

2023

Annual Report of the Gateway Regional School District



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Member towns include:

Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Russell

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GATEWAY TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

GATEWAY SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE	685-1000
PUPIL SERVICES DEPARTMENT	685-1017
LUNCH PROGRAM	685-1005
GATEWAY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL	685-1100
GATEWAY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT	685-1107
GATEWAY REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL	685-1200
GATEWAY REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT	685-1206
LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER	685-1106
CHESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	685-1360
LITTLEVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	685-1300

“No School” signals will be broadcast between 5:00 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. over the following stations:

WYHN	Holyoke
WAQY	Springfield
WNNZ	Westfield
WHMP	Northampton
WMAS	Springfield
WPKX	Springfield
WWLP	TV 22, Springfield
WGGB	TV 40, Springfield

As well as on the website and the weather line @ 685-1001

**THE GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
AND ASSOCIATED PERSONNEL
THE COMMITTEE**

**Sarah Page, Chairperson
Jason Forgue, Vice Chair
Tara Balboni
Jeana Briggs
Nicole Daviau
Pegg Dragon
Brian Forgue
Lisa Goding
Keri Morawiec
Lyndsey Papillon
Edward Renauld
Alex Seid
Tasha Strong**

**Russell
Chester
Russell
Chester
Blandford
Huntington
Chester
Huntington
Blandford
Russell
Huntington
Middlefield
Middlefield**

ASSOCIATED PERSONNEL

**Kristen M. Smidy
Stephanie Fisk
Stacy Stewart
Deborah Kuhn
Deborah Burkott
Scott Caron
Dupere Law Offices**

**Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Facilities
Administrative Assistant
District Treasurer
Transportation Coordinator
Accounts Payable
Counsel for the Committee**

**BUSINESS OFFICE
Gateway Regional School District
12 Littleville Road
Huntington, MA 01050**

**Telephone (413) 685-1000
FAX: (413) 667-8739**

Hours: 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Most regular meetings of the School Committee are held one Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. A calendar with specific dates and location can be found on the district's website – www.grsd.org under the school committee tab.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

William Sullivan	Principal – High, Middle School
Kylie Crawford	Interim Assistant Principal - High, Middle School
Melissa McCaul	Principal - Littleville Elementary Sch.
Vanna Maffuccio	Principal–Chester Elementary School
Kurt Garivaltis	Director of Pupil Services
Christopher Tamburrino	Assistant Director of Pupil Services
Deanna LeBlanc	Director of Curriculum
Jason Finnie	Principal on Assignment
Kelly Sudnick	Nurse Leader
Christopher Parker	Technology Director

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS 2023 - 2024

Annual Report Superintendent of Schools

Gateway Regional School District experienced a year of discovery and opportunity from 2023 into 2024. During the summer of 2023, members of the administrative team met to fine tune our district strategy plan into two priority areas for the upcoming academic year. The priority areas are:

- **Cultural Priority:** All staff in the Gateway Regional School District will intentionally build positive, caring relationships and uphold clear, equitable systems and policies so students are respected, feel safe to learn, take risks, and make progress towards their goals every day.
- **Instructional Priority:** Gateway educators deliver excellent, culturally responsive learning experiences grounded in our high quality instructional materials and review data to make adjustments to their practice so that students make their thinking and reasoning public while engaged in rigorous, grade-appropriate tasks.

These two priorities align nicely to our [district strategy plan](#) and speak to the work that we will be focusing on for the school year. Professional development, support in the classrooms, the educator evaluation process, and meeting agendas will be targeted towards these two areas. Gateway's incredible teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, and administrators continued to build on the foundation of a safe school environment for all by consistently applying our anti-bullying protocols and building authentic relationships in addition to implementing high quality instructional materials in English language arts and mathematics across the district.

Additionally, Gateway received notification in July of 2023 that after a lengthy application and multiple interviews, we were awarded with the Meeting the Moment Grant funded and supported by the Barr Foundation, the private philanthropic organization out of Boston. This grant provided the district with one hundred thousand dollars to partake in a robust process to prepare the transformation of the high school experience, which Gateway expanded to include the elementary and middle schools as well. If we engaged in the process with fidelity, the Barr Foundation committed to being the district's long-term partner to provide technical and financial support for this innovative work.

Starting in the fall, a core team was developed to lead the work for this grant. Members of the team included: Cheryl Wright (HS math teacher) and Anne Marie Fant (HS English teacher) with Middle/High School Assistant Principal Will Sullivan and myself as the core team coordinators along with Bill Brown (district librarian and union vice president), Martha Clark (6th grade teacher, parent of child in district, district resident), Linda Hyjek (3rd grade teacher, parent of Gateway graduates, district resident), Deanna LeBlanc (district

Curriculum Director and Barr Foundation grant writer), Amy Mason (district teacher of the visually impaired, parent of child in district, district resident), Taylor Simpson (HS English teacher) and Val Zeh (HS math teacher, parent of Gateway graduate) as core team members. The core team led the district through a process of comprehensive data and perspective collection to give all stakeholders a voice in sharing their views on the strengths and areas of growth for Gateway. This included facilitating focus group discussions with every student in the district kindergarten through twelfth grade, collecting survey information from staff, students, and families, organizing a site visit for an organization to assess classrooms in the district, and planning walkthroughs for our own staff to complete learning observations. All of this data was collected and synthesized into three guiding questions focused on student engagement and ownership, post-secondary support, and a strong sense of purpose for our community.

Beginning in January of 2024, the Barr Foundation funded opportunities for staff, administrators, parents and students to travel to see other high performing schools in action across the country. Using the lens of the three guiding questions, stakeholders collected as many high-quality ideas as possible for Gateway to consider. By the end of the site visits, over 60 members of our learning community will visit over twenty schools including locations in California, Arizona, Colorado, Vermont, Maine, and across Massachusetts.

The final stage of this grant occurs in the spring of 2024 where a plan is developed for Gateway to implement some of the innovative ideas to begin the transformation process. The Barr Foundation does not have required components to implement; instead, the district is charged with finding the best fit for our own community and designing a proposal where we work together to prioritize actions and identify which systems to address to meet our goals. Throughout this process, we have included staff input, informed families through our bi-weekly newsletter, and rewarded students for their participation. I am excited and hopeful with what this opportunity will bring to the learning community at Gateway in future years.

Aside from the work with the Meeting the Moment grant, the district has seen some impactful shifts in leadership. After over a decade as the Principal at the middle/high school, Jason Finnie announced that he is choosing to step away from his position at the end of the 2023-2024 school year. After a screening process that included staff, parent, and school committee input, Dr. Will Sullivan, the current Assistant Principal, was the top choice for the permanent position. Mr. Finnie worked with Dr. Sullivan to ensure a seamless transition. Additionally, Melissa McCaul, longtime Gateway teacher leader and Huntington resident, accepted the position as Interim Principal at the start of the school year and was unanimously picked by a screening committee for the permanent role in December. I appreciate the work of Mr Finnie and am incredibly excited for our new leaders.

In addition to the hard work focused on teaching and learning, district staff and leaders continued to advocate for fair and equitable funding from the state. With COVID-related funds expiring in September of 2024, it is important for our learning community to speak to

legislators to let them know that our district requires state funding to maintain and grow our educational programs for our students. Because of our joint efforts last year, the allocation for Rural School Aid grew from \$5 million to \$15 million by the end of the budget cycle. Although many legislators have deemed this as a “big win”, it is only a fraction of what a recent state audit of the funding required to level the playing field for students in rural communities. Even still, the proposed budget for Gateway has a total assessment increase to towns coming in at under 2% with the individual town assessments varying by enrollment. The funds needed to continue offering robust programming will be offset by grants and our tuition in revenue sources such as our successful special education Vision Impairment Program that we have developed in the past year.

School safety continues to be a priority for Gateway. In 2023-2024, Gateway was the first school district in the state to pilot the enhanced visualization platform offered by the Department of Homeland Security. In partnership with our local police chiefs, we also provided staff with comprehensive training for many different scenarios and expanded the staff offerings to include bus drivers, our health center, our after school staff and maintenance crew, ensuring that we are focused on our strong protocols at all times.

I am consistently impressed by the commitment of our staff at Gateway. Please join me in celebrating those staff retiring from Gateway this school year after decades of service to our community including:

- Gail Labrecque, paraprofessional in the district for 37 years
- Ruth Harper, Special Education at Littleville for 28 years

We are lucky to have such dedicated educators caring for and about our students.

Please find an update from each department administrator and school leader in this report. I am so proud of the progress we have made, and there is plenty of hard work ahead. With your support and the partnership of our incredible community, I know that we will continue to strengthen our programs and opportunities for Gateway students. I invite you to reach out to me anytime to schedule a time to discuss the work in our school district.

Pupil Services

The 2023-24 school year like the year before continues to mark growth and evolution as the district continues to adapt to the changing needs of our students and families. Last year, it was pointed out how students with disabilities had grown to 25% of the entire student population. Despite the fact that our enrollment has modestly declined for the year, the number of students with disabilities has grown to include 222 students who require Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs). Aligned with the national and statewide trend, students have continued to suffer dramatic regression academically, behaviorally and in the social emotional domain since the pandemic.

In order to adapt and effectively address our students' needs, the department has made a number of personnel and programmatic changes this school year. At Littleville, the district hired special education teacher and soon to be BCBA Hillary Dupont to fill a new position managing GROWTH Academy. GROWTH Academy is a flexible, social emotional/behavior program to address the needs of elementary students who require additional behavioral support, counseling and crisis intervention through a small, self-contained milieu that works to quickly address behavioral concerns and provide staffing support to ensure that GROWTH students may be supported in mainstream classes to learn alongside their typical peers. Another special education teacher, Erica Allen also recently completed a master's degree in applied behavior analysis and was hired to manage the FLEX program. FLEX is a substantially separate program situated next to the Littleville library and serves students with developmental disabilities comorbid with cognitive impairment. These students, a majority of whom are diagnosed with an Autism spectrum disorder, require most of their academic classes in a self-contained environment with a high staff to student ratio to deliver specialized instruction and offer intensive behavioral support. Although FLEX students are occasionally included in specials with their typical peers, these students are primarily educated in the program to effectively meet their needs.

Our speech and language needs have continued to grow among the student body and our staffing has grown commensurate to these needs. Last year I spoke about the district hiring Huntington resident Katy Wojick as a Speech Assistant. Katy completed her graduate program and is certified as a Speech Pathology Assistant, or SLPA. Katy works primarily at Littleville Elementary school where her two young children attend as students. Additionally, the district was very fortunate that longtime Huntington resident and Gateway parent, Christina Kadzick applied to become our second SLPA for the district. Christina is an experienced professional who had previously worked as an SLPA for Northampton Public Schools for the past decade. Christina has two students at Gateway Regional High School and her eldest will graduate this year. She works at Chester Elementary and in the Middle/High school. Rounding out the Speech and Language department, despite our tireless effort to hire an in-person second Speech Pathologist to augment the exceptional clinical leadership of Amanda McFarland SLP-CCC, the district was required to hire another Telehealth SLP and successfully onboarded Athena Ziogas from Boston to fill this role. A Telehealth Clinician is a certified professional who delivers services virtually, or through the computer. Although this position affords the district the ability to be compliant with the needs of our students on IEPs, there is widespread agreement the in-person, on-site model for service delivery is superior and we will continue to brainstorm creative ways to hire an on-site specialist moving forward.

Another area of priority and growth for the department is Early Childhood. Our preschool programs continue to deliver exceptional programming for our youngest learners. The district continues to operate two half-day programs for 3 year olds at Littleville and Chester Elementary Schools and full day programs for four year olds at Chester and in the middle/high school. You may remember the district developed a new Chapter 74 Vocational program in early childhood development to create additional opportunities for our high school students and to create a pipeline of highly qualified staff who should become certified following graduation from the high school program and completing a year long program at Holyoke Community College. The full day program in the middle/high is where another new Gateway professional was hired. Longtime Westfield Principal, former Early Childhood Teacher and Blandford resident Joanne Hentnick joined the district this past fall. We are over the moon that she decided to come out of retirement to share her passion and experience with our youngest learners. Joanne's learning center topics and materials are some of the most creative, high interest activities you will see in any early learning center. The other fantastic staffing addition in early childhood is Chester Elementary's Kaitlyn Kelly. Kaitlyn is an extraordinary talent who is wise beyond her years and brings a seasoned calm professionalism with youthful passion and exuberance to Chester's youngest learners.

One additional professional was hired this school year to fill the enormous shoes of longtime district Occupational Therapist, Kathy Murray who retired this fall after many years of devoted service. After an exhaustive search by committee, the district hired former GRSD soccer standout and all around student extraordinaire, Jessie Baker. As a former student raised and living in the district, Jessie brings a wealth of connections and unique knowledge to her clinical expertise. After only 6 months on the job, we are confident the committee made the right choice and are hopeful you will join in celebrating Jessie as well as all our new and veteran Pupil Services staff.

Gateway Regional School District Curriculum Updates

Professional Development

This year's professional development was centered around our Tier 1 or "Core" instruction in the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) structure. The district strategy, "Learn, Support, Connect" grounded our work in ensuring that staff were learning about our new high quality instructional materials, enhancing our supportive learning environments and connecting our work to the larger community through a culturally responsive approach. We had many enriching experiences, including a session with speaker Adam Welcome, who

presented “The Time is Now” focused on how much our amazing students can do. Staff had the opportunity to collaborate as they continued to work through new materials. Most importantly, staff provided regular feedback to the professional development committee, who worked under the coordination of the Director of Curriculum to create a comprehensive professional development menu of offerings. Staff feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and many staff (more than 10) offered to host a Professional Development Session for their colleagues this year!

In addition to our internal professional development workshops and release time, Gateway Regional School District has tenaciously advocated for and been enrolled in the Massachusetts DESE Multi-tiered Systems of Support Academies for both math and for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for additional support years (FY ‘24 and FY ‘25). These two academies each include extensive professional development for a team of staff that is paid for by the state through their own internal grant system. The PBIS academy is training a team of 6 internal staff to be leaders in PBIS across the district, in order to build our own capacity to keep this framework in place at the end of the academy. We are in the third year of this program. The math academy is specifically designed around the Add-Vantage Math Recovery program, with Heather Cabral at Chester Elementary being trained and completing rigorous coursework to be a Math Recovery Specialist. There are now 3 staff in the district with this intensive training, making our math interventions much more sustainable. Both of these opportunities are helping build capacity and improving instructional strategies, which will improve outcomes for students. In addition, Gateway Regional School District is engaged in the Learning Acceleration Network (LAN) for the third and final year, which provides ELA high quality instructional materials support and coaching to leadership and to teachers. The LAN opportunities have specifically targeted developing leadership capacity to support the ELA implementation work. Principals have worked side by side with the Director of Curriculum to ensure that we are setting goals, and working with teachers to ensure that expectations are clear and support is provided. These network opportunities (academies and LAN) dramatically reduce financial burdens to our district long-term, as we will have internal experts available to support our teachers.

Grants

FY ‘24 has been another strong year in grant funding. Above our entitlement and targeted grants managed through the curriculum office, Gateway Regional School District was able to secure competitive grant funding from the Student Opportunity Act Evidence-Based Practice grant (FC 117) for \$200,000, the Innovation Pathways Planning Grant (FC 436) for \$25,000, the SEL & Mental Health Grant (FC 332) for \$53,550, the Safe and Supportive

Schools Grant (FC 335) for \$10,000, the After School and Out of School Time Grant (FC 528/530) for \$80,000, the Hate Crimes Prevention Grant (FC 794) for \$50,000, The Literacy Institute Grant (FC 583) for \$8,100, the Teacher Diversification Grant (FC 253) for \$32,102 the 21st Century Learning Grant (FC 647) for \$210,000, and the High Quality Instructional Materials Implementation Grant (FC 185) for \$65,744 have totaled \$734,496 in competitive grants that the curriculum office is directly involved in. Many of these grants have continuation opportunities as well, so that we can continue the important work from these grants moving forward!

Curriculum

Gateway Regional School District is in the third year of implementing Illustrative Mathematics in grades K-8. This program really pushes students' understanding of the three aspects of number in early grades, and student ownership of multiple problem-solving strategies in upper grades. Our English Language Arts curriculum is in the second year of implementation of the following: Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) for grades K-3, and Wit and Wisdom for grades 4-8. Our high school math department is reconsidering which High Quality Instructional Material to use in classes, with a decision to be made this spring. The district has further explored Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum and has fully vetted Second Step for continued use in our district. We have additionally made some changes in high school science, world language and continue to look at our instructional materials to determine if they are high quality while also reviewing for bias. No instructional materials are perfect, we are looking to make sure that they are aligned to grade level standards, and that the materials encourage student ownership of the learning.

Technology

The Technology Department at Gateway has had another successful year supporting the students and staff. The three employees in the department now total over 50 years of service to the district. While maintaining our high standards for student/staff support, much of the focus in the last year has been in safety/security.

The beginning of the school year saw a major changeover as we installed a new intercom system in the middle/high school using Rural School Aid funds. As the former system was dated and not working correctly, this upgrade was necessary and urgent. This new system allows for quick, reliable communication with all areas for general announcements, as well

as potential emergency situations. Upgrades to the system will allow us to call lock downs/shelter in place from any room.

We also have installed new clocks for each room that include a messaging system so that important information can be passed along visually as needed. This system is the backbone for many other important safety measures that are in the works, including; warning lights (inside and outside), larger message boards in common areas etc.

Following the feedback given to us as a result of security assessments by the Department of Homeland Security, we have continued to improve on our robust security camera system. We have added additional cameras and upgraded existing cameras to ensure our coverage is as comprehensive as possible. Additionally, we are adding TV type monitors with built in cameras at all common entrances as a way of reminding all that enter that they are being filmed. We continuously evaluate our systems to identify areas of growth through internal and external assessments.

In addition to the upgrades in safety/security, we continue to provide support for our robust 1:1 chromebook program which helps us to integrate our digital curriculum as seamlessly as possible. With the support of our administrative team as well as teachers, we are able to keep chromebooks in the hands of all students as well as educating them on proper use. Since a good portion of our district-wide curriculum is online, it requires us to provide a robust network to support this learning. We strive, on a daily basis, to keep our connections up and running, while providing the bandwidth necessary for learning.

While state and local budgets are fluid, we still have to take consideration to stay current in all aspects of technology, whether it be safety, security, device management or network connectivity, we are constantly looking for ways to expand our reach to provide a safe environment for our digital learning.

Chester Elementary School

Vision:

We strive to empower the students of today to create the world of tomorrow.

Mission:

At Chester Elementary School, we believe a meaningful education has the power to shape lives, inspire new ways of thinking, and build a better, brighter future. We are committed to building community partnerships that serve as catalysts to rich, relevant learning

experiences and to empowering our students to push new boundaries of innovation and productivity within a culture of belonging, joy, and high expectations for what students learn and who they become.

Student Enrollment (as of 2/24/24) at Chester Elementary School:

Preschool: 33

Kindergarten: 16

Grade 1: 17

Grade 2: 14

Grade 3: 9

Grade 4: 16

Grade 5: 17

Total: 122 Students

Enrollment has increased an average of 15 students since the 21/22 school year.

2023-2024 Achievements:

Academic

- Our school engaged in the Massachusetts Early Literacy Tutoring Program funded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), which allowed us to provide high quality early literacy tutoring, aligned to the science of reading, to students in K-3 at no cost to us (Students engaged in 40 minute sessions 3x/week before and after school). We engaged in 2 cycles of Early Literacy Tutoring this school year, with each cycle consisting of 36 sessions, from October through June. See * below.
- In January, DESE provided an additional opportunity for schools to partner with tutoring vendors for no-cost high dosage tutoring in grade 4 mathematics in order to accelerate student learning. We partnered with Imagine Learning and provided evidence based, high quality targeted mathematics instruction to 8 students in grade 4 during their WIN (what I need) blocks from February through June this school year. See * below.

*High dosage tutoring builds prerequisite and foundational skills to set students up for success with the current grade's core content. All costs for high-dosage tutoring are covered by the Department.

- We held our first ever Spelling Bee Competition for students in grades 2-5. We celebrated 5 students for their skill and sportsmanship during this event.
- We invited families in for many events and performances tied to student learning this school year, from Kindergarten's fairy tale performances, which was a unit of study within their core ELA knowledge curriculum, to fifth grade's living history museum,

which featured students as American patriots and heroes from their studies about the American Revolutionary War.

- We Implemented high quality English Language Arts curriculum, with integrity, in all kindergarten through grade 5 classrooms through the use of Amplify CKLA (K–3), Amplify Skills (K-2), and Wit and Wisdom (4-5).
- K-5 teachers implemented high quality mathematics instruction using Illustrative Mathematics Curriculum, with integrity, this school year.
- We Implemented and utilized an academic and social emotional/behavioral focused multi-tiered system of supports framework, MTSS, to provide all students with targeted, timely and research based practices and interventions in response to assessment and performance data.
- We implemented and maintained an Academic Progress Monitoring structure and model for measuring and responding to student performance data through biweekly skill based assessments. This model was upheld in order to ensure supports and interventions resulted in adequate to ambitious growth in specific domains of foundational math and reading skills.
- Our school implemented and upheld an equitable instructional schedule for math and reading in grades K-5 in order to ensure all students were provided with access to robust, quality grade level instruction. Students receiving services for special education or from a reading or math interventionist were pulled out of the classroom for this specialized support outside of their tier 1 mathematics and english language arts blocks (Core plus more model).
- We engaged in a free pilot program with Just Right Readers in order to accelerate student reading achievement through the use of personalized Science of Reading Take-Home decodable books. We used student data to provide 3 rounds of “just right” phonics based, high quality readers to 24 of our students in grades K-2. Each student received a total of 30 books (3 rounds of 10 books). These Take-Home Decodable Packs extended phonics instruction into the home and engaged parents and families in reading. Each book contained phonics tips and a qr code that provided direct and easy access to an engaging, short video lesson about the book's content, vocabulary, and targeted phonic's skill.
- After School Grade 5 Title 1 funded math tutoring began in January. Students received 70 minutes of instruction after school every Monday and Thursday.
- We provided monthly collaboration time around the implementation of high quality instruction materials for grade level teacher teams formed between both of our district's elementary schools.
- All of the principals within our district partnered with our curriculum director to select and implement professional development opportunities, inclusive of coaching, to support writing instruction for teachers in grades K-8.
- Chester staff worked to help form and advance our district's Literacy Leadership Team, which is a team that was formed to implement the complex multi-tiered system of support across grades preK–3.

- Two Chester Elementary School students received Massachusetts Student Achievement Awards for their exceptional performance on the 2022 MCAS test!

Enrichment

- We started a Girls Who Code Club after reading about the opportunity in the Commissioner’s Weekly Update. This club provided free computer science resources, including materials to start a Girls Who Code Club for students in grades 3-5. Students learned the concepts of loops, variables, conditionals and functions that form the basis of all programming languages. We received a free \$300 Amazon Gift Card for forming this club at our school.
- We partnered with Equitable Financial Advisors to bring a Financial Literacy kickoff event and program to our students in grade 3 and 4. Advisors from Equitable donated their time and expertise to teach and inspire students through a 90 minute Financial Literacy event. Additionally, they donated 30 copies of The Nickel, Dimes, And Dollars: A Wise Kid's Guide to Money Matters Book! This is an empowering and informative book that engages children (ages 6-12) in learning about financial fundamentals; children discover their power to make thoughtful choices around saving, spending, sharing, earning and growing their money. Students learned how to be the boss of their own money, as they became the co-authors and writers of this interactive book. They were empowered to make careful plans and decisions about how, when and where to earn, save, spend, and grow their money.
- Our school won The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) second annual, “Name A Snowplow” contest, which is a statewide contest for elementary and middle school students in Massachusetts. Our entry, Flower Plower, secured our school the District 1 win!
- We engaged in a hydroponics to lunch table project for the first time this school year! On 11/17/23, our students were proud and excited to eat school lunch because the hydroponic vegetables they grew were being served. Students harvested their hydroponic crops, but instead of taking the vegetables home, as they did last school year, half of our harvest was allocated for school lunch ingredients. The menu featured Swiss Chard and Bok Choy for the Very Veggie Soup and Green and Red Leaf Lettuces for the Turkey and Cheese Sandwiches. Our students are modern day farmers practicing and promoting innovative and sustainable agriculture!
- We successfully planted, grew, and harvested cucumbers in our hydroponic garden! Students in third grade harvested and tasted our first batch of cucumbers on January 26th!
- In January, we expanded STEAM instruction to include our 3 and 4 year old preschool students, in addition to our students in K-5.
- The Gateway Education Foundation supported our STEAM teacher and our grade 4 and 5 students in accessing more advanced coding and robotics equipment through providing funding for new “Finch 2.0” robots!

- We participated in the American Heart Association Kids Heart Challenge this school year! Our students raised funds to help kids with special hearts; they learned hands only CPR and how to take care of their own hearts too. Students participated in cardio-pumping challenges and engaged in a warrior style obstacle course during our Kids Heart Challenge Week in February!
- We tapped trees and boiled sap over a bonfire (all done on our very own school grounds) in order to produce and bottle maple syrup!
- Members from our Student Advisory Club made a trip to the Statehouse in Boston, Massachusetts to speak to legislators and testify in-person on behalf of the need to offer equitable educational opportunities for rural schools throughout the state.
- Students in grades 2-5 attended The Energy Academy: The Power Squad performance, which is an interactive assembly about energy efficiency. Two professional actors performed a series of comedic and educational sketches on the topics of energy resources and conservation.
- All students in Pre-K through 5 received a free copy of “The Energy Detectives: The Mystery of Snow” through the Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation.
- Students enjoyed watching the Berkshire Theater Group perform The Magic Tree House: Merlin Mission Winter of the Ice Wizard, a play with music, based on Mary Pope Osborne’s book of the same title this school year. Students in grades 3-5 received a free copy of the Magic Tree House Book Merlin Mission #4 Winter of the Ice Wizard following the performance.

School Climate/Joy/Belonging

- We Created a strong sense of belonging for all students by creating routines that support a strong start for every student, every morning, in every K-5 classroom this school year.
- We taught, reinforced, and celebrated students who exhibited good character and citizenship traits this school year. Each month we held an assembly to introduce an individual character trait and then we worked together as a whole learning community to practice and uphold it. Students who demonstrated the greatest amount of improvement or who were role models of the monthly citizenship or character trait were honored at an assembly style celebration. They received a superhero cape, superhero mask and certificate of honor. In June, 10 students were awarded with the title of Ultimate Citizen for the 2023/2024 school year. Students who received this prestigious award got a trophy, certificate of honor, superhero cape, and superhero mask. Our Character is Our Superpower at Chester Elementary School!
- We used student voice to create and facilitate voluntary participation in student led clubs this school year. Lego Lifers was one of our recess clubs that was established by students in grades 4 and 5.

- Our student advisory club organized a school-wide November Food Drive. We donated 224 pounds of food to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, which allowed them to prepare 181 meals!
- We completed our school's playground project this year! After years of fundraising and perseverance, our community, Parent Teacher Organization, and school celebrated this joyous and major accomplishment. It was a dream come true to be able to successfully install a playground structure for our students in grades 1-5 to utilize!
- We continued to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, PBIS, with a ticketing system to recognize, reinforce, and celebrate positive behaviors among our students. We held Fun Ticket Friday at the end of every week and organized special events and assemblies for our students to engage in.
- Betty, a service dog, visited our students on Fridays throughout this school year to bring our students and staff smiles, joy and comfort.
- A photo filled and action packed monthly newsletter was shared with families and the community in order to increase engagement, showcase, and celebrate the robust, engaging instruction and events occurring within our school.

School/Community/Partnership

- We partnered with Robert Perry, a local farmer from Marsy Belle Farms in Blandford, MA to bring a Microgreens Planting Project experience into our school this year. Students in kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 5 engaged in this work over a two week timeframe. They planted and harvested pea and radish microgreens to bring home to enjoy with their families.
- Our school partnered with Girls on the Run of Western Massachusetts in order to form a Chester Elementary School running team for the first time this school year! Girls on the Run is a physical activity-based positive youth development program designed to enhance girls' social, emotional and physical skills and behaviors to successfully navigate life experiences. 15 students in grades 3-5 participated in the program; our team met after school, for 3 hours weekly, for 10 consecutive weeks. The season ended with a 5k at Western New England University.
- We partnered with a local geologist this school year! Second and third graders received a lesson on our local terrain and learned how to operate a compass before heading out on a walking field trip and hike led by local geologist, James Higby, to Gobble Mountain, which is located just down the road from our school. Students observed and learned about old emery mines, animals, plants, stone walls, rocks, soil, and water as they engaged in their first ever walking field trip.
- Grades 4 and 5 partnered with Hancock Shaker Village to participate in The Hatch Project. Hancock Shaker Village provided our school with an incubator, eight eggs (laid by our heritage breed chickens), educational material, and trained instruction. Over the course of three weeks, our students watched the eggs hatch and the chicks grow. Once the chicks reached a certain age, the new generation of heritage

chickens were brought back to Hancock Shaker Village, the oldest working farm in the Berkshires.

- Grades 1 and 4 partnered with New England Dairy to participate in the Adopt a Cow program in order to bring agriculture to life for students. The Adopt a Cow program offered an exciting look inside the world of dairy farming by allowing classrooms to adopt a calf as their classroom's mascot.
- We partnered with Massachusetts Safe Routes to School to provide pedestrian safety lessons for students in K-2. Each pedestrian safety session was broken into three sections: sidewalk safety, crosswalk safety, and parking lot safety. Students went outside to engage in these lessons in an authentic learning environment; they practiced how to safely navigate a parking lot, the elements of pedestrian infrastructure, and the basic concepts of crossing streets and intersections safely.
- We partnered with a local artist, Mary Jo Maichak, to bring a 10 week theater residency program titled, Playing with Diverse World Folktales to Build Oral Expression, into our kindergarten through third grade classrooms. This residency was made possible through the Mass Cultural Council FY '24 STARS Residency program.
- All of our students participated in Fire Safety Day, which was facilitated by the Chester Fire Department.

Littleville Elementary School

Littleville Enrollment 2023-2024

Grade PreK- 30 students

Grade K- 39 students

Grade 1- 46 students

Grade 2- 39 students

Grade 3- 37 students

Grade 4- 36 students

Grade 5- 43 students

I am pleased to present to you the annual report of Littleville Elementary School for the 2023/2024 school year. As we reflect on our accomplishments and progress made throughout the year, I would like to highlight our continued commitment to fostering a positive school culture where all students and staff feel safe, supported, and valued. The expansion of our community partnerships have played a significant role in enhancing the support and resources available to our school community.

Building a strong school culture has been one of our primary focuses, recognizing its pivotal role in promoting academic success, emotional well-being, and a sense of belonging among our school community. Here are some key initiatives we have undertaken to further this goal, in addition to the introduction of two new programs and new community partnerships:

1. Daily Strong Start: We implemented a daily strong start into our schedule to ensure that every school day begins on a positive note. This includes morning meetings, mindfulness exercises, and other activities aimed at fostering connections among students and creating a welcoming environment for all.

2. Increased Support Staff: Recognizing the importance of providing adequate support to our students, we have expanded our support staff team. We hired a dedicated Student Support Teacher and a second School Adjustment Counselor to provide additional resources and assistance to students facing challenges academically, socially, or emotionally.

3. PBIS Implementation: We continued the implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with a ticket system to recognize and reinforce positive behaviors among students. Additionally, regular school assemblies were held to celebrate achievements, reinforce school values, and promote a sense of community.

4. FLEX Program and GROWTH Academy: In response to the varied developmental needs of our students and to better support students with behavioral challenges, we introduced two new programs to Littleville with the FLEX Program and the GROWTH Academy. The FLEX program offers tailored support and resources to students who require individualized attention to reach their full potential. Through personalized learning plans and targeted interventions, we aim to empower every student to succeed academically and socially. The GROWTH Academy provides a structured and supportive environment where students can develop essential social-emotional skills, learn positive coping strategies, and receive specialized behavioral interventions. Our goal is to help these students thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

5. Community Partnerships: We strengthened our community partnerships by collaborating with the Children's Advocacy Center to teach a lesson on body safety. This initiative aimed to educate students on important topics related to personal

safety and well-being, empowering them with knowledge and skills to protect themselves.

6. YMCA Wrap Around Program: To ensure the continued success of our wrap-around program, we partnered with the YMCA to oversee its operations and provide adequate staffing.

These initiatives, along with our expanded community partnerships, have significantly enriched our school community and contributed to a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. By working together with our community partners, we are able to leverage additional resources and expertise to better meet the diverse needs of our students and families.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to further enhancing our school culture and ensuring that every student feels safe, supported, and empowered to succeed. We will continue to foster strong relationships with our community partners and seek out new opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

Gateway Middle and High School Updates

The 2023-2024 school year has been an opportunity for the Gateway Regional Middle and High School students and faculty to engage in some meaningful reflection, learning and growth, and improvement.

Enrollment 2023-2024

Grade 6- 69 students
Grade 7- 60 students
Grade 8- 62 students
Grade 9- 49 students
Grade 10- 36 students
Grade 11- 34 students
Grade 12- 42 students
Post HS- 1 student

This year, our school is working with the Barr Foundation to reimagine what the high school experience could look like for our students. Since July 2023, our school has been engaging in the three phases of the process. It began with the “Learn” phase in which we engaged our whole community through focus groups, surveys, observations, student-shadows, and walkthroughs. This phase provided us with an abundance of information about our whole

district and prepared us well for the “Dream” phase. During this phase, over 50 staff members district-wide are planning to visit other schools throughout the nation to get inspired and bring back some ideas that would work for our school. Once this phase is completed, we will enter into the “Plan” phase in which we will come up with a proposal for the Barr Foundation with the aspiration that they fund it. This process has been a huge commitment this year for our students and staff, but it has provided our students and faculty the ability to think critically and creatively, reflect on where we are at as a school, and work collaboratively to move forward.

In regards to teaching and learning, the middle school math department is continuing to implement Illustrative Math and the middle school ELA department is implementing Wit and Wisdom. Our high school math department is implementing Reveal Math but will soon be going through an additional HQIM review to determine if this program is what is best for our students. In the spring of 2023, 43 AP exams were administered across multiple subject areas. Presently, 41 seats are filled in the AP courses for the current school year. Due to some strong advocacy from our high school students to the school committee, the cost of AP testing will now be covered through the district instead of asking families to pay for it. Our two Chapter 74 vocational programs (Welding and EEC) continue to thrive and be a draw for students in our community and beyond. To ensure we support each of our students individually, the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) continues to grow, with staff meeting at least monthly to discuss individual students.

Safety and school culture continue to be a priority at Gateway Middle and High School. Our school safety team meets once a month to review protocols, examine current events related to school safety, and work on projects to ensure our staff and students are safe and supported. Our Culture Committee, made up of students, teachers, counselors, support staff, building administration, district administration, and school committee members, meets often to work on improving the culture of our school. This year, the committee has focused on updating policies to make sure all students feel safe and supported, developing a protocol for addressing acts of hate, providing professional development to staff around restorative practice, and creating a welcome package to welcome new staff and students to the school. Recently, students in this committee created and taught a lesson to all middle school students that focused on treating one another with respect, the impact of hurtful/hateful words particularly toward marginalized groups, and the importance of using appropriate language. To continue to build on this important work, a few middle school staff participated in a curriculum review related to SEL, respect, and anti-bullying. Funded by the Hate Crimes Prevention grant, our school was able to buy a five year license from Second

Step. This grant also was able to fund a PD for staff to engage in implementing restorative practice school-wide and how to support teachers with this implementation.

In addition to the Culture Committee's work, school culture continues to grow through PBIS and school community events. Our Health teacher, Abbey Keeler, also serves as our new PBIS Coordinator and has helped to expand PBIS in both the middle and high school. Our middle school students earn blue tickets for following our core values of responsibility, respect, safety, and kindness that they can "cash-in" at our school store, which is run by Elizabeth Lewis and our Life Skills program. In the fall of 2023 and winter of 2024, we held a pep rally to honor our student athletes. These pep rallies included a staff v. student soccer game (won by the staff) and a student v. staff basketball game (won by students). On the last day before break in December 2023, our high school ran their annual Reindeer games, while the middle school began a new tradition of the Snowperson games. These games included relay races, trivia, tug-o-war, volleyball, ring toss, and more. Students were also surprised with an unexpected guest during the morning hot chocolate social, Gilbert the Party Pig.

The support we receive from our six communities really helps to ensure the success of our school and students. This year, Gateway has worked to try and provide more opportunities to bring their community into our school. On March 7, 2024, Open House will include the traditional option for families meeting with staff, and include different community organizations and vendors for students and families to engage with. This ranges from Westfield Bank, the Child Advocacy Center, the Village Closet, SEPAC, and town officials. In addition, our newly formed Middle School PTO, led by President Kristina Schultz, has hosted a middle school movie night and other successful fundraisers to provide our students with more experiences. Gateway Regional Middle and High School continues to appreciate the support and collaboration with our communities. Representing five out of the six towns, five Gateway students were selected to participate in Project 351. Students representing the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts assemble virtually for dialogue, action, service, and celebration.

Our staff have engaged in some robust and meaningful professional development this year. With help from The New Teacher Project (TNTP) and the Learning Acceleration Network (LAN) our implementation of Wit and Wisdom continues to grow and improve. Our middle school ELA staff have also engaged in PD with Wit and Wisdom directly. The staff implementing Reveal have been collaborating with one another and outside coaches. In addition, staff have engaged in PD related to student behavior, restorative practice, and

data review. In December 2023, our district welcomed Adam Welcome to speak to all of our staff about how students deserve the best out of us, preparing students for their future, and how to engage learners.

On June 2, 2023, the class of 2023 had their graduation ceremony. All of our 41 seniors graduated from Gateway Regional High School. Wonderful speeches were given by the class valedictorian Nancy Mueller, the class salutatorian Rachael Austin, and class President Olivia Kanner. Valerie Zeh, a high school math teacher and former middle school math teacher gave the commencement speech. 72% of the class of 2023 reported plans to further their education after graduation: 47% at four year colleges or universities; 13% at schools with two year programs; 3% in technical programs; and 9% in the military. Graduation for the class of 2024 is scheduled for May 31, 2024 at 6:00pm on Booster Field. 11 out of 42 current seniors were awarded the John and Abigail Adams Scholarships for their accomplishments on MCAS. This scholarship awards funding for eight semesters to state community colleges or universities.

At the end of the 2022-2023 school year, there were some notable retirements and staff departures at Gateway Regional Middle and High School. Joseph Hough, a long-time sixth grade teacher, retired. Martha Clark moved into his position from her previous role in the district office. Emily Cavanugh was hired as the eighth grade ELA teacher and Daniel Rose was hired as our choral teacher. New para educators hired since last school year included Bryanna Gates, Theresa Fairley, Whitney Antosz, Emily Derouin, and Kevin Brown. Karen Leis and Kathy Gallagher joined us from Littleville as a para educator and special education teacher, respectively. Jessica Barrett was hired as school adjustment counselor when Kylie Crawford transitioned to the role of Interim Assistant Principal for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year. Sophie Dobosz and Jeremy Spevack are in long-term substitute roles as the middle school PE teacher and 7th grade social studies teacher, respectively. All of our new staff have been very welcome additions to this community of learners.

An important update for the communities to be aware of is that we will be transitioning from two schools (Gateway Regional Middle School and Gateway Regional High School) to one school (Gateway Regional School). This transition will help with budgeting and create a seamless bridge from 8th to 9th grade.

I am extremely honored and proud to be a member of this district. As I continue to transition into the new role of principal, I am thankful for all of the support I have received from the staff, students, fellow administrators, and the community. The commitment to improve, think critically, accept feedback, and work together that everyone has will only lead to positive

outcomes for the students at Gateway Regional moving forward. I am happy I will get to be a part of this work for a long time as the future is very bright.

Annual Athletic Report

Softball and baseball fielded varsity teams, as well as a junior varsity team for softball. Both participated in league-only competition in the spring of 2023. Baseball worked to get younger players to develop skills while balancing opportunities for older athletes. Softball continued to be competitive, despite the record of 5-11, still finished ranked #37 in the state amongst D5 schools, narrowly missing the state tournament.

The Boys' and Girls' Soccer teams competed in league-only competition this season. Both programs had enough participation to field junior varsity teams. The boys' JV team was able to find a separate JV coach, however the girls weren't as lucky, so their schedule was modified to still have an appropriate number of games, based on the availability of the varsity coach. Boys' soccer moved to the Schmidt league to compete against schools of similar grade make-up. It was a stronger league, but the boys represented Gateway well. Girls' soccer moved to the Bi-County League. After starting the year 1-6-2, the girls won their final five regular season and consolation games to finish .500 and qualify for the D5 state tournament.

The Girls' and Boys' Cross Country teams competed in a full season. Both teams competed in the Middle School Championship, PVIAC Championship, and state qualification race (mix of schools from all regions, there were three locations for all division three schools).

Gateway participated in a co-op boys' hockey program hosted by Southwick High School, and played a full schedule this year. There was one student participant from Gateway.

Girls' and Boys' basketball played in a league-only competition. The boys had some close games, and did manage a home win. Boys' basketball had both varsity and junior varsity teams. Girls' basketball had several wins on the season and only fielded a varsity team.

The Wrestling team competed in a league-only schedule with the addition of select tournaments/dual meets to try to complete a comparable season as the other athletic teams. The wrestling team participated in the WMASS championship and had one wrestler who qualified for the state championship (by winning their weight class), as well as a 6th place finisher in WMASS.

Our AD, Mr. Bonenfant, has completed his second year as one of the two District 1 representatives to the MIAA Softball Committee. This committee is made up of one AD and one school administrator from each district. Mr. Bonenfant has served, for four years, as a

member of the WMASS Tournament Committee. Recently, Gateway hosted one of the monthly PVIAC AD meetings, catered by our wonderful food service department and paid for by the PVIAC. We were proud to welcome AD's from all across the Pioneer Valley. To support other AD's across the Commonwealth, Mr. Bonenfant is an instructor for NFHS/MIAA coaches education classes and NIAAA leadership training courses. He was also able to attend the National Athletic Director Conference in Orlando, Florida.

Celebrating the Class of 2022

Gateway Regional High School held its fifty-first commencement exercises on Friday, June 2, 2023, at Gateway Regional High School, Huntington, MA. Kristen M. Smidy, Superintendent and Sarah Page, Chairperson of the School Committee, presented diplomas to the Class of 2023.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>
Audet, Ayden	Russell
Austin, Rachael	Montgomery
Balboni, Cecelia	Russell
Benson, Annemarie	Chester
Bovat, Joshua	Westfield
Bowler, Liam	Huntington
Brown, Natalie	Montgomery
Burke, Tristan	Chester
Chapman, Cole	Russell
Cooper, Shane	Chester
Dame, Olivia	Russell
Damon, V	Westfield
DuBour, Jordyn-Michelle	Springfield
Forgue, Sean	Chester
Gallagher, Aaron	Westfield
Hamblin, Azades	Montgomery
Harding, Edward	Chester
Hebert, Tyler	Montgomery
Heeter, Rylie	Blandford
Hicks, Zander	Blandford
Jusson, Nevaeh	Chester
Kanner, Olivia	Blandford
Krassler, Hailey	Huntington
Laurie, Gage	Chester
Lewis, Erin	Westfield
Lucia, Dominic	Blandford

MacLeod, Jacob
McKellick, Liam
Mueller, Nancy
Painter, Sage
Pitoniak, Lucy
Primack, Noah
Przybyla, Owen
Saalfrank, Audrey
Santiago-Lopez, Jayden
Solitario, Isaiah
Tester, Jacob
Tsosie, Aakiyah
Vargas, Nicolas
Wallace, Amelia

Huntington
Montgomery
Russell
Blandford
Montgomery
Chester
Chester
Huntington
Russell
Middlefield
Montgomery
Chester
Montgomery
Huntington

Summary of Proposed FY '25 Budget

FUND - DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL FY '21	ACTUAL FY '22	ACTUAL FY '23	BUDGET FY '24	BUDGET FY '25	\$ CHANGE FROM '24	% CHANGE FROM '24
Chester Elementary School	\$1,168,347	\$1,410,718	\$1,406,696	\$1,351,048	\$1,415,347	\$64,299	4.76%
Littleville Elementary School	\$2,456,865	\$2,864,645	\$2,620,700	\$2,780,246	\$2,934,967	\$154,721	5.60%
Gateway Regional School	\$4,636,527	\$4,629,177	\$5,075,064	\$5,176,929	\$5,211,792	\$34,863	0.70%
District Special Education	\$320,173	\$482,566	\$462,769	\$511,421	\$595,445	\$84,024	16.40%
District	\$5,458,452	\$5,106,165	\$5,019,345	\$5,394,563	\$5,650,252	\$255,689	4.70%
Non-Foundation	\$1,843,451	\$1,879,121	\$2,006,912	\$2,163,126	\$2,163,957	\$831	0.03%
TOTALS	\$15,883,815	\$16,372,392	\$16,591,486	\$17,377,333	\$17,971,760	\$594,427	3.42%

GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
March 1, 2024 CENSUS

TOWN	Pre Sch.	Kdg.	1	2	3	4	5	Total Pre-5	6	7	8	Total	9	10	11	12	Total	Out of District Spec. Needs	TOTAL PRE-12	School Choice	Charter School	TOTAL	PERCENT
BLANDFORD	15	8	5	4	3	3	12	50	6	4	10	20	6	2	3	7	18	0	88	13	0	101	12.720%
CHESTER	14	7	11	7	5	13	9	66	5	9	7	21	10	8	7	6	31	0	118	7	1	126	15.869%
HUNTINGTON	19	16	17	24	18	15	22	131	21	18	15	54	11	13	7	10	41	5	231	26	8	265	33.375%
MIDDLEFIELD	2	3	1	2	1	0	2	11	4	4	2	10	0	0	1	0	1	0	22	5	0	27	3.401%
MONTGOMERY	5	9	6	4	5	4	3	36	6	2	1	9	3	2	0	6	11	0	56	12	0	68	8.564%
RUSSELL	9	10	20	5	9	12	11	76	18	19	22	59	15	7	11	10	43	2	180	26	1	207	26.071%
TOTAL	64	53	60	46	41	47	59	370	60	56	57	173	45	32	29	39	145	7	695	89	10	794	100.000%

TOWN	Pre Sch.	Kdg.	1	2	3	4	5	Total Pre-6	6	7	8	Total	9	10	11	12	Total	Total Pre-12	
EXCHANGE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TUITION	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	3
SCHOOL CHOICE	0	2	3	7	5	5	0	22	8	3	5	16	4	3	4	4	15	0	53
TOTAL	0	2	3	7	5	5	1	23	9	3	5	17	4	4	4	4	16	0	56
GRAND TOTALS	64	55	63	53	46	52	60	393	69	59	62	190	49	36	33	43	161	7	751

VOCATIONAL	West Voke	Smith Voke	Total Voke
TOWN			
BLANDFORD	4	6	10
CHESTER	3	4	7
HUNTINGTON	10	29	39
MIDDLEFIELD	0	2	2
MONTGOMERY	1	2	3
RUSSELL	6	7	13
TOTAL	24	50	74

*Preschool role models and at-risk children

3/1/2024