

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, October 11, 2023

Middle School Room 112/114

7:00 P.M.

7:00 PM I. OPENING OF MEETING

Call to order: Sarah Page, Chairperson

BLANDFORD

Nicole Daviau
Keri Morawiec

CHESTER

Jeana Briggs
Brian Forgue
Jason Forgue

HUNTINGTON

Pegg Dragon
Lisa Goding

MIDDLEFIELD

Alex Seid
Tasha Strong

MONTGOMERY

RUSSELL

Tara Balboni
Sarah Page
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Kristen Smidy, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Assistant 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, Reagan Morawiec, Amy Porter

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

A. District MCAS Data Overview (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy went over a PowerPoint presentation that was shown on the smartboard as well as included in the packet.
- Mr. Jason Forgue arrived at 7:04 p.m.

- Mrs. Briggs arrived at 7:06 p.m.
- Mr. Seid arrived at 7:14 p.m.
- Mr. Jason Forgue asked who determines the points. Is the algorithm set by DESE? Does the algorithm take into account if there was a more drastic change?
- Mrs. Smidy said it is set and based on last year's scores only. The target is based on the previous year. The % takes into account the past 4 years.
- Mr. Jason Forgue's concern is we are hanging on by attendance. He hopes there is room for what we think is the reason, rather than the state just telling us what it is.
- Mrs. Smidy said this isn't going to change what we are doing with high quality instruction.
- Ms. Page asked if our internal data shows the same.
- Mrs. Smidy said yes, Iready data shows this. We have extra time dedicated to data for professional development this year. The data support from the state is going away even though she would like it back.
- Ms. Dragon said this is only our second year as a middle school.
- Mrs. Smidy said yes this year and last year 6th grade has been with the middle school, but the grade level data doesn't change much.
- Mrs. Daviau said the accountability percentiles and improvement targets are similar in all the other schools but high school is much different.
- Mrs. Smidy said a number of schools are doing better than us.
- Mrs. Daviau asked, will the middle school still receive the intervention?
- Mrs. Smidy said it's a good assumption, we would be eligible for more grants to support more assistance and DESE will require more reports.
- Mrs. Goding asked how other rural schools are doing.
- Mrs. Smidy said there is a western mass contingency of this support group, but doesn't have a good analysis.
- Mrs. Strong said because Chester is doing so well, does that mean we will receive less support?
- Mrs. Smidy said for schools under 1,000 we can apply for things as a whole school district or by school to personalize what we need.

7:25 PM IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Health Center Update

Discussion for policy and formation of an advisory board

- Mrs. Smidy said the MOU does not address some specifics such as space and visitors. There has been a request to have community visitors. She has looked at our policies and doesn't find anything that addresses it. She had asked if the full-time staff members are supposed to see students for the full time they are at the school.
- Mrs. Strong would hate for a student not to get seen if a community member is being seen instead.
- Mrs. Smidy said she has concerns with it and will have the policy subcommittee look into it.
- Mrs. Daviau asked how many people would they see.
- Mrs. Smidy said 6-8 patients per day.
- Mrs. Goding asked which services.
- Ms. Page said just the physician.
- Mrs. Smidy said for mental health, students have a year wait, however they see community members online.

- Mr. Seid said, so they are seeing a community member before a student in crisis.
- Mrs. Smidy said these are established patients. She was asked by a member of the school based health center if we were discussing this tonight. She said she was only recommending referring to it to the policy subcommittee and not going to make a decision tonight.
- Mr. Jason Forgue argued over building use policy. He is concerned we are already using the facility in a profit for profit venture without a school use/building use in place.
- Mrs. Smidy said there is a MOU with the services in exchange for space. Not sure which one trumps the other.
- Ms. Page said there was talk about the formation of an advisory board so we can work together to get on the same page.
- Ms. Dragon asked if it is always virtual or do people in person.
- Mrs. Smidy said students are seen by the physician in person and adult patients in person. The school physician sees students and staff and would like to see community adult patients.
- Mrs. Strong asked who was going to make the decision.
- Mrs. Smidy is not sure.
- Ms. Page said the first step will be meeting with policy in November.
- Mrs. Papillon asked if there would be an appropriate time for us to have conversations.
- Mrs. Smidy held this from last spring until the school physician piece was solved.
- Ms. Dragon asked about the school physician.
- Mrs. Smidy said in the past they provided one, this year it will be \$2,500, but it won't in the future. They have committed to it moving forward. The person is from the community health center, but not school based.
- Mrs. Daviau said the other models were more urban and had a full day of students. Is there indication to have their full day occupied for primary care? If she is seeing 6 to 8 outside patients does that leave enough time for our students.
- Mrs. Smidy said the grant is from DPH and she just asked for clarification today.
- Mr. Jason Forgue said we are providing the space so they can receive the grant. We should have access to the grant. We definitely need to know what this consists of.
- Ms. Page said it has been here and it is a huge asset so we want to be careful. It also includes dental and vision. They have had a leadership shake up as well and they are working that out.

B. Superintendent Contract-Vote

- Ms. Page said this is for the second piece we didn't do last meeting. It's a contract offer for 6 years. A separate 6 year contract in July.

Mrs. Daviau made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve a six year contract for Mrs. Smidy starting July 1, 2024.

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

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

7:30 PM V. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM

A. Approval of FY '24 First Quarter Transfers (Enc.)

- Ms. Fisk said it is all staffing, therapeutic staffing where they actually are. New speech language pathologist and occupational therapy. Special education is new, plus a shift in staff as well as non-certified staff that will be filling in.

Mr. Jason Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Goding to approve FY '24 first quarter transfers as provided.

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

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

B. AP Exam Cost Discussion (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy said included in the packet were details on the current process, the difference between AP and honors. They surveyed the teachers with the summary of the differences. How many AP Tests that are administered to get a cost.
- Mrs. Goding and Ms. Dragon said if everyone qualifies for free lunch doesn't everyone qualify for a reduced rate.
- Mrs. Daviau asked if this is the cost to subsidize or the full cost.
- Mrs. Smidy said this is the full cost.
- Mr. Brian Forgue asked if AP classes still have a required final?
- Mrs. Smidy said no, they do a project.
- Mr. Brian Forgue asked if you didn't take the AP test could there be a final to get AP credit, just not transfer to college credit.
- Mrs. Balboni said it is valuable, but it doesn't really get them anything in college.
- Mrs. Daviau asked if AP classes are taught in the same class as honors.
- Mrs. Smidy said no in different classes. There are different standards.
- Mrs. Goding asked what is the difference between asking for financial aid for the test and financial aid for college.
- Mrs. Morawiec said not everyone that fills out a form doesn't need assistance when it comes to paying for three \$100 classes.
- Ms. Page said teachers get good feedback about where your students have trouble. When it comes to scores we have work to do.
- Joseph Pisani said it is a larger stigma especially in a small school.
- Mrs. Daviau said we could still have students fill out the financial aid form.
- Mr. Seid is the AP coordinator at his school. If you do pay for the exams, automatically expect more kids to take the test. Students sit down with the counselors and say I want to take the test. His school is spending about \$14,000. They took 162 exams this year. They said if they are paying, students are taking the test. There is no loss for the student. If you can put it in the budget, it is a win and good for everyone.
- Ms. Fisk asked if they have in the course of studies that it is required you take the AP Exam if you take an AP class.
- Mr. Seid said yes and their deadline is early, like the thirteenth of this month. The deadline for the exam order is November, and after that you may incur a late fee. He gets the roster.
- Mrs. Smidy said we will put it in the budget.
- Ms. Fisk said we will use student activity. If there is a balance we will use ESSER.

- Mrs. Smidy said we will update the program of studies for next year to require students to take the exam.

7:45 PM VI. CONSENT ITEMS

A. 9/13/2023 Minutes (Enc.)

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to approve the minutes of 9/13/23 as written.

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

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

B. Acceptance of Grants/Donations (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy said there are five grants that need to be approved.

Ms. Dragon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to accept the five grants on the list.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

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

7:50 PM VII. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE

- Joseph Pisani said they have a Pep rally coming up, clubs and teams are having a sas-fest and he and Abby will dj.
- T-shirts and sweatshirts for GEF are on sale
- Littleville - nursery rhyme unit; students and staff dressed up
- Chester super power hero - and the superpower is respect.
- MS had a design for the best amusement park contest.
- HS - senior nights are coming up. The first is cross country. There are no senior boys on the cross country team. Boys soccer this Friday, girls varsity is the 20th. He was the senior manager for varsity this year. They put their blood, sweat and tears into this season.
- Stop by the athletic booster shack for food.
- He is waiting post Barr to put out his survey.s

7:55 PM VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mr. Jason Fogue met with Girls, Inc last week, then met with the executive director and didn't get the answer he wanted. Was hopeful to have expanded services. We spent a lot of time talking about what a girl's state is. It is something they will do but, in Holyoke, but we may be even further along.

B. Chairperson - None

C. Superintendent - Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Ms. Smidy said we need to start discussing how to move forward with roof replacement; at least bring attention to it so the process is transparent and cooperative. The SBA payment is falling off in November so it would be easy for us to roll that over to the roof replacement. It might not be for every town. What payment options are to be selected, not whether or not it needs to be done. She is meeting with Curt Robie from Middlefield and Ms. Fisk.
- Mr. Brian Forgue said the earlier the better, the wheels move slowly.
- Ms. Fisk said one of the thoughts is that the \$225,000 comes off of the budget, but it is likely the budget is going to go up.
- Mr. Jason Forgue said the quote we got 4 years ago was over a million.
- Ms. Fisk thinks it was more like 3 million. Maybe there will be more SBA money. The state budget is not going as smoothly as they thought. Revenue is down. Jason Lewis said yesterday not to worry about it, MARS said to worry about it. They still have not calculated the payment of rural school aid. We are asking for hold harmless for transportation.

D. Assistant Superintendent - None

E. Administration (Enc.) - None

F. Town Officials - None

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

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- Ms. Page said the superintendent's evaluation met tonight for the first meeting of the year. Mrs. Balboni is the chair. Process and timing worked well last year. Ms. Smidy shared her preliminary goals.

B. Legislative Liaison

C. Negotiations

D. Building Liaisons

E. CES Update

- The next CES meeting is in December and Mrs. Balboni will attend.

F. Policy

- Policy will meet before the next school committee meeting.

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

8:20 PM XI. INFORMATION

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

AP #1022 \$178,986.48	PR #006 \$420,583.02
AP #1026 \$42,522.34	PR #007 \$422,814.92
AP #1020 \$28,006.59	
AP #1028 \$47,361.58	
AP #1031 \$10,210.25	

AP #1030 \$55.37

8:25 PM XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

8:25 PM XIII. ADJOURNMENT by 9 p.m. unless extended by majority vote.

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

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

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

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy L. Stewart
School Committee Secretary