

**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.

**FY' 24 Budget Hearing Minutes**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2023**

**Gateway Main Complex  
Gateway Performing Arts Center**

**7:00 P.M.**

**7:00PM I. OPENING OF MEETING**

Call to order: Sarah Page, Chairperson

**BLANDFORD**  
Terri Garfield

**CHESTER**  
Jeana Briggs  
Jason Fogue

**HUNTINGTON**  
Pegg Dragon  
Lisa Goding  
Edward Renauld

**MIDDLEFIELD**  
Tasha Strong

**MONTGOMERY**

**RUSSELL**  
Sarah Page  
Lyndsey Papillon

**SECRETARY**  
Stacy Stewart

**CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION**  
Kristen Smidy, Superintendent  
Stephanie Fisk, Assistant Superintendent

**ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL**  
Martha Clark, Communication/Program Coord.  
Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal  
Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director  
Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director  
Vanna Maffuccio, Chester Principal  
Chris Parker, Technology Director  
William Sullivan, Middle/High Asst. Principal  
Chris Tamburrino, Asst. Pupil Services Dir.

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**  
Joseph Pisani

OTHERS: Wendy Long, Amy Porter, Curt Robie, Nick Balboni, Amy Mason, Adair Laurel-Cafarella, Tameran Laurel-Cafarella, Gloria, Martha, Linda Hyjek, Andy Myers, Bob

Daley, Ben Just, Karen Leis, Cathy Servaes, Jenna Kakimoto, Ruth Kennedy, Betsy Todd, Bill Brown, Vanna Maffuccio

**7:05PM      II.   FY '24 Budget Public Hearing**

Sarah opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

Kristen gave the presentation

Overall 3.76%

District leadership increased. Grants require more audits, and dues went up. A good chunk increase was that. Total budget is \$17,747.

Nick Balboni asked what else is included in tuition to schools besides charter.

Mrs. Smidy said students who have needs we cannot services in the district. Out of district special education, choice and charter.

Mr. Fogue said Chapter 70 went up. 1.03% chapter 70 went up. Are there large disparities with other towns?

Mrs. Smidy said yes.

Mr. Fogue asked if we would expect to see the reimbursement for charter go up next year.

Ms. Smidy said the state reimburses on a sliding scale, it would technically go down over the years. The process is not as clear as voke is in their appeals process, even though they both cost about the same.

Mrs. Smidy said the enrollment from last year to this year is going up. Minimum contribution is the wealth of the town and property value. We have done some investigative work. Salaries are used for taxes, land value we don't know yet. It is interesting how that state is dictating the towns pay 4.4% more, but their increase is not that high.

Total assessment comparisons.

We are offsetting the budget with ESSER III, School Choice, Rural School Aid, State and federal funding and Tuition from incoming students for the vision program.

Bob Daley asked if we could put together a strategy for community advocacy at the first opportunity which would be March 7 open houses.

Mrs. Smidy has also reached out to other superintendents.

Mr. Fogue asked if there was any feedback from the Governor about dissatisfaction with the rural school number. He reached out to Natalie Blais about why it isn't fully funded.

Mrs. Smidy said she has not heard anything. 60 million is the fully funded amount. It is currently at 7.5 million. She said her mentor is the person who wrote the rural schools report.

Andy Myers is concerned about the charter school number.

Mrs. Smidy said we budgeted for 3 students and then ended up with 5 additional students.

Andy Myers asked us to double check.

Ms. Fisk said for charter schools, the state increases the revenue and expenditures at the same time and wants you to net the spending out. Compared to the 139,000 jump

Mr. Forgue asked why the sliding scale for charter reimbursement.

Mrs. Smidy thinks they tried to lessen the blow, there is no deadline for charter.

Gloria Farrell asked about tuition for assistant special education director. Are we getting a new assistant director?

Mrs. Smidy said we are using that tuition payment to pay for these salaries so it is taking them out of the budget.

Nick Balboni asked if we will post this on the website?

Mrs. Smidy said yes.

Mr. Forgue spoke about advocacy. We now are all represented by the same house Nick Boldyga admitted he had yet to read the rural schools report. That would be a great start. Senator Mark will be at the train station in Chester on Sunday. His aide is a gateway graduate.

Bob Daley asked Mrs Smidy if she would share with everyone the intern program.

Mrs. Smidy talked about the career training tracks - chapter 74, internships, career, program of studies. We have been able to match students with their place of interest. One is the water operator field internship in Chester. These are paid internship opportunities. Elem electric, nursing students, early education (here), and dental. We have received grants to support the water treatment internship. Student are also taking a class at STCC. This is not happening there anywhere else.

Mrs. Smidy thanked everyone for coming.

**7:41 PM XIV. ADJOURNMENT at 9 p.m. unless extended by majority vote.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.