

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 MINUTES
Wednesday, September 13, 2023
Middle School Room 112/114**

7:00 P.M.

7:00 PM I. OPENING OF MEETING & QUESTION TO SEE IF ANYONE IS RECORDING

Call to order: Kristen Smidy, Superintendent

BLANDFORD

Nicole Daviau
Keri Morawiec

CHESTER

Jeana Briggs
Brian Forgue
Jason Forgue

HUNTINGTON

Pegg Dragon
Lisa Goding
Edward Renauld

MIDDLEFIELD

Alex Seid
Tasha Strong

MONTGOMERY

RUSSELL

Tara Balboni
Sarah Page
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Kristen Smidy, Superintendent

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal
Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director
Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director
Vanna Maffuccio, Chester Principal
Melissa McCaul, Littleville Interim Principal
Chris Parker, Technology Director
William Sullivan, Middle/High Asst. Principal
Chris Tamburrino, Asst. Pupil Services Dir.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Joseph Pisani

OTHERS: Scott Caron, Amy Porter, Brenda Chaloux, Bob Garriepy

- Mrs. Smidy introduced the new members. Nicole Daviau from Blandford, Alex Seid, from Middlefield and Brian Forgue from Chester.

7:05 PM II. REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE

A. Chairperson

Mrs. Papillon nominated Ms. Page as Chair, seconded by Mr. Renauld.

Ms. Dragon nominated Mr. Forgue as Chair, seconded by Mrs. Morawiec

Ballot Vote:

Ms. Page: Nicole, Tara, Ed, Tasha, Keri, Alex, Jeana, Jason, Lyndsey, Sarah

Mr. Forgue: Pegg, Brian

B. Vice-Chairperson

Mrs. Morawiec made a motion seconded by Mrs. Daviau to nominate Mr. Jason Forgue as Vice Chair.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Nicole, Pegg, Brian, Jason, Keri, Lyndsey, Ed, Alex, Tash, Sarah

Absent: Lisa

C. Appointments

- Sick Bank Committee: Tara, Keri
- Negotiations Committee: Jason, Pegg, Tasha, Lisa
- Superintendent's Evaluation: Tara, Sarah, Brian, Keri
- Policy Committee: Lyndsey, Nicole, Pegg, Sarah
- Warrant Signing Committee: Sarah, Tara, Alex, Jason, Ed, Brian, Nicole, Pegg, Keri, Lisa
- Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) Representative: Still Vacant
- Gateway Education Foundation: Lyndsey, Lisa
- Legislative Liaisons: Brian
- Liaisons
 1. Chester Elementary: Jeana, Brian
 2. Littleville Elementary: Ed
 3. Middle School: Lyndsey, Keri
 4. High School: Tara, Nicole
 5. Curriculum: Lyndsey, Sarah
 6. Pupil Services: Ed
 7. Facilities: Sarah, Brian, Alex

7:15 PM III. PUBLIC INPUT

- Reagan Morawiec, a Senior here at Gateway, has some concerns with the AP calculus class and AP exam policy which she feels is an equity issue. The program of studies says if a student does not sit for the exam their GPA gets adjusted to honors credit. You are not required to pass the course to get credit, only to pay for it.
- Ms. Page said we will move this to the October Agenda.
- Mr. Jason Forgue asked what is the difference between the coursework for Honors versus AP or is it simply the exam.

7:20 PM IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

7:25 PM V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

- A. Approve/Confirm Superintendent's Contract**

Mr. Jason Forgue is happy to see the vacation buy back taken away and the subsequent move to a six year contract. It gives some comfort from both sides. It won't be something we have to do anything with right away.

Mr. Jason Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Goding to modify the contract in the third year of the superintendent's contract with the approved changes. (for those not on the committee last year the changes include removal of vacation buy back (from 15 to 0), reduction in vacation days (from 33 to 25), 6 years starting 7/1/24 with a 2.5% increase the first year)

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

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

B. School Physician Contract Approval

- Mrs. Smidy said in previous years the school physician was provided by the school based health center. One is not provided this year. We have a one year contract with Kristen Duchane. There had never been a hiccup with the school based level. She and Ms. Page met with them and they assured us that they will provide the school physician in the future. The cost is \$2,500. There was not a charge in the past and won't be one in the future.

Mr. Jason Forgue made a motion seconded by Mr. Renauld to approve the 1 year school physician contract.

- Mrs. Goding asked for an explanation of the misunderstanding.
- Mrs. Smidy said in the past the school physician worked with the nurse leader, and they had a partnership. There was a shift in the communication style. There were questions about the role feeling like there would be more responsibility. We have a new nurse leader and there is an interim CEO for the health center. The school physician does not need to be on site, however they are consultative and sign off on medication delegation.

Mr. Jason Forgue made a motion seconded by Mr. Renauld to approve the 1 year school physician contract.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

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

7:30 PM VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM

A. Discussion to include of Pledge of Allegiance at meetings

- Ms. Page said Ms. Dragon brought it up and she thought it would be a nice thing. We do it in schools. We are not just a public meeting.
- Mrs. Daviau said we could have a motion to say it on a per meeting basis.
- Mrs. Goding asked if there is any exposure that people might find offensive.

Mrs. Morawiec made a motion seconded by Ms. Dragon to include the pledge of allegiance at the beginning of each meeting.

Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 3 Nays 7 Abstain 3 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Pegg, Ed, Sarah

Nays: Tara, Nicole, Brian, Jason, Keri, Lyndsey, Alex

Abstain: Jeana, Lisa, Tasha

- Mrs. Smidy said to Mrs. Daviau's point: anyone can make a motion prior to each meeting.

B. Discussion of moving school committee meeting start time

- Mrs. Papillon said if we moved the meeting earlier, it makes a 5 o'clock start time for subcommittee meetings.
- Mr. Renauld has selectboard meetings on Wednesday nights and as it is he has to leave early to get here.
- Ms. Page said we will continue to move forward with the 7:00 p.m. start time.

C. Discussion regarding State Rural School Aid/Rural Schools Bill

- Mrs. Smidy said 15 million out of 60 million is not equitable. We still don't know our allocation or amount. She would like to caution the narrative around rural aid being a big win. We cannot responsibly budget without knowing. Natalie Blais and Jo Comerford sent an email about sending thank you notes to the committees who supported it.
- Mr. Jason Fogue thinks we should, but with a caveat, thank you but it is not enough. People think this increase is going to make the assessments go down, however it is not going to change much of anything. We as a school committee guessed and we are not going to get what we guessed. We should send a thank you for what they did, but we have a long way to go. The 60 million was pre inflation. He feels it should be closer to 80 million now.
- Ms. Page said she and Mrs. Smidy spoke about putting a folder together with those letters in it so you have the resources.
- Mrs. Smidy said many legislators were amazed at how much they heard from the Gateway community.
- Joseph Pisiani received an email about thanking them. He sent a thank you to Senator Cumerford , but not to everyone. If Reagan or He put in 25% they would fail.
- Mr. Jason Fogue said one of the messages - Southwick is attempting to try to be added to the definition of rural schools. If a town like that gets added we will lose more.
- Mrs. Smidy thinks we should ask Nicholas Bodega how it would affect the rest of his towns.
- Mrs. Smidy said Mrs. Strong forwarded a note about support for the rural school bill. She will forward it to everyone.

D. Acknowledge updated district bullying forms

- No action needed

E. Acknowledge Intent to Bargain from GEA

- No action needed.

7:45 PM VII. CONSENT ITEMS

A. 6/14/2023 Minutes (Enc.)

Mrs. Morawiec made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the minutes of 6/14/2023.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 5 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

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

Abstain: Nicole, Brian, Lyndsey, Ed, Alex

B. Acceptance of Grants/Donations (Enc.)

a. Information share about the Barr Foundation Grant

- Mrs. Smidy said the list of grants is in the packet. We will keep a running tab like this.
- Barr foundation is giving us \$100,000 to figure out how to create opportunities to empower students to reach their goals. From July - November, 90 percent of students and staff and 50% of the community/family need to have a voice. We are one in 8. It is an incredible opportunity to figure out what the community needs. November - March is the dream portion where we will tour the best schools. March - June support us to write a plan and if they approve it they will fund it. The grant was focused toward high school, however in other schools the population in their high schools are larger than our school district, so our schools are participating. They don't want you to come with solutions, they want you to gather information to see what your community needs. Members from elementary, middle, and high school are on the team.
- Mr. Jason Fogue said when we push community involvement, one of the dreams should be a new roof
- Mrs. Daviau wanted something in the minutes for the gratitude for Mrs Leblanc's - writing skills.
- Ms. Page also acknowledged Mr. Lubbers, a former school committee member for putting the idea out there.eas.
- Mrs. Daviau asked if there could be a session where childcare is provided.

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the grants.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

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

7:50 PM VIII. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE

- Mr. Jason Foruge suggested a question for the survey. Are there any students who don't take an AP exam because of the requirements, i.e., cost.
- Mrs. Goding wonders about field trips based on expense as well.
- Ms. Dragon said in other states students take the exam to attain college credit.

7:55 PM IX. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mrs. Daviau has a conflict of interest - She is a Blandford municipal employee and holds an elected unpaid position. Potential volunteering at Chester elementary school - it would be a short term combination with Romona Thieme to bridge the gap. She is the literacy coordinator for Blandford and those students go to Chester.

B. Chairperson

- Was happy to see the Regional Agreement mentioned in the letter.

Chairperson at or before 8:40, to discuss paraprofessional return to open session

Mr. Jason Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to go into executive session at or before 8:40 p.m. and to return to open session session

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

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

C. Superintendent - Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Everything is in the update.

D. Assistant Superintendent - None

E. Administration (Enc.) - None

F. Town Officials - None

8:00 PM X. COMMITTEE REPORTING (Enc.)

A. Superintendent's Evaluation - None

B. Legislative Liaison

- Mr. Brian Forgue said Natalie Blais describes her role as economic development- less focused on school related stuff. She is a significant part about general policy, and how grants are created and administered. She said she would come and visit us.

C. Negotiations - none

D. Building Liaisons - none

E. CES Update - none

F. Policy - none

8:15 PM XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

8:20 PM XII. INFORMATION

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

AP#1095 \$213,423.18	PR #001 \$108,866.21
AP#1100 \$126,462.91	PR #002 \$205,496.12
AP#1102 \$72,944.98	PR #003 \$199,087.58
AP#1103 \$41.49	PR #004 \$161,133.09
AP#1001 \$803,077.00	PR #005 \$486,379.81
AP#1000 \$93,502.85	
AP#1003 \$158,359.13	

AP#1105 \$29,506.19
AP#1005 \$243,000.05
AP#1011 \$90,367.94
AP#1015 \$88,066.03
AP#1019 \$9,180.03
AP\$1017 \$105,889.23

8:25 PM 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

8:44 PM XIV. RETURN TO GENERAL SESSION

A. Ratification Vote on Unit D contract

Returned to open session at 8:44 p.m.

Mr. Jason Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to ratify the Unit D, Paraprofessional's 2023- 2026 Contract.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

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

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

Mr. Jason Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L Stewart
School Committee Secretary