

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, March 8, 2023

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

Jeanne Briggs
Jason Forgue

HUNTINGTON

Pegg Dragon
Lisa Goding
Edward Renauld

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
Melissa McCaul, Student Support Leader (Lit)
Chris Parker, Technology Director
William Sullivan, Middle/High Asst. Principal
Chris Tamburrino, Asst. Pupil Services Dir.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Joseph Pisani

OTHERS: Gloria Farrell, Wendy Long, Andy Myers, Scott Caron, Tom Kulig, Amy Mason

7:05 PM II. PUBLIC INPUT - None

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

7:10 PM III. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

- Mrs. Smidy said Missy McCaul will be the sStudent Support Leader for the remainder of the year in a grant funded position. She will be joining Mark Folta, Interim Principal in leading Littleville.

7:15 PM IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Update regarding discipline law

- Mrs. Smidy said we previously tabled the discussion. DESE has given an advisory that basically said interpret the law locally as you wish. We are still looking for more guidance and still following the spirit of the law. We are not changing what we are doing. The high and middle school code of conduct has been revamped. We may want to include a copy of DESE's advisory. Littleville's code of conduct will come up in April.

7:20 PM V. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM

A. SkillsUSA Field Trip (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy said this is the same as what was planned last year. The early education class is competing. There is a component that requires school committee approval if they make it to the finals. If they make it to finals in would include an overnight trip.

Ms. Dragon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve Skills USA request.

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

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

B. MS/HS Code of Conduct Review and Approval (Enc.'s)

- Mrs. Papillon said she and Ms. Page worked on this committee with Mr. Sullivan and some other faculty and staff. This has also been vetted by our attorney.
- Ms. Dragon said as she broke down the categories that kind, vs unkind there were a lot of suspensions. It seems you could be up to a 10 day suspension for what they are saying. The harshness of the material in being unkind. That is a judgment call. You might say he was unkind, but someone else might not think so.
- Mrs. Morawiec said the stuff that leads to suspension is verbal and written threats, it has to have a specific spoken intent.
- Ms. Dragon said for verbal or written you could get 6-10 days and so many other things do not get a suspension. Skipping a class is one thing but skipping school is another thing. Violations of school rules or expectations. Plagiarism if they have been doing it more than once. She feels the first items are too harsh. Those are specific items. When you are talking about kind or unkind. If they use the wrong personal pronoun, is that unkind.
- Mrs. Balboni thinks it is spelled out well.
- Mrs. Papillon said the kind, safe, respectful, responsible are not necessarily levels, they are just the pillars.
- Mrs. Smidy said it may be good to look at things versus threats - safe versus unkind.
- Mrs. Goding said social or emotional supports were X out under disrespectfully discourteous behavior. She is comparing it to one's around it.
- Mr. Renauld thinks we are reading into it way too deep. It gives administration a lot of leeway. There is an appeal process if treated unfairly. You are not going to address everything. Are they being a jerk by not using the correct pronoun or do they not know?

- Mrs. Goding said disrespectful behavior doesn't have social emotional supports like everything else.
- Mrs. Papillon said it's not progressive. It could be a variety of outcomes.
- Mrs. Goding would social emotional supports and educating them help stop.
- Mr. Forgue said this is absolutely necessary. We are a school that has touted zero reported bullying incidents. It is clearly not zero. How do we respond when we go from zero to many with this new report?
- Mrs. Smidy said there is work being done around the bullying policy. We will be in compliance when they finish the process. They concluded the first draft today. It will go out for public comments. We are reporting the new direction with fidelity.
- Mr. Forgue thinks that we will have to state we were wrong in the past. Several people had their kids bullied and there was no response to it.
- Mrs. Smidy said I expect it will come, because there will most likely be paperwork to fill out.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morwawiec to approve the Middle/High School Code of conduct with the x under disrespectful or discourteous behavior.

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

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

C. FY '24 School Calendar Approval (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy said the calendar was included in the packet. The format is different and the coding is a little different. Graduation is May 31, the last Friday in May. It's normally in June. Notice there are 6 half days for professional development as developed by the pd committee for the high quality instructional material and work we are doing to make sure they are implemented well. There is a half day every 3rd week of the month unless there is a vacation. We will still offer wrap around on those days. November 7 is included, but we may want to hold on that right now. There are creative ways on the table they will be able to participate in professional development that won't cost as much. Families are looking for dates so she really wants to get this out. Open house is being proposed as a split event. Elementary will move back to September and secondary will stay in March. School committee dates are not on the calendar. She may make a note of school committee meetings on the bottom.

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the FY '24 with the changes discussed and the 183rd day budget pending.

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

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

D. Grant Approvals (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy said the Deeper learning grant is to supplement the Boston trip.

Ms. Dragon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to approve the list of grants.

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

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

**7:50 PM VI. JOINT BUDGET SESSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS
FY '24 Budget Adoption**

- Ms. Fisk said the the assessments in the document were the assessment the final .voted on at annual town meeting save 23,000
- Wendy Long asked about the cost center.
- Ms. Fisk said when school committee members have family, they cannot vote on that line item but they can vote on the overall budget.
- Andy Myers complemented Ms. Fisk and Mrs. Smidy for working on the budget. He is happy we are getting more students.
- Ms. Fisk said this does include seven charter school students.
- Mrs. Goding said you do the best you can with what you know. She asked how we feel about para negotiations?
- Mrs. Smidy said she can't talk about too many of the details - but it is accounted for.

**A. Recommendation to approve Chester Cost Center (02) Total \$1,400,018
(Lyndsey)**

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to approve the Chester cost center.

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

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

Recuse: Lyndsey

**B. Recommendation to approve High School Cost Center (08) Total \$2,851,342
(Tara & Lyndsey)**

Mrs. Morawiec made a motion seconded by Mr. Renauld to approve the High school cost center.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Lisa, Keri, Ed, Tasha, Sarah

Recuse: Tara, Lyndsey

**C. Recommendation to approve the FY '24 Budget in the amount of
\$17,377,333**

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve the FY '24 Budget.

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

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

Abstain: Lisa

8:15 PM VII. CONSENT ITEMS 2/8/2023, 3/1/2023 Minutes (Enc.)

Mr. Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve the minutes of 2/8/23, and 3/1/3023.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 2 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Jeana, Pegg, Jason, Lisa, Lyndsey, Ed, Tash, Sarah

Abstain: Tara, Keri

8:20 PM VIII. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE

- Joseph Pisani said today is international women's day. He said to all the teachers, paraprofessionals, cafe, custodians, secretaries, administrators, school committee members and every young woman. Thank you for make Gateway limitless with possibilities and potentials. Thank you to all of you in this room.
 - Middle school is having a dance for \$5.
 - Bake sale at tomorrows open house
 - Summer camp flier - share it.
 - The report was also shared and it included a student survey

8:25 PM IX. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mrs. Dragon said because we are so large geographically we lose students because they can go to another school that is closer to them. We are not losing students for what we are or aren't doing.
- Mrs. Smidy said rural school aid needs to be fully funded for equity purposes. The legislators have heard from about 40 members from the Gateway community.
- Mrs. Papillon received an email about the upcoming joint committee for the budget weighs and means coming up on Monday at UMass. She can forward the email for the link to submit questions.
- Mrs. Goding asked if we put the information on the website.
- Mrs. Smidy said yes.
- Mrs. Briggs said it was on gator bites.
- Mrs. Smidy said she may put out another to contact our state reps, not just our local reps.
- Joseph Pisani encourages students to send letters as well. It was recommended by MASR. It is a voice the legislators don't expect to hear from.

B. Chairperson - None

C. Superintendent - Central Office Update (Enc.)
Invitation to Legislator Event

- Mrs. Smidy said the superintendents are coordinating a luncheon with statewide advocacy. It will be held at Mohawk. They are working on a date that works for everyone.
- Mr. Forgue said senator Mark mentioned we change the thought process. It will only come from increased correspondence.
- Mrs. Smidy said Blais used the big win comment too and it's not.
- Mr. Forgue said the student opportunity act is what started this and we came up with suggestions.
- Joseph Pisani said over half a billion dollars in theory will be going toward education, so asking for 60 billion is not a lot to ask for.
- Ms. Fisk said she would guess when they talk about 1/6th, they are looking at a six year timeframe. The most concerning part of rural school aid is the increase right now, but it doesn't show how many districts are included.
- Mr. Forgue said Chester is going to the MA Selectboard Association Western and Rural Massachusetts conference. It's April 1 at the Delaney house.

D. Assistant Superintendent

- Ms. Fisk said assessment letters will go out tomorrow. We will keep updating the towns on vocational student numbers that change between now and April 1.
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E. Administration (Enc.)

- Mrs. Clark gave summer camp numbers 175 students as of today. 107 junior explorers and 68 explorers.

F. Town Officials - None

8:30 PM X. COMMITTEE REPORTING (Enc.)

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- Will meet prior to the April 12 School Committee Meeting.

B. Legislative Liaison - None

C. Negotiations - None

D. Building Liaisons - None

E. CES Update - None

8:35 PM XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

A. Next Policy Subcommittee Meeting March 8, 2023

B. Next Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee Meeting April 12, 2023

8:40 PM XII. INFORMATION

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

AP #1062 \$257,409.87

PR #017 \$430,156.72

AP #1066 \$57,255.89

PR #018 \$447,777.75

AP #1067 \$109,407.89

8:45 PM XIII. ADJOURNMENT by 9 p.m. unless extended by majority vote.

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to adjourn at 8:35 p.m.

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

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

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy L Stewart,
School Committee Secretary