

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, December 11, 2024

Middle School Room 117/119

7:00 P.M.

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

Call to order: Mr. Forgue, Chairperson 7:06 p.m

BLANDFORD

Keri Morawice 7:41

CHESTER

Jeana Briggs
Brian Forgue
Jason Forgue

HUNTINGTON

Pegg Dragon

MIDDLEFIELD

Alex Seid
Tasha Strong

MONTGOMERY

Peter DeGregorio

RUSSELL

Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Kristen Smidy, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Assistant Superintendent

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Martha Gendron, Littleville Asst. Principal
Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director
Vanna Maffuccio, Chester Principal
Melissa McCaul, Littleville Principal
Chris Parker, Technology Director
William Sullivan, GRS Principal

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Theodore DeAngelis-Page
Ana Holmes, Alternate

OTHERS: Amy Mason, Katie Harding

7:02 PM II. PUBLIC INPUT

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

- Josiah Novik said he has been on the soccer team for two years. Varsity has announcers, a snack shack, and national anthem, and it is a great place but the scoreboard has a few light bulbs that are not working, it's rusty. Adding a scoreboard would enhance the field making it better. They want to avoid being the field with the bad scoreboard. The estimated cost is \$4,000-\$10,000 not including installation. Looking to the booster club to potentially give a donation. He is approaching the school committee to get this process started. He would like to involve the community in a collaborative

effort. This appeals to families and players. The school board would enhance interest in a collaborative way.

- Mr. Jason Forgue encouraged Josiah to talk to his friends and tell them to stop leaving for Smith. He is a building inspector for South Hadley and they had a larger one installed and cost around \$54,000. He suggested getting the dimensions so he can try and get some estimates. There are local businesses that would gladly donate their time and efforts to do the installation. Estimates would help. We would be happy to help. Costs could also be defrayed by selling advertisements. That's what they did in South Hadley. He thanked Josiah for coming to the meeting.
- Mrs. Briggs said boosters are doing an expensive project for basketball and wrestling. They would be interested in looking into that with him as well.
- Mr. Jason Forgue suggested looking at GYAA as well. They bought the gym scoreboard years ago as well as the clock.
- Theodore DeAngelis-Page suggested talking to Mr. Bonenfant as well. He has seen a growth with students in all sports and is looking to meet with grant people.

7:05 PM III. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

A. [FY'25 Financial State of the District](#)

- Mrs. Smidy gave a powerpoint presentation.
- Mr. Jason Forgue said the state mis-estimated and had to figure out a way to pay it back. Millionaires tax 75-80% is going to the T. This is not an equitable distribution. We will probably get the 20% to offset.
- Mr. Brian Forgue asked if we were considering green grants as part of funding the roof.
- Mrs. Smidy said SBA has replacement programs and one for green programs as well. They don't recommend panels on the roof.
- Mr. Brian Forgue said some schools in the east are saying they have a 7-9% budget. Are we closer to that or closer to 3-4%
- Mrs. Smidy is getting input from staff getting and input about right sizing right now.
- Ms. Fisk said it is a little early, we still have staffing to fill from this year, the transportation bid, and health insurance to consider.
- Mr. Brian Forgue asked with low income student numbers going down is it a decrease or unknown.
- Mrs. Smidy said, still unknown.
- Mr. Jason Forgue said it was \$200,000 last year. A lot of towns sell it to their towns wrong. If you can't raise the tax levy, maybe we can do a better job of explaining that. 2 to 3% isn't out of the world.
- Mr. Jason Forgue also said Tesla makes solar roof panels. They are not traditional so it might be an option.

7:15 PM IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Second read of [sub rate policy GCE](#) and vote

Mr. Brian Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve the updated Sub Policy.

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

Yeas: Jeana, Peter, Pegg, Brian, Keri, Lyndsey, Alex, Tasha, Jason

- Ms. Dragon said it seems like a big jump. You did say it is higher than other schools. We have hired our subs to fill teaching positions.
- Mrs. Smidy said the commissioner said filling positions is a state-wide issue.

7:20 PM V. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM

A. First read of policies:

1. AC [Non-Discrimination Policy](#)
 2. AC - R [Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation](#)
 3. ACA [Non-Discrimination on the basis of sex](#)
 4. ACA-R [Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex Under Title IX Including Sex-Based Harassment](#)
 5. ACAB [Sexual & Sex-Based Harassment and Retaliation](#)
 6. ECAF [Security Cameras in Schools](#)
- Mrs. Papillon said updates recommended by the attorney in the yellow is attorney, teal is a requirement Policy 1-5 attorney. Policy 6 any administrator doing a title IX investigation has access to the security camera.

B. Vote to approve Lecrenski Bros, Inc. as the low bidder and contractor for regional and athletic transportation from July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2030

- Ms. Fisk said it is a 12% increase. Athletic price per mile went down and waiting time went up a bit.
- Mr. Brian Forgue asked if this is across the state.
- Ms. Fisk said Westfield's last bid went up 27%. Our daily rates are one of the lowest in the state.
- Mr. Jason Forgue said they were the only bidder.
- Ms. Fisk said yes, and they have been operating with us for 50 years.

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mr. Brian Forgue to approve Lecrenski Bros, Inc. as the low bidder and contractor for the regional and athletic transportation from July 1, 2025-June 30, 2030.

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

Yeas: Jeana, Peter, Pegg, Brian, Keri, Lyndsey, Alex, Tasha, Jason

C. Vote to approve calendar change - proposal from Dr. Sullivan (Enc.)

- Dr. Sullivan requested a change from 2 half days to 4 half days last year. He received a lot of feedback from staff that there weren't a lot of finals given, so there wasn't a need. We also worked with the academic council and are requesting the last 3 days be half days for core, math, science and ELA. Non-core would have finals leading up and more than likely be more project based. Math finals would be proctored by other teachers.
- Mr. Jason Forgue said it wasn't just pushback from staff but also students about taking finals at the end of their year.
- Dr. Sullivan said there is an expectation that there will be finals unless they have an exemption. Math, science, and ELA They will be in that class that day. You can be

exempted from two finals right now and they only take 4. Might change for the following year.

- Dr. Sullivan met with staff and this was the most popular option.

Mr. Brian Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Morawiec to approve the calendar change from the last 4 half days to the last 3 half days for the secondary level.

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

Yeas: Jeana, Peter, Pegg, Brian, Keri, Lyndsey, Alex, Tasha, Jason

7:30 PM VI. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Approval of 11/13/2024 Minutes (Enc.)

- Ms. Dragon said there was an error in administrative reporting; it should say no more funds. Forgue was misspelled in the minutes too.

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mr. Brian Forgue to approve the minutes with the suggested changes.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 1 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Jeana, Peter, Pegg, Brian, Keri, Lyndsey, Tasha, Jason

Abstain: Alex

B. Acceptance of Grants/Donations (Enc.)

- Grants and donations at the next meeting- will adjust the date on the December entries.

7:32 PM VII. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE

- High school is starting a community service idea. They will integrate into the middle school to help them in their day to day lives and possibly have them stay here.
- Underground spirit week, teachers dressed up for sports day, like a student day, anything but a cup day.
- Students are going to have a spirit week, reindeer games and a staff reindeer games central office versus high school. Student council hosted a food drive, the boot drive raised \$2,750 to purchase Christmas gifts for families for the holiday.
- Middle school band
- Sports are starting back up. Girls basketball Friday. Josia came in about the scoreboard and increased numbers.
- Littleville students attended a Hartford wolfpack game. Mr. Rose brought three Springfield symphony members to his class. Underground spirit week as well.
- Chester fall food drive. They harvested their hydroponics and held their winter gift fair. Dave Pierce came to talk about train history and the Chester station. The whalemobile will be displayed there and it's 43 feet long. Student media club, student who
- Mr. Jason Forgue asked where they were releasing the fish.
- Mrs. Maffuccio said the Westfield river.
- Mr. Jason Forgue said Marine Maritime might be a nice segway.

7:37 PM VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mrs. Papillon said Alicia Hansen has been appointed, but not sworn in yet. The jazz band was great. They are very young, mostly 6th graders. All the students did such a great job. Congratulations to the band and choir students who have made it to senior districts.

B. Chairperson - None

C. Superintendent - Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy said she included her report in the packet. She said, with the retirement of assistant superintendent Fisk and district treasurer, Kuhn, we have been considering how the central office can transform. This will be posted in January, Not every position may look the same. She is excited how that reconfiguration can support our needs. She will be talking about it with Mr. Jason Forgue and Mrs. Morawiec.. Roof information. Barr foundation. We do not have a great place in our district to host gatherings. Looking at potentially building a pavilion. We found some grants that may help make this happen.
- Ms. Dragon asked if there is a specific use in mind.
- Mrs. Smidy said it came up at the Littleville open house. We either have to stagger or hold events off site.
- Mr. Jason Forgue said reworking the handbook regarding the exemptions to allow less , he has a real problem with test corrections. It becomes really easy to get exempt when you are allowed to take tests over.
- Green communities - towns can allocate money to the school. A lot of towns might be willing to allocate some of theirs.

D. Assistant Superintendent - None

E. Administration (Enc.) - None

F. Town Officials - None

7:45 PM IX. COMMITTEE REPORTING (Enc.)

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

B. Legislative Liaison

- Mr. Brian Forgue said Representative Boldyga rescheduled the Chester meeting and is coming this Monday, December 16 at 6 p.m. The board has committed to bring up the middle school after school program not being awarded this year. Hopefully he talks about it and fights for it.

C. Negotiations

- No letters received yet.

D. Building Liaisons - None

E. CES Update

- Mr. Brian Forgue couldn't attend the meeting tonight. The next one is in January.

F. Policy

- Met tonight. They will have quite a few updates for the next agenda

7:50 PM X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- February 12 is the next scheduled meeting.
- Next agenda items - local competency determination since the state one has been removed. School committee needs to approve it. Dr. Sullivan and Mrs. Smidy will bring recommendations.
- Ms. Dragon said there are a lot of projects rather than testing for seniors. Maybe that could be part of their requirements.
- Playgroup - there has been a lot of back and forth discussion and it will be moving forward.

7:52 PM XI. INFORMATION

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

AP#1035 \$135,172.16	PR #009 \$458,950.10
AP#1037 \$74.68	PR #010 \$483,159.99
AP#1039 \$207,711.79	

7:55 PM XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

8:00 PM XIII. ADJOURNMENT by 9 p.m. unless extended by majority vote.

Mrs. Papillon made a motion seconded by Mr. Brian Forgue to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

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

Yeas: Jeana, Peter, Pegg, Brian, Keri, Lyndsey, Alex, Tasha, Jason

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy L Stewart,
School Committee Secretary