

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 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

CHESTER
Beth Brett
Shirley Winer

HUNTINGTON
Ron Damon
William Hathaway
Laurie Webb

MIDDLEFIELD

MONTGOMERY
Anne Marie Buikus
Sandra Haas

RUSSELL
Ellen Hirtle
Ruth Kennedy

WORTHINGTON
Sue Levreault
Gretchen Eliason

SECRETARY
Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION
Dr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Business & Finance

ADMINISTRATIVE 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

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: _____

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

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT - None

IV. CONSENT ITEMS

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to accept the minutes of 1/23/13 with corrections.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 8 Nays Abstain 4 Absent

V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

A. Pupil Services Update - Alice Taverna

- Ms. Taverna gave a brief PowerPoint Presentation
- Mrs. Winer asked who pays for some of these specialists.
- Ms. Taverna said some of it is in the budget and some is in grants. What we get in our 240 grant should cover most of our services, but it doesn't.
- Mrs. Winer asked for an explanation of the difference between therapeutic interventions and an interventionist.
- Ms. Taverna said one is the intervention and one is the person who does the intervention.
- Mrs. Hirtle asked if ELL was part of special education.
- Ms. Taverna said no, but they are under her as pupil services. We have 8 ELL students. They are bilingual meaning they speak their native language at home and are learning English in school.

- Mrs. Eliason said the learning lab is used at the high school. What exactly is the learning lab? Is it a self contained classroom or do they come and go?
- Ms. Taverna said it is self contained we have two who are in the program all the time and 5 who float in and out all the time.

B. Chester and Grade 5 Field Trip to the Hartford Science Museum – Megan Coburn

- Mrs. Coburn explained the field trip to the Hartford Science Museum. It correlates with the science curriculum. Dates for the program trip: 5th grade is May and 4th grade the end of March.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to suspend the two meeting rule.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve the field trip to the Hartford Science Museum for the 4th and 5th grades.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Student Representative - None

B. School Committee

- Mrs. Buikus said she was concerned with the Superintendent's Corner that was done on the first of February. She is not questioning the right to put it in the paper or subject; she is just questioning the timing.
- Dr. Hopson said except for the Westfield News, school committee had the information before it went out.

C. Chairperson

D. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Everything is On Agenda
- Need an executive session

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to go into executive session at or before 9:30 p.m. for the purpose of negotiations and to come back into open session.

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

Yeas: Ruth, Gretchen, Ellen, Sue, Shirley, Michele, Ron, Laurie, Anne-Marie, Sandy, Bill, Beth

E. Business Manager

- Ms. Fisk said we received an RFP from Worthington for central office services. She has returned is because of the reservations she had about it not meeting Chapter 30 requirements.
- Mrs. Winer said we could have to add staff.
- Dr. Hopson said yes, but Worthington is just looking for cost estimates for running their own school.

F. Administration

- None

VII. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- Superintendent's Evaluation met tonight for their management meeting and developed questions for administrative interviews to be held on March 1.

B. Subcommittee

- Met last week, Dr. Hopson, Ms. Fisk and Mrs. Coffey went over accounts what was left in certain accounts. Rundown of retirement costs, health insurance GASB.

C. Policy Subcommittee - None

VIII. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. FY '14 Budget (Enc.)

- Budget – Dr. Hopson gave a PowerPoint
- Mrs. Eliason said the Chapter 70 information is on the Website. There were reforms passed but never put them in place, because there is not money. The proposal for next year was they would spend money to fund that and Worthington would actually get Chapter 70 aide. The idea was that not town would pay more than 82.5%.
- Dr. Hopson said the cities and towns that have been paying less will pay what the state says the towns can afford.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if they are counting those students that are here and those who school choice out.
- Dr. Hopson said it is the student population we are required to educate.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked how many more years we have left for SBA payback from closing schools.
- Ms. Fisk said eleven more years.
- Mrs. Eliason said what Dr. Hopson was showing is the state assessment which you get by default. You can choose the alternate assessment per our regional agreement, which says towns pay based on their percentage of population. (Amherst does their assessments on a 5 year average) When you go with the alternate assessment all towns have to agree.
- Ms. Fisk said to follow up on the alternate assessment method, all towns need to pass it every year.
- Dr. Hopson said according to the alternate assessment Russell and Huntington's assessments would be even greater.
- Dr. Hopson said the school committee and everyone should know what the prioritized list consists of. The administrators are not in favor of any of the reductions. The first part is in version 2.0. The second would be a 2.5% increase in budget, and the third would be to get to a 0% average increase in assessments to towns. If school committee went to an addition \$100,000, it would cut hours to secretaries and would require impact bargaining.
- Mrs. Eliason thanked the leadership team. Out of district tuition which we think we can reduce by \$50,000, stipends for positions this year, it seems like it might be painless. She deleted reduction to secretary days and custodian and still came up with \$107,000, which is still a good chunk of change.
- Dr. Hopson is not sure the towns would appreciate cutting and then adding to a trust fund, it won't reduce their assessments. What you are saying is the goal of the whole child you are not going to fund those position ever again. Again it is your choice, but there was a lot of discussion about what would have the least impact.
- Mrs. Hirtle confirmed the ones at top are gone. So you are saying you don't need a math coach or a literacy coach.
- Dr. Hopson said we looked at what we would cut to get to \$121,000 this is what we came up with, a math coach, which is not filled, literacy coach and a secretary was cut. We have talked about utilizing teachers from their classrooms to take the place of a coach.
- Mrs. Hirtle is concerned about taking the teachers out of the classroom. They aren't getting a fresh perspective.
- Mrs. Kennedy said if our towns knew what was going on with unfunded mandates, maybe they would start to put money away.
- Dr. Hopson asked Derek what is your unfunded liabilities.
- Derek said he didn't know and Pandora is unsure.
- Dr. Hopson said we don't know whether the state will ever mandate payment of unfunded liabilities.
- Mrs. Crane said the unfunded liabilities not nearly as important as getting towns to put money aside for physical plant problems.
- Dr. Hopson said we know in the next few years we will need a roof.
- Mrs. Levreault said we set up our stabilization account and haven't put anything in it yet. She knows we met with the solar company and we couldn't do anything. The last company said it would be about five years before we have to redo the roof. What are we looking at for a cost?
- Ms. Fisk said two years ago to recoat the roof was going to be \$230,000. The House one budget is based on the total preschool count. Now they include all students. If the House one budget holds the preschool students on the bottom of the census will move to the top.
- Mr. Damon said if we are facing replacement of a roof, we still have to have every town approve to borrow to replace the roof.
- Ms. Fisk said Ms. Taverna puts in extra money in case students go out. This \$50,000 was in excess.
- Dr. Hopson would caution you on this, based on previous special education directors.
- Mrs. Eliason said GASB 67 and 68 came out this summer which changes the way you report with a timeline. GASB 45 deals with non pension health insurance which should be in place right now.
- Ms. Fisk said yes in the reporting.
- Mrs. Eliason said they are not telling you how much to pay or when to pay. We haven't changed anything to date.

Mrs. Eliason made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to take \$107,364 from this second section and dedicate it to creating a trust for pension and health insurance liabilities.

- Mr. Damon said there is no assessment change for the towns.
- Jeanene Iglesias, chair of secretarial union was her to address the potential for reduced days for secretaries on the reduction list. She is shocked they are on the list, and on the top. They already lost a position completely. They agreed to use their vacation during Christmas and winter vacation. Secretaries complete data entry to state, as well as many other duties. There have been cuts in the past 10 years. The NEASC report stated there were not enough paraprofessionals and secretaries. In the last five years secretaries were put to back to full time and now we are being cut again.
- Mrs. Kennedy said it is not our decision as a school committee to make the cuts, it is the administration. We discuss the guidelines.
- Mrs. Eliason's guidance would be to eliminate the secretaries and custodians from the list. She appreciates Mrs. Iglesias coming to speak at tonight's meeting.
- Mrs. Winer said it helps us.
- Mr. Damon opposes any further cuts at this time. We hire administrators and they are doing the job, we are not in a position to know what is right or wrong.
- Ms. Fisk said regarding Medicaid money there is no immediate panic button.
- Mrs. Eliason proposed an amendment to eliminate the unfunded liability part of the motion.

Mrs. Eliason made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to take \$107,364 from this second section and dedicate it to creating a trust for pension and health insurance unfunded liabilities.

Motion Failed (VOTE) Yeas 1 Nays 9 Abstain 2 Absent

- Dr. Hopson said we have not adopted the budget yet. The next meeting is the public hearing and the second meeting in March will be to adopt the budget.
- Mrs. Buikus asked if there is a possibility we could take more E & D.
- Ms. Fisk said you can make that recommendation, but it is a cushion if something happens.
- Dr. Hopson said you could take \$650,000 for the next few years. If you take more this year, you won't have as much next year.
- Ms. Fisk, we have about \$260,000 less than we had last year.
- Mrs. Winer asked how we know if we are ever going to have to pay these unfunded liabilities.
- Dr. Hopson said we don't.
- Mrs. Web asked, what is E & D?
- Dr. Hopson said excess and deficiencies. Is what we have left over for money from the previous year? It can't be more than 5% of the budget. Anything above 5% would have to be given back to the towns. We used \$650,000 already to offset the budget.
- Mr. Damon would caution all of us of the impact of one student that moves into district we can't deal with. We could be hit for \$200,000 for one student.
- Ms. Fisk – the fingerprinting for current employees is \$9,100.

B. Regional Agreement Amendments – Special Meeting February 27, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

C. School Committee Goals

- School Committee Goals were shared with you today along with the survey results.
- Dr. Hopson said there were 70 original responses to the survey and 73 as of today. 21 century skills are important and MCAS not as important. The survey points out some areas that are most important. How do we measure growth in communication collaboration? How do we establish a growth rubric for 21 century skills?
- Mrs. Winer feels we should have a short lived subcommittee to deal with this and put together a goal document. Those who volunteered to be on the Adhoc committee: Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. Eliason, Mrs. Winer, Mrs. Buikus, Mrs. Levreault. Will report back after they've adopted the budget.

9:20 p.m. - Went into executive session.

9:30 p.m. – Returned to open session

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to suspend the two meeting rule to vote to offer a retirement incentive as an opportunity to reduce the budget.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to offer an early retirement incentive to Paraprofessionals, Custodian's, Secretaries, and Non Union Central Office staff to reduce the budget.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent

IX. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

School Choice Presentation – Wendy Long

XI. INFORMATION

Information

Gateway “Ambassadors” commit to service
 Superintendent’s Corner February 1, 2013
 Schools, offices to close for winter vacation
 Area senior citizens invited
 Vendors sought for Gateway Health & Safety Fair on April 6
 February School Committee meetings

Warrant

AP# 1057 \$187,949.86	PR# 14 \$347,296.36
AP# 1066 \$36.02	
AP# 1061 \$125,869.28	

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to go into executive session at or before 9:30 p.m. for the purpose of negotiations and to come back into open session.

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

Yeas: Ruth, Gretchen, Ellen, Sue, Shirley, Michele, Ron, Laurie, Anne-Marie, Sandy, Bill, Beth

XIII. ADJOURNMENT Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to adjourn at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Stacy L. Stewart
 School Committee Secretary