

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.

FY' 23 Budget Hearing

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022

**Gateway Main Complex
Gateway Performing and Via Zoom**

<https://zoom.us/j/92735616718?pwd=YnBEUldtY01BUkljYVViWUIIRDdGQT09>

Meeting ID: 927 3561 6718

Passcode: 01050

7:00 P.M.

7:00PM I. OPENING OF MEETING

Call to order: Sarah Page, Chairperson

BLANDFORD

Terri Garfield
Keri Morawiec

CHESTER

Jeana Briggs
Jason Forge

HUNTINGTON

David Lubbers
Pegg Dragon

MIDDLEFIELD

MONTGOMERY

RUSSELL

Sarah Page
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Kristen Smidy, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Business & Finance

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Martha Clark, High/Middle Assistant Principal
Megan Coburn, Chs, Lit Principal
Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal
Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director
Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director
Darlene Rehor, Elementary AssistantPrincipal

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Joseph Pisani

OTHERS: Amy Porter, Nick Balboni, Ruth Kennedy, Andy Myers, Tom Kulig, Jackie Sugrue, Stephen Luccini, Jim Duggan, Amy mason, Linda Coffey

7:05PM II. FY '23 Budget Public Hearing

- Kristen opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and gave a budget presentation. .48% is the overall increase. She read the summary of proposed changes by percentage. There is an \$80,000 increase. The increase is based on student enrollment. \$30 more per student for chapter 70. We used E & D last year to make sure towns had a zero percent increase.
- Mr. Forgue asked if there was any success moving forward to the request to make chapter 70 more equitable.
- Mrs. Smidy said she Heard back from senator hinds, looking at through the rural school coalition. They are working on it so the answer is no.
- Mr. Forgue said in Chester we had the town administrator about charlie baker's aides they added the misallocation to the discussion. The more pressure we can put out there the better we are.
- Ruth Kennedy asked where did the covid money go that went to the school
- Mrs. Smidy is trying to be strategic about how we use it because it goes through 2024. By the time other schools get their money they can roll over. Because Gateway does not have that capability, we are funding things year to year. We are currently funding a school adjustment counselor out of ESSER. Because someone is retiring we are moving that person into the budget. It's an ongoing evaluation.
- Nick Balboni asked if it has restrictions.
- Mrs. Smidy said yes only on things that federal grants can be used on. Staffing programming, student needs. We have just not been putting all these amazing programs in that we cannot sustain. One example is the afterschool program which has been super helpful for our students. We still have two years to see if we can roll it into the budget or discontinue it..
- Mrs. Smidy went over census numbers and town comparison. Minimum contribution is what the state calculates what the towns need to contribute.
- Assessment comparisons statutory vs alternative
- Nick Balboni asked about Russell goin up by 1.5 students and the percentage is 5.2 and Huntington went up 20 students and the percentage is 6.99.
- Ms. Fisk said it had to do with the minimum contribution which sets the base, and the student population comes in after.
- Mrs. Smidy said all information is on clear gov, even the line item budget.
- Andy Myers said last month there was a chart of students interested in vocational schools, are there more?
- Ms. Fisk said she thinks there are two more, but not from Chester. The state deadline is April first. We will keep everyone updated.
- Ruth Kennedy asked if we are going after any unfunded mandates as a school?

- Mrs. Smidy said all of the superintendents in western Massachusetts have started a shared document of all schools as it has affected. We should bring it back to the school committee, if they validate it, it will have more push.
- Andy Myers asked about the comment on plans to increase enrollment.
- Mrs. Smidy said programmatically we have added the Pre-K programming. Looking at the configuration still. psv to determine our currently existing special education program. Could tuition students in and we are already paying for staff and services. Analyzing programs right now and are piloting our vision program. We don't want to add expenses. Strengthening our current practices, around curriculum, instruction and teachers to create rigorous programs. Collecting data from choice students - at first glance programmatically. Make adjustments to increase achievement.
- Mr. Forge asked if Mr. Finnie would talk about what they discussed at school council.
- Fr. Finnie said it is called "find your grind". The MyCap committee helps in setting goals for their careers. After attending state conferences students are starting in 7th to begin work investigating lifestyles they are interested in and helping them with a career path. There are self exploration and curricular components.
- Nick Balboni asked what is the next step for the budget.
- Mrs. Smidy said this is the initial budget hearing and the next one will be the budget adoption.
- Ms. Fisk said the school committee will determine which method to use and the towns will be notified what the amount is. Both figures are sent to the towns for information. The one that the school committee recommends has to be on the warrant. The one that is certified by the treasurer which is sent out within 7 days. Has to go on the warrant. The towns can make a decision if they want to add both.
- Andy Myers asked for an update on the regional agreement.
- Mrs. Smidy said next Wednesday at the school committee meeting will be the final read and vote and then it will be sent to DESE. DESE is waiting for it.
- Mrs. Briggs asked if we are promoting the welding and EEC program at the open house.
- Mrs. Smidy said we will be promoting them to other students, but Gateway students are automatically accepted..
- Ms. Dragon asked if there will be former students at this open house.
- Mr. Finnie said no, but there are other times when they can come back and talk to students.

8:50PM XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Smidy adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Stacy L Stewart,
 School Committee Secretary