Students are why we are doing what we do.
- Mr. Forgue said he and Briand don't always agree but he is for it.
- Mrs. Crane said in the past it was hard to get people to come to our meetings. Does he think students would be hesitant?

- Brian Forgue said it isn't for everyone. What he would like to do is work harder to bring more students into the fold. There will always be students who want their voice heard and that want to complain. He would like to make this easily accessible to other students when he is gone.
- Cheryl Wright thinks he is doing a great job.
- Diane Defalco suggested two students.
- Mrs. Otterbeck thinks it is a great idea.
- Mr. Finnie said it would be helpful if the committee had guidelines on how they are selected, such as school council or within school council, then he can make sure it is equitable.
- Dr. Hopson asked Mr. Finnie to come up with guidelines.
- Put on the next agenda for a vote.

#### **B. GEA Resolution Approval**

- Mrs. Crane asked if Mr. Duggan would like to speak to this. Does the GEA want us to support it as is or change it.
- Mr. Duggan said given the federal government spends trillions of dollars bailing out corporations and the federal packet is 2% for education. We need to make our voices heard to get the Heroes Act passed and more state and federal aid. He realizes Gateway didn't get nearly as much funding from the Promise Act. He would be in favor of adapting it to Gateway's circumstances.
- Mrs. Crane asked if we would need to re-write any of this or leave it as it is.
- Mr. Duggan said it is up to you really. It is okay, but it is a little generic and doesn't fit Gateway. It still sends the same message.
- Mrs. Crane asked how we could move forward.
- Mr. Forgue thinks it should be drafted more toward schools like Gateway. The fear is it going to go to other locations. He would take a stab at it.
- Mrs. Page volunteered to help him.
- Mrs. Crane said it was the Student Opportunity Act that gave \$5.00 more per student.
- Dr. Hopson said they should add something about rural school aid.

#### **C. Recommendation to Participate in the National School Lunch Program - FY' 21**

- Move to old business for a vote at the next meeting.
- Ms. Fisk said it is the yearly vote to receive reimbursement from the federal government.

#### **D. Authorization to negotiate transportation payments spring 2020**

- Ms. Fisk said 2680 moved forward. She is working with Russell Dupere - school districts are starting to negotiate with their bus companies. It is between 0-75% right now.
- Mr. Forgue asked if we have reached out to David Lecrenski.
- Ms. Fisk said with the senate bill they would have to give us qualifying paperwork. The lead is Ron Rix from Westfield. He has been reaching out and the reception has not been great.
- Mrs. Crane said that the hope is we might have something for the next meeting.

- Ms. Fisk will also have a recommendation on special education transportation for the next meeting. Social distancing on a 71 passenger bus will be 12 students.
- Mrs. Balboni said with the CDC guidelines so many things are up in the air. Why can't you wear a mask when you can't social distance on a bus.
- Mr. Forgue said Mrs. McVeigh had mentioned she was having David Lecrenski come to a town meeting and he is going to push for Chester to do the same. How do school negotiations affect town negotiations. Should we negotiate it with the school or separate.
- Ms. Fisk said she has talked to Mrs. McVeigh on the phone and they would like to move forward with this at the same time.

## **VII. JOINT BUDGET SESSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS**

### **A. Updated FY '21 Budget Parameters**

- Dr. Hopson gave a brief slideshow.
- Mrs. Crane asked Mr. Duggan if he had anything to say.
- Mr. Duggan said the GEA does not want layoffs but they are not in favor of the current proposal, because it may be unstable to education. They always want what is in the best interest of the students.
- Mr. Myers said it may make sense to have some discussions during the summer.
- Dr. Hopson would agree, it doesn't look like we will have a budget at least until July and it will most likely be August, or September.
- Mr. Myers said they could have a 25% decrease in town aid according to Natalie Blais.
- Dr. Hopson said unrestricted aid. By law and contract we have to have a reduction list by June 15. In 2004 it was October before we had a budget, now we don't have a budget and it's coupled with the fact we don't know what coming back will look like. There are three options; social distancing, regular, or some sort of blended learning. We won't get guidelines until the end of June.
- Mrs. Otterbeck is interested in blended learning. John Hopkins and Chiefs of Change talked about a way to keep teachers on and reorganize it. It seemed to make a lot of sense. Do we have any input of what families are feeling or how they would see this would play out.
- Dr. Hopson said in terms of blended learning, the commissioner sees it as a way to allow teachers who have underlying health issues to be online and not come back. How many will not be coming back to school because of COVID 19 and how do we deal with that. We are trying to develop some method of bringing our students back. Hopefully DESE will change the 12 kids on a 70 passenger bus. How do we get the older siblings home to get the younger ones.
- Mr. Finnie said part of what they have been discussing is to have something concrete and then get input from teachers and parents. Online would be different then what we are doing right now. There has been no formal collection yet. We have to give some structure to the conversation we don't currently have.
- Mrs. Coburn said we have been working on several plans. Families are all over the place, some are doing well and some not. The way it started from the get go was difficult as it kept changing.

- Mr. Duggan said when people are talking about logistics, it is important for teachers and paras to be part of the discussion.
- Dr. Hopson said we are just trying to get some parameters set and then we will get staff input, including how many staff members may or may not come back due to health issues.
- Mr. Forgue said he understands the concern over impacting town assessments, we are going to have to make up for it down the road. He feels like we are just punting like the federal government. What is the downside to redoing the assessments to spread out that hit.
- Dr. Hopson said you're asking to increase the assessments to the towns to lower the impact to the district. Huntington is pushing the levy limit. We would need to get all towns to vote for the alternate assessment. It is possible to do that next year or if the budget fails and it comes back to the school committee to rework the assessment numbers and budget. If the towns get 25% less and we get 10-15% we are all going to take the hit. He said the hope would be for them to do another stimulus.
- Mr. Forgue said we are still going to pay for that too. He feels like we are setting ourselves up for next year and a bigger problem.
- Mrs. Crane said when she asked the question about local control and regulations. We shouldn't have to do what schools in the inner cities do, or is it going to be a one size fits all.
- Dr. Hopson said that has been a question to the commissioner. They are looking at coming up with 80% and leaving about 20% for the locals to come up with.
- Mrs. Otterbeck said this always overwhelms her. We seem to lose sight on education and our educators. We need to support and educate them both socially and emotionally.
- Mrs. Crane said when you think about all the progress we've made over the last few years, it feels like a kick in the teeth.

**VIII. CONSENT ITEMS** 5/13/2020 (Enc.)

***Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to approve the minutes of 5/13/2020.***

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

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

**IX. COMMUNICATIONS**

**A. School Committee**

- Mr. Forgue asked what was the final decision about graduation, are we still doing something next Friday?

- Mr. Finnie said there was finally some guidance from the commissioner and very little had to do with June. In the original survey 84% said they wanted to push it off. We decided to put out another survey to both families and students asking them to look at the guidelines and over 71% of the folks wanted to wait. It has been postponed until July 24 which was the highest choice in the survey. On June 3, we will still celebrate the seniors and vocational students.

#### **B. Chairperson**

- Mrs. Crane talked about the superintendent's survey. If you haven't done it yet please do so. She asked Dr. Hopson how long it could stay open.
- Dr. Hopson said it is up to her, she has to write the report. He said this morning there were 6 or 7 who completed it.
- Mrs. Crane said June 1 is the last chance for you to get it done.

#### **C. Superintendent**

Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Dr. Hopson would like to have a shore executive session to talk about negotiations.

***Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to go into executive session at or before 8:45 p.m. for the purpose of Union Negotiations - Teacher, Paraprofessional, Secretary, Custodian not to return to open session.***

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

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

#### **D Business Manager**

- Ms. Fisk said we are trying to do as much as we can to prepare for the opening.

#### **E. Administration**

- Mrs. Coburn said staff is really working hard to keep students engaged. Working on incorporating end of year events such as a virtual field day and send off.
- Mrs. Crane thanked the administrators for all their hard work.
- Mr. Finnie said the information on the senior event on June 3 will go out to students and families on Friday. The underclass information will also go out on Friday. Chrome book collection information will go out as well.

#### **F. Town - None**

### **X. COMMITTEE REPORTING**

- A. Superintendent's Evaluation –Next Meeting 6/10/2020 to go over the evaluation survey.
- B. Legislative Liaison - None
- C. Policy Subcommittee - None
- D. Building Liaisons - None



**XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

**Future Agenda Items**

3rd Quarter Transfers - June

3rd Quarter Report - June

**XII. INFORMATION**

**Information**

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

**Warrant**

AP#1079 \$43,765

PR#024 \$370,154.92

**XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**8:35 or earlier**

***Mrs. Nazzaro made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to go into executive session at or before 8:45 p.m. for the purpose of Union Negotiations - Teacher, Paraprofessional, Secretary, Custodian not to return to open session.***

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

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

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to adjourn at 9:19 p.m.**

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

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

Respectfully Submitted,  
Stacy L Stewart  
School Committee Secretary