

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.

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

REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, October 12, 2022

Middle School Room 112/114

7:00 P.M.

7:00 PM I. OPENING OF MEETING

Call to order: Sarah Page, Chairperson

BLANDFORD

Keri Morawiec

CHESTER

Jeana Briggs
Jason Forgue

HUNTINGTON

Pegg Dragon
Lisa Goding

MIDDLEFIELD

Tasha Strong

MONTGOMERY

RUSSELL

Tara Balboni
Sarah Page
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Kristen Smidy, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Assistant Superintendent

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Martha Clark, Comm/Program Coordinator
Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal
Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director
Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director
Vanna Maffuccio, Chester Principal
Andrew Samuelson, Littleville Principal
Chris Tamburrino, Asst. Pupil Services Director

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Joseph Pisani

OTHERS: Martha Gendron, Kristina Schultz, Susan Addis, A. Fisk, Susan Rhoads, Leah Jerritsma, James crane, Steph Conway, Jodi Fiarman, Jodi's Husband

7:05 PM II. 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)

- Jodi Fairman had a few words about what led her to leave Gateway. She said she has no extra staff and they have a similar enrollment to 6-12 and they have a guidance secretary and a security monitor. She has been asking for support and hasn't received any. She has been here for 15 plus years and the lack of support and feeling undervalued forced her to make the hardest decision of her career. It made her feel cornered. She was offered the position back in August and didn't feel like she was ready to leave but with all the extra hours she has been putting in, it wasn't good for her mental health. A restructure to the district is overdue.
- Susan Rhoads worries about the survival of the district. We are losing people who are moving to other places with smaller class sizes. It's a concerning trend.
- Mr. Forgue said come to some of the town meetings. As a representative of the school itself. All we hear as town representatives is the school takes so much money and we need to reduce. How do Ms. Fisk and Mrs. Smidy come up with a budget when we continue to cut. We end up in the middle and we lose people like Jodi – the more we go to the towns and meetings it's the same thing over and over. Susan Rhoads Are we able to take in the data – about which top candidates who didn't take the job. Exit interviews of the data when people leave.
- Mrs. Smidy does invite people for exit interviews and two of them were salaries alone, but most of them are more comprehensive. There is still pressure to keep the budget below a certain percentage. It puts us in a really compromised position. We are not the only district in this situation.
- Mr. Forgue said the open recruitment is nice to see. In the past
- Ms. Goding said the other challenge at town meetings is young people are not always able to go to meetings so it is stuck with the public that isn't necessarily vested in the school.

7:10 PM III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Joseph Pisani said he helped out at Littleville with announcements when he was younger and now he does them every day. Unsung and sometimes tireless work of the secretaries. He asked the Littleville teachers and they say it is sad to see her go.
- Elementary – Chester – each Friday students get to have books with Boomer – check out books and boomer the dog. Some tree tapping STEM instruction – buckets – steel catering pans. Constitution day – students at every level. Stem class made some awesome spaghetti towers. He made one in a high school science class and they put him to shame. Respectfulness is this month's character trait. Littleville constitution day two students from each class shared ideas with the whole school for the 20-22-23 school year. Art working on self portraits. Memory book
- High school student government elections: Freshmen: president Elizabeth Kadzik, Treasurer Erica Madru, Student Council Elizabeth Kadzik and Erica Madru. Sophomore president Cynthia Papillon, Vice president Ben Pritchard, Secretary Olivia MacIver, Treasurer Gia Marchese and student council, Cynthia Papillon and Olivia McIver. Junior President Caiden Parker, Vice president Joey Pisani, Secretary Kaitlyn Maynard, Treasurer Sawyer Wilkinson. Student Council: Reeghan Morawiec, Joey Pisani, Kaitlyn Maynard, Alexi Bonenfant. Seniors: President Olivia Canner, Vice President Olivia Dame, Secretary Nancy Mueller, Treasurer Navaeh Judson. Student Council: Olivia Kanner, Olivia Dame, Nancy Mueller, Jordyn Dubour. Very big thank you to Reagan Morawiec and Alexi

Bonenfant – thank you to both of them on behalf of their service with class government. He looks forward to working with them . Seniors

- Student council has their first meeting tomorrow. Homecoming the week of October 17. Soccer games, cross country will be at a meet. Cross country seniors?? The week ends with a pep rally and a dance for high school students. He took psat's. Fall colors and flannel Fridays MASR be a founding member and interim director of legislative affairs. First delegate this Saturday. Resolutions, to be voted on. Standardized voting rights, chapter 70,

7:15 PM IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

- Ms. Page welcomed Tasha Strong to the committee from Middlefield.

7:20 PM V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Bus Contract Information

- Mrs. Smidy said Leah represents the bus drivers union. She asked for advice from our attorney and they said to work directly with the bus company management to address the concerns. She and Ms. Fisk have a meeting with bus management later in the week.
- We are in year 2 of the bus contract.
- Sarah when we are renegotiating the contract – Your voice for your bus drivers – the contract we have is with Lecrenski and the union steward.
- Leah Jorritsma has a contract with Lecrenski – and it has disciplinary and she
- Ms. Dragon said the contract they were presented with – the first contact with the driver is a verbal warning. There is no discussion before that. It was poorly stated. It isn't a question of what is wrong. It's you've been warned.
- Ms. Page said the problem is with the contract. It is not our role to change the contract at a school committee meeting. She feels for the issue at play.
- Leah Jorritsma said it is the language – it says the school committee may remove the driver.
- Mr. Forgue said we are talking about two different contracts – Lecrenski is outlined in the RFP from Lecrenski. She has one It needs to be presented in the RFP ahead of time, which currently is not. We can't fire the bus driver, they just cannot drive our routes.
- James Crane said the issue is he got taken out of his role after driving for 20 years. It shouldn't happen to him. He got a little frazzled and essentially got fired from the position.
- Mrs. Smidy said Lecrenski submits an RFP to the district – what Lea is saying is her contract is different from the RFP. It is not the school committee's responsibility to change the contract. It is the bus company's responsibility to have them be the same.
- Mrs. Balboni asked if she had talked to Lecrenski.
- Leah doesn't think the proper procedure was followed. Before
- Our contract – allows us to remove a driver without due process.
- James Crane said that should come from the union when the bus company is negotiated.

7:30 PM VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM

A. High School Principal notification/approval of list of courses that have an enrollment of 10 or less. (Enc.)

- School committee will be notified of 10 or less if and approve classes that need additional funding.

B. October 1, 2022 Census

- Ms. Fisk said we have 695 students who live in the district. Our total is 730 right now. School Choice and Charter numbers will come in in January.
- Preschool is slightly higher. High school is about the same size. 6-8 is down a little bit. Elementary is up
- Ms. Dragon asked about school choice.
- Mrs. Smidy said if a school district accepts they get \$5,000 per student. If they come in with special education increments, it's a little more. We lose \$5,000 when they go out. School committee has to look at numbers carefully to make sure we don't need to add another teacher when we accept students.
- Ms. Dragon asked if the schools are public or private.
- Mrs. Smidy said it is for public schools. Private is out of pocket for the parent and home school is a wash as well. Charter school tuition can be higher than \$5,000, more like \$13,000-\$17,000 and vocational schools are about \$18,000 which is why we are trying to beef up our vocational program. We are changing the process for our two vocational programs.
- Mr. Forgue what about the virtual schools
- Mrs. Smidy said it's a public school and we voted for a cap.

C. Paraprofessional Negotiations

- Mrs. Smidy said we received an intent to bargain. They are part of the GEA and James Duggan does plan to have Brad Brousseau present, so we will have Dupere Law offices there. Roger Booth is willing to sit on it if no one from the other towns mind. We need to decide if it will be held online or in person. They are asking for a pretty large cost of living increase across the board.

D. Collaborative for Educational Services Request for Approval for Establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund

- Mrs. Papillon said she attended her first meeting in September over zoom. In may they had discussed an establishment of a capital reserve fund. It stemmed from the pandemic payment protection program. They received the funds and then had revenue from creative sources so they were building up the ability to repay it and it was forgiven. They have a chunk of money and are asking for us to vote to approve their capital reserve fund. There are stipulations. It has to work on improving their physical sites and HEC academy. They wanted to vote for our CES If we can include it. And vote it the November 9 meeting.
- Ms. Page asked if there is a reason they are not using the extra money to make tuition less for teachers.
- Mrs. Papillon does not know the answer yet. It cannot exceed five million dollars.
- Mrs. Smidy asked if they have safeguards to continue to increase the funds.
- Ms. Goding asked how much was the PPP fund?
- Mrs. Papillon said 5.2 million
- Mrs. Smidy said she can ask other superintendents what their thoughts are.

E. Grant Acceptance: Safe and Supportive Schools \$10,000

Mrs. Morawiec made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to Accept the Safe and Supportive Schools Grant in the amount of \$10,000.

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

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Lisa, Keri, Lyndsey, Tasha, Sarah

7:40 PM VII. CONSENT ITEMS 9/14/2022 Minutes (Enc.)

Mr. Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to approve the minutes of 9/14/2022 as written.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 7 Nays Abstain 2 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Lisa, Keri, Lyndsey, Sarah

Abstain: Tara, Tasha

7:45 PM VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee - None

B. Chairperson

- Ms. Page shared s description of subcommittee and liaison roles and what is expected.
- The MASC Joint conference is November 2-5 if there is anyone interested in going to let her or Mrs. Smidy know.

C. Superintendent - Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy talked about a regional agreement update. She and Ms. Fisk met with DESE and they expressed disappointment that we didn't come to an agreement. They did acknowledge the hard work we have put in. They will consult with their legal department and get back to us.
- Mrs. Smidy said that Linda Coffey is retiring at the end of the month. Stop in and say goodbye.
- Mrs. Smidy and Mr. Forgue attended a meeting of Connecticut Valley Superintendents and there are some concerns over the new governor.
- Mr. Forgue said it was supposed to be about equity and inclusion and it turned into a budget discussion.
- Mrs. Smidy said statewide there has been hope, but we are getting held harmless so we are not getting the 9-14 increase that some schools are getting.
- MCAS scores came out and our is accountability data is increasing

D. Assistant Superintendent

- Ms. Fisk said if Joseph Pisani wanted to go to the MASC Joint Conference, it is free
- Joseph Pisani said he might be going with another MASR student.

E. Administration

- Mr. Finnie said Joey does a great job. Parent teacher conferences are coming up soon.
- Mr. Samuelson said conferences are coming up. He has 20 elementary teachers taking a dyslexia course thanks to Deanna. Kids are going to get powerful experiences. There has been a lot of discussion around MTSS. They are having regular meetings with teacher teams on how to approach instruction and interventions and accelerating

learning. First grade skills lesson and then group breakdown. This has been going on for about two weeks now and working well for all kids. We have our health teacher collaborating with the school adjustment counselors so she can do some adaptive PE. He gave a shout out to the PTO, they have lots of upcoming events and fundraising. Littleville Craft Fair is coming up. His brag is we have six Littleville teachers who took time out of the day to be here. With Mrs. Fairman's passionate speech, he wanted to take a moment to celebrate her hard work here at Gateway. He is grateful for everything she did to get him started and he would like to introduce Kayla Turner. Who is coming from a paraprofessional position to take the secretary position.

- Mrs. Maffuccio also acknowledged conferences. MTSS is going on and we are making sure we have high quality robust instruction and they are getting core plus more before we move to interventions. We are including an agriculture component as well, tree tapping, and looking into composting and raised beds.
- Mrs. Clark said after school is booming this year. Several new offerings. Also offering some additional clubs, golf in Worthington, and Wright Flight in Northampton for an aviation/stem program. They meet Wednesday for one hour. They have one student flying from Northampton to Orange and the other student flies back. We have started a pathway with the Chester Water Commission. They need water treatment operators. Blandford is on board now. We are trying to get a hold of STCC so our students can take their course in the spring.
- Ms. Dragon said on the job training is big for kids.
- Mrs. LeBlanc said we have the Berkshire county professional development day on November 8. There are 54 offerings this year. They can attend Berkshire county or team collaboration here. Offerings include content needs and things we need for licensure.
- Mrs. Smidy said this is an extra day added to the contract that is funded by ESSER. It is the 183rd day
- Mr. Samuelson said there is a lot going on – the thing he is running up against right now is the attendance policy. Without having a policy it is really hard.
- Mrs. Smidy said it is on the agenda for the next policy meeting.
- Mrs. Clark said if you are a band alumni read the gator bites. There may be a soccer game and the run is coming back.

F. Town Officials - None

7:55 PM IX. COMMITTEE REPORTING (Enc.)

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- Met tonight and are reviewing what went great and what we want to change.

B. Legislative Liaison

C. Policy Subcommittee

- Will be meeting before the November school committee meeting.
- Mrs. Balboni said they had a sick bank meeting today.

D. Building Liaisons

- Joseph Pisani reached out to local state representative and senate candidates to get their stance on education. It was decided it was best to do written correspondences. He sent a set of six questions. So far he has received three responses. He read the responses from Brendan Phair, Anthony Russo, and Paul Mark.

- We will see about inviting the elected official to come and present at a meeting.

E. CES Update - Earlier on the agenda

8:05 PM X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

8:10 PM XI. INFORMATION

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

AP #1013 \$45,442.53	PR #005 \$115,466.23
AP #1009 \$150,483.90	PR #006 \$486,830.83
AP #1016 \$42,514.05	PR #007 \$417,694.85
AP #1018 \$3.49	PR #008 \$431,720.47
AP #1017 \$30,299.62	
AP #1020 \$30,983.75	
AP #1022 \$5,232.96	
AP #1023 \$148,852.27	
AP #1025 \$141,764.35	
AP #1027 \$58,696.77	
AP #1030 \$25.72	

8:15 PM XII. ADJOURNMENT at 9 p.m. unless extended by majority vote.

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to adjourn at 8:43 p.m.

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

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Lisa, Keri, Lyndsey, Tasha, Sarah

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L. Stewart,
School Committee Secretary