

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES****WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2013****Gateway Library
7:30 P.M.****(A PORTION OF THIS MEETING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION)****I. OPENING OF MEETING**BLANDFORD
Michele Crane
Jim KronholmCHESTER
Beth Brett
Shirley WinerHUNTINGTON
Ron Damon
Laurie WebbMIDDLEFIELD
Sarah FoleyMONTGOMERY
Anne Marie Buikus
Sandra HaasRUSSELL
Ellen Hirtle
Ruth KennedyWORTHINGTON
Sue Levreault
Gretchen EliasonSECRETARY
Stacy StewartCENTRAL ADMINISTRATION
Dr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Business & FinanceSTUDENT REPRESENTATIVESADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Elizabeth Bienia, Chs, Lit, MS Assistant Principal
Joanne Blocker, Director of Academics
Angela Burke, Technology Director
Megan Coburn, Chs, Lit, MS Principal
Jason Finnie, High, Jr. High School Principal
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer
Celeste Malvezzi, High/Jr. High Assistant Principal
Alice Taverna, Pupil Services Director

OTHERS: _____

7:35 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA - None

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT - None

IV. CONSENT ITEMS 1/9/13 (Enc.)*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to approve the minutes of 1/9/13 with corrections.**Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 4 Absent*

V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS**A. Professional Development – Joanne Blocker**

- Mrs. Blocker gave a PowerPoint outlining all professional development that has gone on this year including full days, half days, and early releases.
- Paul Dunlevy – a shiest of people who say they help parents Glad there was one thing on there that teachers went to help parents.

B. Budget Presentation 2nd half**Pupil Services**

- Ms. Taverna Staff /student special ed. Numbers. Out of district placements. Programs we currently have by level.
- Mrs. Taverna's are students who have significant mental health issues impacting school performance, those who need intense remediation, increasing state mandates for transition.

- Mrs. Crane asked, what does increase therapeutic interventions mean.
- Ms. Taverna said we have students who have some sad lives for a variety of reasons. In the past we would have recommended counseling. The problem is they are sending outside services into the home and they are not effective. Students are now bringing those problems without intervention into the schools and we have to deal with it.
- Mrs. Winer asked, how effective are our interventions, can you tell?
- Ms. Taverna said you can tell, but not for the new ones.
- Mrs. Winer asked if the internal programs such as SAIL have helped.
- Ms. Taverna said yes, SAIL has helped. What we've done in the past has not always helped. We have better control in house. The learning lab teacher has worked in another program. One of our counselors has worked in a residential program as well. Both have a lot of experience.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked what you mean by increase teacher student connection.
- Ms. Taverna said a more intense level between the teacher and student.
- Mrs. Foley asked for an example of some of the programs being used.
- Ms. Taverna said LIPS and Seeing Stars are a couple examples. We have one student who has advanced a year and a half since the beginning of the school year.
- Ms. Taverna said the major needs are social/emotional/behavior, language based learning disabilities and transition planning.

Technology

- Mrs. Burke continued the PowerPoint. Some of the district administrative objectives are MAP, MCAS and a new learning management system.
- Mrs. Winer asked who and what do they do with all this information.
- Mrs. Burke said we send the information to the state.
- In looking to support 21st century skills and common core initiatives Mrs. Burke has come up with a 5 year replacement plan. Goal 1: Looking at a ratio of 2 students to one capable computing device. Goal 2: replace graphic arts computer lab every 4 years. Goal 3: replace all window based pc's every 3 to 4 years, and replace classroom devices every 3 to 4 years.
- Mrs. Eliason asked what percentage of computers do we buy and what percentage do we lease.
- Mrs. Burke said we lease everything. We own them at the end so they are ours to sell.
- Mrs. Winer what about the laptop one to one program.
- Mrs. Burke said the funds are in Mass 1 to 1. We have been leasing more ipads than imacs. The imac is \$45 a month for three years with a \$250 down payment. There are 5 families leasing them. We leased about 50 -60 ipads to our students. They have a two-year lease for \$25 per month. It is making a little bit of money. Mass 1 to 1 leases ipads and laptops to Hampshire Regional and only ipads to Ashburnham.
- Mrs. Levreault is surprised that the PARCC test is going to be all online. Did the state look at the fact there might be a transition problem.
- Dr. Hopson said that is why we have to send all our computer information to the state.
- Mrs. Burke said it is more economical to send tests electronically.
- Dr. Hopson said they are hoping to do the PARCC test multiple times a year with a quick turnaround.
- Mrs. Blocker said it looks like some of the samples that they might be able to have pencil and paper in the essay part, but it is too early to tell.

Curriculum

- Mrs. Blocker continued the PowerPoint that included grants, Title I services at risk students, Title II focusing on training, recruiting, and retaining highly qualified educators. Homeschooling, mentoring, Professional Development, Curriculum, MCAS Training – transition to PARCC
- Mrs. Webb asked if we are teaching typing or if everything is going online. How do we retrain them?
- Mrs. Burke said we have talked about doing some training.
- Mrs. Webb what happens to the kids in the middle school - keyboarding might be an activity if they finish something early.
- Mrs. Levreault asked if they have talked about accommodations for students who couldn't do it. We've discussed that some students are better with paper and a book.
- Dr. Hopson said we don't have much control over that.
- Mrs. Burke said probably not for regular education, but definitely for special education. We have students who use speech to text programs already.

Library

- Mr. Brown is trying to set up the library to meet the needs of the various levels. The library services elementary through high school. There is a separate middle school fiction and high school fiction. The common core is much more non-fiction based. Also looking at more digital text.
- Mrs. Winer how do you take out digital text.
- Mr. Brown said every student will have a login and they will be able to use it online or download it.

- Mrs. Winer how expensive
- Mrs. Burke said it depends. Current books will be almost the same price. We are moving to digital data bases.
- Mr. Brown said the back corner is set up for presentations and hopefully we'll be able to take digital field trips. This is part of a grant we received as part of a consortium, the room is set up, and we are just waiting for the equipment. He would also like to bring more 3-d individuals – live and human resources.
- Culture grams and discoverer are the two data bases the library subscribes to.

Central Office

- This information will be on the website tomorrow.
- Dave went over 1,000, 5,000, 7,000, 8,000, 9,000 functions, State and federal grants and revolving accounts.
- You will find that special education transportation is almost the same amount of all of regular education transportation. Ms. Fisk has cut back on runs. However, outgoing placements all start at the same time, so they all have different busses.
- Mr. Damon what is the possibility of the bus company having two or three economical cars.
- Mrs. Eliason asked for an estimate on the cost to the district to have everyone fingerprinted and national CORI checked.
- Overall increase there is a budget increase of 3.24% or \$534,000.
- Paul Dunlevy said there are about 15 students going to out of district schools, is there a commonality.
- Dr. Hopson said they all have different needs.
- Paul Dunlevy said the librarian talked about online field trips, too bad we can't use some of that technology to help those students in house.
- Dr. Hopson and Ms. Taverna are looking at setting up a program to try to bring 5 students in at 50,000, it may be worth it.
- Dr. Hopson said the current budget is uses student numbers as of January 1. The population is going to change assessments even if the budget doesn't change.
- Initial numbers came out with governor's budget. It looks like we got a little bit more money, but the assessments changed.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Student Representative - None

B. School Committee

- Mrs. Eliason said the DESE was here last April for a review and they interviewed school committee members. Do we have anything back from them yet?
- Dr. Hopson said we have the draft right now.
- Mrs. Winer said Craig Boyer has resigned from school committee. Chester has one opening for two years and one for three years.

C. Chairperson - None

D. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)

- On Agenda

E. Business Manager- 2nd Quarter Financial Report (Enc.)

- On Agenda

F. Administration

- None

VII. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation - None

B. Finance Subcommittee

- Met tonight and had a few guests.
- They went over expenses line by line.
- Next meeting will be February 6 at 6:30 p.m. in the Career Center.

C. Policy Subcommittee - None

VIII. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Regional Agreement Amendments

- We need to decide if we want an amendment, at time withdraw or what it is based on when bond taken out. Do we want to state whether or not they are

Mrs. Eliason made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to extend the meeting till 10:30 p.m.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays 5 Abstain Absent

- Mrs. Eliason said there are no amendments to the agreement at this time, and there is nothing that says we can't give a figure until it needs to be voted on by 7 towns. Worthington is never going to vote to penalize itself, it will never happen.
- Dr. Hopson said if you follow the regional agreement as it is now, Worthington would pay the percentage of operating cost of the year in which they leave, you don't know what year. How do you lock in the number now, when capital costs could decrease in three years, or the percentage of students could go up or down?
- Mrs. Winer asked, can you write in the amendment it needs to be updated within three months of a town leaving.
- Russell what you are doing is setting up the mechanism for when they leave. (in the year it happens you are going to certify a number)
- Mrs. Eliason said as you say, it is in the year it happens. There is certainly room for that number to change as the situation changes. Each year the budget is going to be different, there is nothing wrong whetting out numbers for this year and setting out numbers for the subsequent years, but she doesn't agree with the idea of making this dependent on changes.
- Mr. Kronholm said it would be more reasonable to set the percentage based on the average over 10 years.
- Dr. Hopson said school committee has the right to set the factors to whatever it wants. You can specify a 10 year average, etc. One of the things Mr. Wagner said was he didn't want was everything in one vote. It could be the current year percentage of students, current capital cost, could be unfunded liabilities – insurance, retirement. Would like to give Russell those parameters. He agrees with Mrs. Eliason, this has got to be something that favors all 7 towns.
- Mrs. Levreault said when you look at setting the parameters; it talks about indebtedness, to come up with a 10 year average, how fair is it to start adding things. When Worthington asked to get out there were no unfunded liabilities
- Dr. Hopson said you are asking for an amendment.
- Mrs. Levreault said it feels like we are changing to rules because we don't want Worthington to leave. Worthington voted on the school project Worthington thought their school wouldn't be able to close.
- Mrs. Hirtle said we are voting on unfunded liabilities and the percentage Worthington will pay when they leave.
- Dr. Hopson said the current number of students and operating costs is what is in the agreemtn. Is it fair to go back or do you use current figures. Do you want it to specifically state unfunded liabilities. These are the decisions school committee needs to make.
- Mrs. Hirtle said when it is decided and the towns vote to let Worthington out of the district, we are going to use those figures.
- Mr. Damon said the six towns remaining should not be responsible for unfunded liabilities we don't know about. Consider protecting the six remaining towns from any financial burden created by Worthington leaving. Secondly, seven towns borrowed money plus interest at the time that project went forward he is suggesting the percentage paid back is the percentage when we entered. It is not being directed at Worthington. We are currentlye paying back capital projects and MSBA.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer draft an amendment using the percentages based on the time when the monies were borrowed.

- Mrs. Webb asked if someone could explain unfunded liabilities.
- Dr. Hopson said we have not future funded for health insurance – it is about 14 million.
- Mrs. Webb said under the current regional agreement Worthington's portion would be based the percentages as if they left today.
- Mrs. Eliason said Worthington's is responding depended upon this current agreement.
- He is talking about having them pay 10 percent instead of 8 percent.
- Mrs. Levreault what past precedence have we set for towns in the past.
- Dr. Hopson said there are no records.
- Dr. Hopson said money we granted, money we borrowed, money we owe for closing schools. If Worthington leaves and reopens do we not owe that money
- Mrs. Kennedy said we need to look in our books and do more legal research.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to table discussion on the regional agreement.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to have a special meeting to deal with Regional Agreement amendments on January 27 at 7:30 p.m. in the library.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent

- Which areas need to be addressed, Operating costs, unfunded liability, capital costs, etc.
- Think of it as if your own person town leaving, not just Worthington.
- Mrs. Levreault asked if we should be funding these liabilities now.
- Russell Dupere said there is a method where we could set up a trust in the budget. For this agreement you would have to come up something everyone can live with and the commissioner has to approve it.
- Paul Dunlevy. One of the things that doesn't seem fair everyone doesn't know all the parameters that need to be discussed. Get a small team together.

B. School Committee Goals

- School Committee goals on the back burner for the minutes.

IX. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. FY 14 Budget (Enc.)

- Dr. Hopson and Ms. Fisk attended the last GTAC meeting. They weren't looking for huge increases in the budget. This budget is going to impact a few towns. Two of the towns would have a 10% increase in assessments. Dr. Hopson would recommend reducing the budget to a 2.5% increase.

Mrs. Eliason made a motion to reduce the budget from the last vote of 3.4% to 2.5%. This would be a \$121,000 reduction.

- Mrs. Crane is what we saw for needs in tonight's presentation and at the last meeting going to happen.
- Dr. Hopson said probably not.

Mrs. Eliason made a motion to reduce the budget from the last vote of 3.4% to 2.5%. This would be a \$121,000 reduction.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays Abstain 2 absent 1 (Ron)

X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

School Choice Presentation – Wendy Long

XI. INFORMATION

Information

Estelle Named Coach of the Year
 SEPAC meeting on January 15
 Holidays, half-days ahead for students
 Gateway sends flute players to Sr. District Concert
 Free Weight Watchers meeting January 15
 Upcoming School Committee meetings
 Superintendent's Corner January 4, 2013
 Schools Match Wits team aired January 12
 Superintendent's Corner January 11, 2013
 2013 Vocational school application process announced for Gateway students
 Levreault wins "All-State"
 Twain scholars report to foundation board
 All invited to take Gateway Survey
 Volunteer Dinner Save-the-Date
 Superintendent's Corner January 18, 2013

Family fun night at Gateway

Warrant

AP# 1053 \$198,280.68

PR# 14 \$347,296.36

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

XIII. ADJOURNMENT *Motion to adjourn Gretchen Michele at 10:30 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L. Stewart
School Committee Secretary