

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.

(A portion of this meeting may be held in Executive Session)

All visitors attending the school committee meeting should sign in at the security booth.

JOINT BUDGET/SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2022

Middle School 112/114 - In Person And Via Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/93636228412?pwd=b0lzUkErdXNKOFILzh0djd4Z2pyZz09>

Meeting ID: 936 3622 8412

Passcode: 01050

*******Snow Date of Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.*******

7:00 P.M.

7:00PM I. OPENING OF MEETING

Call to order: Sarah Page, Chairperson

BLANDFORD

Terri Garfield
Keri Morawiec

CHESTER

Jeana Briggs
Jason Fogue

HUNTINGTON

David Lubbers
Pegg Dragon - Remote

MIDDLEFIELD

MONTGOMERY

Michael Lafleur
Michael Morrissey

RUSSELL

Tara Balboni
Sarah Page
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Kristen Smidy, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Business & Finance

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Martha Clark, High/Middle Assistant Principal
Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit Principal

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Joseph Pisani

Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal
Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director
Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director
Emily Loux, Communications
Chris Parker, Technology Director
Darlene Rehor, Elementary Assistant Principal

OTHERS: Amy Porter, Steven Luccini

7:05PM III. PUBLIC INPUT

(Guests attending the meeting may address the committee on topics not on the agenda. There is a three minute time limit per guest)

- Mrs. Kennedy was sad when she read Mrs. Coburn's letter. She is going to be missed. She was responsive to parents and really cared about the students. She also thanked Mrs. Smidy for the letter regarding unfunded mandates. She has been fighting that for years.

7:10PM IV. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Joseph Pisani said yesterday was like the first day of school and he was excited that his glasses weren't fogging up. High school semi formal is Friday. Student council got a lot of sign ups for the fundraiser showing Despicable Me. Practices have begun for the play Clue. He touched base with Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Coburn. Ms. Craig is doing so many incredible things with the middle school student council. Other things going on: kindness campaign, a fundraiser for an animal shelter, putting things to know packets together for incoming middle school students. Painting nice pictures/messages on bathroom walls. Read across America happened at the elementary schools. NHS students read to them. Everyone has been so respectful of each other on what they choose for masking. Joseph heard/read about Mrs Coburn. A group of students are sad she is leaving but grateful they had her as a principal at the elementary school and thanked her for her leadership. It's very rare for a group of teenagers to agree on something. They will go far because of her leadership
- Mrs. Balboni asked what time the semi-formal starts.
- Joseph Pisani thinks 6-10 p.m.

7:15PM II. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

7:20PM V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Regional Agreement Approval (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy said the agreement was in the packet and it has not changed since the February meeting. DESE is looking for approval from us so the commissioner can approve it. Then the towns can vote.
- Mr. Lubbers asked when we needed to get it to the others.
- Mrs. Smidy is hoping to get it to DESE tonight, the towns need to have it for their warrant.
- Mr. Lubbers asked if it was possible for him to vote the same way as Jason Forgue. He is not an expert in finance and Mr. Renauld is not here.
- Mrs. Smidy said this document governs how the school district and the towns work together, how we calculate the budget, and towns leaving and entering. The current regional agreement is out of date. This is the final document after feedback from towns.
- Mr. Lubbers respects the work that she has done with Ms. Fisk but still has concerns about other people who have a different opinion. He has the greatest respect for Ms. Fisk about finance and her dedication to the district.
- Ms. Page said it has to be updated, this is the amalgamation of all the work we have gone through.
- Ruth Kennedy asked about requirements for the school committee. The document states the resignation goes to the school. That is not the way it goes. When a person resigns, they send a letter to their town clerk. The town sends it to the school committee and it is up to the town to appoint someone. That is not reflected in the agreement.
- Ms. Smidy said we tried to beef up the language so it was a two way street.
- Ruth Kennedy said it isn't a two way street, they are elected by the town. It is the selectboards responsibility. It is up to the school committee members to keep in touch with the selectboard members. It is part of the charting the course.
- Ms. Smidy said we can have DESE look at this section to make sure we are in compliance.
- Mr. Forgue said the thought was if we knew, we could tell them to go through the process and notify the clerk.
- Ruth Kennedy asked what is the process for enforcing what is owed financially if a town withdrawals.
- Mrs. Smidy said obligations are on page 9, but we will flag that section for DESE as well.

Mr. Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to accept the regional agreement as written.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays 2 Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, David, Keri, Lyndsey, Sarah

Nays: Mike L., Mike M.

B. Recommendation for Special Education Transportation Contract Ms. Fisk is recommending Lecrenski Brothers for the FY '23-25 special education transportation contract with an average of 1% and no contingency for fuel charges.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to recommend Lecrenski Brothers for the FY '23-25 the Special Education Contract.

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

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Mike M., Lyndsey, Sarah

C. FY '23 School Calendar (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy said there was discussion of potentially moving half days but we will keep them where they are but if we had bad weather we would move to the following week.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to approve the FY '23 School Calendar.

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

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Mike M., Lyndsey, Sarah

7:35PM VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. First Read of Superintendent's Entry Plan Findings

- Mrs. Smidy said this is the first reading. She will talk about the highlights tonight and get more into detail at the next meeting. She would like to bring a few things to attention that are relative for planning. With Mrs. Coburns departure the elementary schools need to have a successful transition. After taking input from families, Mrs Coburn, staff and students, she is going to shift to one principal for each school with no assistant principal. Each school needs strong leadership to get to know the families. The line item would be a little different.
- In the interest in making sure the enrollment increases or stays steady and making sure we are providing great programs. We have a lot of them and people might not know of them or be able to access them. She is changing the current communications position to a vocational and academic programs coordinator. Relocating the money to the new position. We need to promote programming in a more intentional way. We would allocate more rural school aid to fund that position. And if we can prove that benefits our enrollment and program, maybe tuitioned in money could help with that. Will keep an eye on it to make sure it is sustainable.
- Third is to have an excellent curriculum for all students k-12, high quality instruction and materials, pd support, by making the curriculum director a full year position. This could be funded through title II. We have obtained about \$369,000 in grants for instructional materials.

- Those are the three main priority areas.
- Ms. Dragon asked if there has been any thought since 6th grade has moved and we may be expanding preschool. Could we go to a Prek - 5 and a 6,7,8 model.
- Mrs. Smidy said yes, that is a good suggestion. She met with the 6th grade teachers last week and is meeting with the 5th grade teachers next week. She wants to get input from families too.
- Ms. Dragon said the principal is also in the wrong building for the 6th graders.
- Mr. Forgue asked with the principal reassignment, would Mrs. Rehor still be here for the remainder of the year.
- Mrs. Smidy said yes she will be. We would go through a process. The new positions would start for the new school year.
- Mrs. Briggs asked if that is the responsibility of the school committee or Mrs. Smidy.
- Mrs. Smidy would like the school committee on the interview committee group but it is the superintendent's responsibility. She is happy to take feedback on any of the information in the plan.

B. First read of Policy D (Enc.)

- Mrs. Papillon went over the D policy changes. A lot of them were language changes, little things nothing substantial. Two policies will be deleted: DBB which is outlined under state law and DKB salary deductions as those are really worked out in negotiations and individual contracts. There is a new policy based on the recommendation of MASC and that is DJA purchasing authority.
- Move to vote on at the next meeting.

C. Underfunded/unfunded mandates review and potential vote

- Mrs. Smidy said Ruth Kennedy brought this up at the last meeting. She has been consulting with other superintendents and Ms. Page and Mr. Forgue she is proposing sending this to the governor's office and legislators. This letter was to the ways and means committee and signed already, there was a hearing on education already today. If the committee waives the two meeting rule she will send this out immediately. She is attending a hearing on Friday to talk about ideas legislators have for spending. We could send it to Hinds, Sabadosa, Velis, Blais, Pignatelli, and Boldyga's office.
- Ruth Kennedy said we can go back 5 years for reimbursement. Suzanne Bump is who we would apply to..

Mrs. Morawiec made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to waive the two-meeting rule to vote on the underfunded and unfunded mandates letter to legislators.

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

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Mike M., Lyndsey, Sarah

- Ms. Smidy said the state budget went up 9% but there is such a disparity between schools as ours was 4%

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to approve the letter to legislators regarding Underfunded and Unfunded Mandates.

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

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Mike M., Lyndsey, Sarah

D. Update re: representative for Negotiations from towns

- Mrs. Smidy emailed select boards to see if anyone was interested. This representative must be in place 21 days before opening a contract. We can have a vote or waive the vote since there is only 1 nominee; Roger Booth.

7:45PM VII. JOINT BUDGET SESSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS

A. Recommendation to approve 2000 account Total \$8,407,847.00

- Ms. Fisk said the budget is broken down in several sections, 2000 is all instructional support staff salaries, instructional materials, and guidance.

Mrs. Garfield made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to approve the 2000 account in the amount of \$8,407,847.

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

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Sarah

Recuse: Mike M., Lyndsey

B. Recommendation to approve 3000 account Total \$1,854,299.00

- Ms. Fisk said 3000 is support staff nursing, coaches, extra curricular

Mrs. Moriawiec made a motion seconded by Mr. Forgue to approve the 3000 in the amount of \$1,854,299.

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

Yeas: Jeana, Pegg, jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Mike M., Sarah

Recuse: Tara, Lyndsey

C. Recommendation to approve the FY '23 Budget in the amount of \$16,747,274.00

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve the FY '23 Budget in the amount of \$16,747,274.00.

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

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Mike M., Lyndsey, Sarah

D. Recommendation to approve the alternate assessment method for the FY 23 Budget

Recommendation to approve the alternative assessment method of FY 23.

Kristen last year of alternative assessment pilot - based on minimum and enrollment, alternative is an equal distribution across all towns. Sta 3 down and 3 up.

Mr. Lubbers made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to approve the alternate assessment method for the FY '23 Budget.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays 2 Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, David, Keri, Lyndsey, Sarah

Nays: Mike L., Mike M.

8:05PM VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 2/9/2022, 2/15/2022, 3/2/2022 (Enc.)

Mr. Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve the minutes of 2/9/2022.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 2 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Mike M., Lyndsey, Sarah

Abstain: Tara, Keri

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to approve the minutes of 2/15/2022.

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

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Lyndsey, Sarah

Abstain: Mike M.

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to approve the minutes of 3/2/2022.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 2 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Lyndsey, Sarah
Abstain: Tara, Mike M.

8:10PM IX. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mrs. Papillon said the open house was so great last week. The kids were so excited and asking questions. Staff, students, and administration put in a lot of work.
- Mr. Forgue missed what would have been his 13th and last.
- Mrs. Briggs agreed with the high school and middle school, it was great to put faces to names. The teachers are the best thing we have going.
- Ms. Page said it was nice this late in the year. Kids were comfortable and owned their classrooms.

B. Chairperson

Ms. Page said we need an executive session at or before 8:30 for negotiations, not to return to open session.

Mrs. Morawiec made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to go into Executive session at or before 8:20 p.m. pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Paraprofessional Association if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares, not to return to open session.

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

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Lyndsey, Sarah
Abstain: Mike M.

C. Superintendent

Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy put her central office update in the packet. We are rolling into spring and like Joseph Pisaini said we have some exciting events coming up.

D. Assistant Superintendent - None

E. Administration

- Mr. Finnie said they are working on bringing back the celebratory events. They combined the awards ceremony, and seniors will still be front and center with spring fling in the afternoon.
- Mrs. Papillon said the honor roll link in gator bites was not working.
- Mr. Finnie will check the link.
- Mrs. LeBlanc said we received the celebrating literacy grant k-8 new reading program \$169,000. They have started looking at programs and narrowed it down 3 ele education, whit and wizdom, an?
- Mrs. Briggs said she was at the PTO meeting and they are working on putting Chester Elementary back on track again.
- Mr. Lubbers said he is meeting tomorrow with CES. He is trying to raise money for the students here.

F. Town Officials - None

8:20PM X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- Mrs. Garfield said they talked a little about the timeline and will discuss it further at the next meeting. It will be more streamlined.
- Mr. Lafleur asked Mrs. Smidy about the sign out front.
- Mrs. Smidy said the writing on the board is no longer working and the quote to fix it ranges from \$8,000 to \$15,000. The operating system was put in when the building was renovated and it was a floppy disk. Looking at putting a lighting strip in the letter area for now. The temporary fix with the LED light could be the permanent fix.
- Mr. Morrissey said all you need is a 110 and WIFI,
- Mrs. Smidy said Joseph Piasani and the student council are taking over the sandwich board.
- Mrs. Smidy said she is working on revising our MOU for emergency management. Kurt Robie connected us with the new facilities director at Westfield and both attorneys have looked at it. She will bring it to the next meeting.

B. Legislative Liaison - None

C. Policy Subcommittee - None

D. Building Liaisons - None

E. CES Update - None

Entered into executive session at 8:20 p.m.

8:30PM XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

8:35PM XII. INFORMATION

Information

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

Warrant

AP#1059 \$241,362.66	PR#016 \$434,076.79
AP#1063 \$35.51	PR#017 \$394,802.42
AP#1065 \$189,924.66	PR#018 \$409,598.88
AP#1066 \$130,651.25	PR#018.1 \$331.48

8:40PM XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Executive session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Paraprofessional Association if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares.

Mrs. Morawiec made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to go into Executive session at or before 8:20 p.m. pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Paraprofessional Association if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares, not to return to open session.

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

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, Mike L., David, Keri, Lyndsey, Sarah
Abstain: Mike M.

8:50PM XIV. ADJOURNMENT at 9 p.m. unless extended by majority vote.

Mr. Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to adjourn at 8:34 p.m.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain Absent 2 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Terri, David, Keri, Lyndsey, Sarah
Absent: Mike L.,Mike M.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy L Stewart,
School Committee Secretary