

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**PUBLIC HEARING****WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2013****Gateway Performing Arts Center
7:30 P.M.****(A PORTION OF THIS MEETING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION)****I. OPENING OF MEETING**BLANDFORDMichele Crane
Jim KronholmCHESTERBeth Brett
Shirley WinerHUNTINGTONRon Damon
William HathawayMIDDLEFIELDMONTGOMERY

Anne Marie Buikus

RUSSELL

Ruth Kennedy

WORTHINGTONSue Levreault
Gretchen EliasonSECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIONDr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Business & FinanceADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILElizabeth Bienia, Chester Assistant Principal
Joanne Blocker, Director of Academics
Angela Burke, Technology Director
Megan Coburn, Chs, Lit, MS Principal
Jason Finnie, High, Jr. High School Principal
Celeste Malvezzi, High/Jr. High Assistant Principal
Alice Taverna, Pupil Services DirectorSTUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: _Linda Coffey, Steve Estelle, Jodi Fairman, Deb Robbins,

7:35 p.m. II. PUBLIC HEARING – FY '14 Budget

- See Dave's presentation on website. Version 2.1 has changed due to the census for March 1, 2013.
- The average class room size is 22 at the elementary, and 24 to 25 at the high school level, but can be as high as 30 in the high school.
- Mike Crochier clarified on the reduction list that the left hand column is the reduction and the right is the running total.
- Mrs. Eliason said one thing not on the list is we did close schools and lost students. It helps explain some of what is happening in the charts.
- A gentleman in the office spoke about the quality of school and maintaining that. He spoke to many parents who choice into Gateway. Do we see an increase in incoming school choice.
- Dr. Hopson said we are not seeing a huge upturn. We may if we were located between West Springfield and Westfield. We are so far away and we don't have to provide transportation to students choicing in.
- Mr. Damon is concerned with the loss in offerings that we may lose students.
- Dr. Hopson said we have added woodshop, and there would be more students in welding if we had the room. We also tried to put in some Business courses last year, but couldn't find a teacher. It is almost impossible to put in a vocational program, due to the cost. Westfield state is looking at dropping their business teaching certification. They asked superintendents if there was a need. He said there was.
- A man in the audience asked how do we strike a balance between student offerings and courses in demand. Are there kids who are clammering for classes or do you have to find students?
- Dr. Hopson said students are looking for welding. We are fortunate because our woodshop teacher is also science certified.

- Is there a way to tell ahead of time if there is going to be a need for a certain course.
- Dr. Hopson said as people leave we try to fill those positions with people who are dually certified to meet the needs of kids. We are looking for the maximum flexibility.
- Have we thought about sharing teachers with other districts.
- Dr. Hospon said looking back three years ago when we had five schools open, we had teachers who serviced students in all schools. We spent a lot of money on teaches who were driving. Hampshire regional is a half an hour away. The high school and the librarian are looking at changing the vendor for online courses to allow us to offer more.
- Do we have retired teachers who would come back and volunteer time to teach a course.
- Dr. Hopson said it is a contractual issue and referred to Steve who concurred.
- We do have parents who do come in and volunteer at the elementary level.
- Dr. Hopson said we have one teacher who comes back and teaches who only makes enough to allow her not to lose retirement. This is a pretty tight knit family at Gateway. We have teachers who start here and stay until they retire. A lot of teachers who retire can't leave.
- The almost \$200,000 insurance increase is do to the fact you can stay on insurance till you are 26, people who didn't have our health insurance are jumping on and some go from from single to family.
- Ms. Fisk said the Edu Grant that we lost covered health insurance.
- Dr. Hopson said his budget changed because of the census, but school committee will have to look at another budget, due to open enrollment in health insurance. The budget we looked at in the beginning is different from the one in March and could be different in April.
- There was a question about the water issue. Has it been taken care of?
- Dr. Hopson said it was taken care of so well we won the best water for the state of Massachusetts.
- Jodi Fairman sked for ean explain if version 2.0. is not adopted, does it go line by line or is it chunked.
- Dr. Hopsn said the school committee has three options. They could increase it, leave it the same or decrease it.
- She asked why would you cut positions that have people in them verses positions that have not been filled.
- Dr. Hopson said administrators took about 10 hours looking at what they would do if positions never were filled again.
Jodi said one secretary absorbed two schools when schools closed and there is more and more to do.
- Dr. Hopson said you picked up more kids, middle school lost students, high school lost students; they have a lot fewer students than they did five years ago.
- Deryk invited everyone to come to the GTAC meeting on Saturday where Steve Kulik will be there to talk about the state budget.
- It was asked if the governor gave us an extra million dollars what would we do with it.
- Dr. Hopson said it depends on if it was for one year or multiple years. We would fill in the gaps for our students regarding staffing. He would put back the coaches that were eliminated. When you look at what you reduce you have to look at permanent reductions.
- A Preschool question – there are only 37 students enrolled between the two schools. Why don't you give families the option to pay so there would more student opportuntiy? Most families would qualify.
- Dr. Hopson said as soon as you charge any parent for it, you have to charge all students. In order to make it work, you would have to charge a substantial amount. You have to have a certified staff and paraprofessional ratio per so many students. We would no longer qualify for state funding.
- We used to have our local representatives come to a meeting and one of them brought a map and showed us our reps and all the reps in Boston. All you have to do is have Boston vote no on something.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to adjourn at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Stacy L. Stewart
 School Committee Secretary