

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, May 14, 2025

Gateway Auditorium

7:00 P.M.

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

Call to order: Mr. Forgue, Chairperson

BLANDFORD

Nicole Daviau

CHESTER

Jeana Briggs
Brian Forgue
Jason Forgue

HUNTINGTON

Lisa Goding

MIDDLEFIELD

Alex Seid
Tasha Strong

MONTGOMERY

Peter DeGregorio

RUSSELL

Tara Balboni
Alicia Hansen
Lyndsey Papillon

SECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Kristen Smidy, Superintendent

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Martha Gendren, Littleville Asst. Principal
Deanna LeBlanc, Curriculum Director
Melissa McCaul, Littleville Principal
Chris Parker, Technology Director
William Sullivan, GRS Principal
Chris Tamburrino, Pupil Services Dir.
Val Zeh, GRS Assistant Principal

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Ana Holmes, Alternate

OTHERS: Patty Healey, Michael LaBranche, Alicia Swendsen, Kayla Brady, Kayla Turner, Misty Robitaille, Mark Folta, Amy Porter, Jim Duggan

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)

- Mrs. Briggs thought we were done with this. She has a problem with the wording in an email the school committee chair sent. Evaluating a superintendent is evaluasupingen. How can we evaluate five months of an agenda? Where was the support wit. This was the last attempt to advocate for our principal that has done so much for our schools. She

was starting to feel good about the support, communication and guidance until that email. I personally apologize to the superintendent and fellow school committee members. You deserve nothing but my respect. I take responsibility for all the anger. I commend the parents who spoke. They didn't write it from a place of power. We are purposely advocating for our students. Never be ashamed of advocating. Only through advocacy we were able to get Mark Folta. She does everything for the kids in the district. It was of the utmost importance to make this agenda item happen. The other moms, teacher administrators, nurses, social workers, dispatchers, no one would ever hurt those children. It is disgusting you send that to them. So many people went through the train of thought of not speaking up. We did it anyway. Our kids are going to middle school next year, the principal spoke against us. You said everything that has happened so far happened for the best interest of their children. Sarah Page was the chair during covid. She didn't try to attack or disparage them. She wishes he had taken a page out of her leadership book.

- Alicia Swendsen said she was against having Mr. Folta because she wanted Mrs. Maffuccio. He has done good things. With regards to the boiler, are you aware of the state code? 603 CMR rooms occupied must maintain a temperature of not less than 68 degrees. Discovered at 6 am and at 11:30 still 65 degrees. Who notified you and when. The apology email didn't say. What time is drop off for K? What are the contracted hours for teachers? Who is there when they drop off students. Who conducts evaluations. She sent an email about a previous issue and didn't mention the name because it was not her child but you mentioned in a private psv meeting. She is just looking for answers.
- A person in the audience said Ms. Smidy's communication is very poor and she is disappointed. She is basically very concerned with Gateway.
- Kayla Brady. May 14 and vanna has been on leave for 5 months. Schools must follow processes. Could have been a single conversation. It could have been cleared up. Nothing clearly defined as a contractual start. Has emails outside the workday. This shows dedication. We show up because they care and want to. You do oversee the superintendent- re read my email and would you want those to happen to your kids. The accusations are petty. This isn't about a job, it's about reputation. She should be afforded the opportunity to clear her name.
- Misty Robitaille asked with regards to the email that went out from Mr. Forgue, is that email that is going to be shared with every parent that is concerned
- Mr. Jason Forgue said the email was sent to everyone who reached out to him directly about the agenda item.

7:17 PM III. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

7:19 PM IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. None

7:20 PM V. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM

- A. Discussion on the process of parental and student notification in emergency circumstances resulting in potential policy recommendations
- Mr. Jason Forgue said this is the item requested by Mrs. Briggs as a way for us to discuss what we would like to see going forward to hopefully avoid the same situation.

- Mrs. Briggs said parents not being notified was a huge problem. If kids had been gathered together to let them know that it is not their fault it could have prevented the roomers about what was happening. Support needs to be in place. If that had happened on January 3 a lot of stress would have been avoided.
- Mr. Jason Forgue asked if they wanted this to go through the policy subcommittee, and the overall committee, or through administration.
- Ms. Hansen asked if there is something that is already in place we can add too or something other schools use.
- Mrs. Balboni said it is nuanced to make a policy - there might be someone who wants their privacy. It needs to be carved out , it is important.
- Mrs. Goding said it seems like an administrative process so maybe they could provide something first.
- Mr. Jason Forgue didn't know if we wanted to see what happened.
- Ms. Daviau could there be something that includes the school counselors so they are involved from the beginning. I
- Mrs. Hansen said it might alleviate some of the legal
- Ms. Daviau asked if there is something when something happens to a student. A harm reduction model Looking at the emotional social model.
- Mrs. Smidy said it is an administrative process. Memorialize it in a policy.
- Add it to the next policy subcommittee meeting. In the meantime we can research other policies.

B. Vote to approve/acknowledge the proposed [School Improvement Plan](#) for Gateway Regional School (Enc.)

- Mrs. Smidy said it is approved if no action is taken after 30 days.
- Mrs. Balboni was very excited to see some of the innovative ideas from some of the schools they visited incorporated. A lot of thought and work went into this. Nicole Lyndsey

Ms. Daviau made a motion seconded by Mrs. Papillon to approve the GRS School Improvement Plan.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Peter, Nicole, Brian, Lisa, Alicia, Lyndsey, Alex, Tasha, Jason

7:45 PM VI. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Approval of 4/9/2025 Minutes (Enc.)

Mr. Brian Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the meeting minutes of 4/9/2026 as written.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 2 Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Peter, Nicole, Brian, Lisa, Alicia, Alex, Tasha, Jason

Abstain: Jeana, Lyndsey

B. Acceptance of Grants/Donations (Enc.)

Mr. Brian Forgue made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to approve the following grants and donations: Grants - Prism grant \$15,000 Special ed IEP Grant, and adopt a classroom donation.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Peter, Nicole, Brian, Lisa, Alicia, Lyndsey, Alex, Tasha, Jason

7:52 PM VII. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE

- Ana Holmes is happy to be here and apologized for not being here last month. The Band has been very busy - the high school concert was last week. Middle schoolers were able to play a song with the high schoolers. Great East festival; On May 2 schools came to our school from all areas to play in front of judges due to the size and quality of our auditorium. We scored gold. The marching band will be playing at Chester on track and Blandford, Russell, and Huntington's Memorial Day Parade. We had a record high of 61 AP Tests due to the tests being paid for. Students interested in the military took ASVAB. Sophomores took Pre-Act. Teacher/staff appreciation was last week. Students 9-12 have gone on a multitude of field trips. Juniors and seniors visited MassMOCA. Others went on a construction field trip looking at workplace aspects of construction. Still others went to WNE attending an engineers exposition. Finally, many students participated in a Poetry reading at Smith College. 14 juniors were inducted into the NHS. Spring fling is coming up with the help of Barr funds. Prom is next Friday. Graduation is May 30th on booster field. Berkshire community college held a college fair which our junior class participated in. Lilly Peloquin and Leah Fulton attended Skills USA going against 3,000 other students. 8th grade held their semi-formal last week with snacks, dj and decorations. They also went on a Boston overnight escape tour.
- Spring sports season - Softball held their senior night Monday, and baseball held their senior night yesterday.
- Littleville is learning about and appreciating their local wild with a visit from Acadia Wildlife Sanctuary. Kindergarten went on a Barr funded trip to Whip City Animal Sanctuary. The annual poets' tea was held on May 2nd. 1st grade read poetry to families. Their field day is scheduled for May 23rd.
- Chester brook trout were released in the stream behind the school. The Magic treehouse play and puppet show will take place on the 29th. Prek and k were treated to a Mother goose puppet show. On the 22nd 4th grade students will travel to Blandford cemeteries to place flags for Memorial day.

7:57 PM VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Tara Retirement reception before the next meeting, typically we have a google doc. Lisa will do it. Will send a final.

B. Chairperson -

- Yearbook Ad Reminder
- Retirement/Recognition Celebration

C. Superintendent - Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Supt - middlefield had their town meeting and the budget was approved. Montgomery is Monday, and the rest are in June.
 - D. Assistant Superintendent - None
 - E. Administration (Enc.) - None
 - F. Town Officials - None

8:05 PM IX. COMMITTEE REPORTING (Enc.)

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

- Supt. evaluation Tara, the documentation is in there - if you are missing something, take a look and it may be there.
- Missing a couple - aim for 100. She will pull it together for kristen to know what she can improve in,

B. Legislative Liaison

- The state house and state senate are in the process of approving the budget. House budget that passed a few weeks ago. 16 million ot s then level fund what the governor proposed They will likely determine to give us 12 million statewide. We need to continue to speak with one voice to be comparable to other schools across the state. Tutwiler will be in Northampton in May.

C. Negotiations

- signed both contracts - so fantastic to get through.

D. Building Liaisons

E. CES Update - next meeting May 28

F. Policy

- We reviewed policy G. Graduation requirements - we also voted to put the academic honesty policy - on the next agenda and handbooks.

8:10 PM X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

8:12 PM XI. INFORMATION

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

AP#1063 \$71,809.11	PR #020 \$480,799.89
AP#1064 \$43.43	PR #021 \$477,714.29
AP#1066 \$359,702.43	PR #022 \$428,469.75
AP#1071 \$450,138.91	
AP#1073 \$64.05	
AP#1074 \$153,186.48	
AP#1076 \$93,524.19	

8:15 PM XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

8:35 PM XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Jason Forgue made a motion seconded by Mr. Brian Forgue to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Tara, Jeana, Peter, Nicole, Brian, Lisa, Alicia, Lyndsey, Alex, Tasha, Jason

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L. Stewart
School Committee Secretary