

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2013

**Blandford Town Hall
7:30 P.M.**

(A PORTION OF THIS MEETING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION)

I. OPENING OF MEETING

BLANDFORD
Michele Crane
Jim Kronholm

CHESTER
Shirley Winer
Martha Otterbeck

HUNTINGTON
Ron Damon
William Hathaway
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY
Anne Marie Buikus
Sandra Haas

RUSSELL
Ruth Kennedy
Mary Ann Laurie

WORTHINGTON
Sue Levreault
Gretchen Eliason

SECRETARY
Stacy Stewart

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

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Amy Fouracre, Chs, Lit, MS Assistant Principal
Joanne Blocker, Director of Academics
Megan Coburn, Chs, Lit, MS Principal
Jason Finnie, High, Jr. High School Principal
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer
Alice Taverna, Pupil Services Director

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

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

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT - None

IV. CONSENT ITEMS 9/11/13 (Enc.)

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to accept the minutes of 9/11/13 as amended.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain 3 Absent

V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

A. School Choice Presentation – Wendy Long

- Mrs. Long handed out a hard copy of the presentation. She is disappointed that there was a low response. 50-80% has been response rate and this year there was a 35 % response rate. She found that a lot of people have unpublished numbers. Mrs. Long went over the reasons why they choose to choice out. Of the 17 that left that year, 8 of them have never attended gateway. A lot of families have moved into Russell and Blandford on the outskirts and they are staying in Westfield.
- Mrs. Levreault said when you look at state numbers they show much more. Why would we not look at everyone? That is our total customer base.
- Mrs. Long said we try to understand why people go to other public schools, because they are similar to us. We can't compare with private schools. We are looking at things that they can relate to.
- Mrs. Levreault has been looking at all students particularly home school. Russell really hasn't had an enrollment decline.
- Mrs. Long said home school also includes the Mennonites. She is giving the school choice responses for the current year.

- Mrs. Kennedy said the Mennonites come from all over, so they are not just from Huntington.
- Mrs. Otterbeck said there are some families who belong to other religious groups who home school through grade 6 and then come here.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if it would help with the budget to add the private school students to the survey.
- Mrs. Long feels this is a lot of work and anyone who knows numbers isn't going to think this is enough information. She is also looking for other ways to contact families. She doesn't think we are getting the most bang for our buck, and it may not be worth continuing the survey if the response continues to be so low.
- Mrs. Winer said she doesn't think the responses from private schools will be very fruitful. The families who can afford it send their kids to private schools and will continue to do so.

B. Student Performance Update – Administrators

- Mrs. Coburn went over K-6 assessments and how these assessments are used to drive instruction.
 - Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark assessment
 - Dibels
 - Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) for ELA and Math
 - Go Math – beginning, middle, and end of year assessments
 - MCAS
- Mr. Wyand asked if she has comparable data to MCAS.
- Mrs. Coburn said it is accurate and the assessments are pretty in line with MCAS. Tutoring has been helpful and this year we are getting starting early.
- Mrs. Eliason asked how kids are targeted for interventions.
- Mrs. Coburn said we use universal screeners - Dibels for students who struggle with fluency. These send red flags for students, then with the RTI data the classroom teacher does progress monitoring. They are noticing a student who did well in the fall maybe start to fall behind. This is when they would be targeted for an intervention. Progress monitoring is done in between the assessments. The same for getting out of intervention, the process is very flexible.
- Mrs. Winer said some of the interventions are not academic.
- Mrs. Coburn said we have a lot of students are in the RTI program because of behavior not academics.
- Mrs. Eliason said earlier it was said there was a problem with MAP. This is an outside company, not something we purchased and is on our server.
- Dr. Hopson said that is correct and they are working to resolve the issue.

Junior High/High School

- Mr. Finnie went over standardized testing data and interventions for the high school junior high school.
 - 7th and 8th grade ELA MCAS and MAP and Math MCAS and MAP
 - Junior High School Interventions
 - 9th and 10th grade ELA MCAS and MAP, Math MCAS and MAP, and Science and Technology MCAS
 - High School Interventions
- Mrs. Winer asked if it has anything to do with how the test takes.
- Mr. Finnie said they are still digesting MAP data and looking at multiple assessments.
- Mrs. Foley asked if the 7th grade piece has open response, and does MAP
- Mr. Finnie said yes, both of them do. They need to look at what answers the students are getting wrong.
- Mrs. Foley asked if they have multiple choice questions.
- Mr. Finnie said yes, but there are some very different multiple choice questions, like dragging a word to where it best fits.
- Mr. Finnie said MAP is considered grade level achievement
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if it could be something as simple as they are dealing more with computers in MAP verses the written MCAS.
- Mr. Finnie said it is important to look at that. The MAP test is more formative. Using Study Island, as Mrs. Coburn mentioned earlier is for grades 3-12 which will help, as it is a different approach. Study Island is something students can do from home.
- Mrs. Winer asked if they are improving that much in 10th or are they just maturing.
- Dr. Hopson said what the state says is different for 10th grade. You can't have 50 % of your students not ready for graduation. It is scaled.
- Mrs. Winer asked why it is called backwards design.

- Mr. Finnie said the idea is to start with your expectations or key understanding points and then work backwards to use the skills you will employ, key vocabulary, what assessments and how in the process will they know how they are doing.
- Mrs. Winer asked how you would intervene with the brighter students who may need to be stimulated.
- Mr. Finnie said enrichment activities are not just for students that need help. It's about having students take ownership through more group work and student centered projects.
- Mrs. Eliason said way back, there were maybe only three different math tracks. How many different courses do we have students follow in the course of high school.
- Mr. Finnie said you start to see the groups form just out of necessity – The idea is to get them to progress through their career. They still use instructional warm-ups. It does pose a challenge that is not unique to Gateway. Math, the way it progresses is linear in pattern, and ELA is similar. Science is different because they take the test for whatever class they happen to be taking.
- Mrs. Foley asked when the parent packets will go home.
- Mr. Finnie said they just came in.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Student Representative

- Jon Wyand said all elected officers were announced today. Classes will start with their yearly activities and fundraising ideas.
- Mrs. Blocker announced that John is the president of the senior class.
- Mr. Wyand is going to try to get classes to come or give him information to present.

B. School Committee

- Mrs. Laurie had a parent come to her about school supplies at Littleville they are required to buy. The parent has some concerns about it. All the schools do it. She was concerned about the paper towels, Kleenex.
- Mrs. Coburn– those are not mandatory, but they can use them. The student may be required to bring in their own binder because each student has a portfolio.
- Mrs. Eliason as a principal there is a small pool of money. If that were a problem, they would be able to use that.
- Mrs. Coburn said yes.
- Mrs. Winer asked Mrs. Long to explain Ed Webster program being sponsored by the Foundation. They are looking for people who would like to buy ads for the booklet to help fund the program.
- Mrs. Long said Ed Webster is an international climber who has climbed Mount Everest without oxygen, Sherpa's, etc. The last day they were without food. It's a story about survival and perseverance. The foundation has paid for the presentation and they are looking for a way to recoup some of it. He will be telling his story, bringing his gear, pictures, etc. Mrs. Winer handed out the flyers for placing an ad.

C. Chairperson - None

D. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Chris Parker is coming from Easthampton. He will be the new tech guy starting October 21.
- The DEP consent order was signed and sent back. The bulk head has been installed.
- Calendar request is on the agenda.
- We need an executive session for negotiations.
- Ms. Fisk and Dr. Hopson have been working with NET Metering. They've met with a couple of different folks. Met with HCOG this week and they have been after us to move forward. We are one of three who will participate. UMAS Amherst and Town of Hadley who would be the other two. All permits are done. It should be ready Feb 1. We have looked at their contracts. Ms. Fisk has been working with the attorney general, and we may make a few more changes to the contract. Timeframe wise, for SREX is if you re online or at least 50% you can go on SREX. If not, after December it will be SREX 2. At 970KW with a 2% reduction over the next 20 years we'd save over \$570,000. If school committee is okay with it, we will move forward.
- There will be a MCAS presentation by administrators, so if there is anything specific you want us to look at, we will try to put it into the presentation.
- Mr. Wyand said he was told they are changing the format this year. His daughter is very concerned and in 10th grade.

- Dr. Hopson said there has been consistent transition along with the common core. Massachusetts is one of the states moving the PARCC. Over the last couple of years the questions have been changing. The state has chosen 75% of the schools to do a trial PARCC test. Mr. Finnie was chosen and Mrs. Coburn was not. They are hoping to transition all from MCAS to PARCC. Over the next 2 to 5 years there will be big changes.
- Mrs. Blocker said our teachers have already been slightly changing by building crosswalks between the old curriculum and the new common core.
- Dr. Hopson said they keep changing things over time. The commissioner is asking the state SBA to set money aside to update schools to take the PARCC test.
- Mrs. Eliason said when we asked Mrs. Burke last year, she wasn't sure what the browser will look like.
- Mrs. Blocker said it will be online, but they have not shown us any documents at all.
- Dr. Hopson said we responded to a trial test period.
- Mrs. Blocker, the problem is that everyone has to take it the same time, on the same day.

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to go into executive session at or before 9:45 for the purpose of negotiations update not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Martha, Sarah, Shirley, Sue, Sandi, Ruth, Anne-Marie, Michele, Ron, Jim, Jeff, Mary Ann, Bill, Gretchen

E. Business Manager

- None

F. Administration

- Mrs. Long is submitting this week for a \$25,000 grant geared for professional development at the K-6 level-an innovations grant.

VII. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee

- Next meeting October 9, 2013, 6:30 p.m. in Montgomery

B. Finance Subcommittee

- Discussion about what might happen with the budget. Chester voted no and we have no clue what Russell will do. In October, they will lay out how to do the budget process for next year. The next meeting is on October 23, 2013 in Chester.

C. Policy Subcommittee

- BDA on agenda.

D. School Committee Goals Subcommittee

- Nothing now.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Out of State Field Trip Approval

1. Mark Twain House – Rodney Kleber
2. New York – Broadway Performance Trip – Jeri Beauregard
3. Bodies Exhibit – Cynthia Jensen

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Crane to approve the above field trips.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent

B. Worthington Withdrawal/Special Legislation Update

- Mrs. Eliason said there was a hearing held last Thursday in Boston. The Worthington ad hoc committee and town government presented their case. Montgomery, Chester, Middlefield and Russell also made presentations. Mrs. Kennedy spoke against it and she voted for it then they went to lunch together.

- GTAC met on Saturday. Derek Mason proposed contacting the MOPC, a mediation group out of Amherst in hopes of facilitating discussion. GTAC would engage in a meeting with MOPC Next meeting October 26 9:30 a.m.

C. FY '14 Budget (Version 4.0) Update

- Dr. Hopson said Chester turned the budget down. They feel because Gateway is in the eye of the legislature, it is one more reason for the state to look at them.
- Mrs. Winer said that Mr. Baldasaro thinks it is a political opportunity if we all vote the budget down. Chester voted for the first two but not the above minimum.
- Dr. Hopson said that finance voted in favor of the budget.
- Mrs. Levreault asked about the percentage of land owned by the state.
- Dr. Hopson thinks it's about 34%.
- Mr. Damon asked what is the possibility that if the state takes over the budget the cost to the towns might be more than if they would have voted this budget.

D. DEP Consent Order Update

- Dr. Hopson signed it and sent it back. He wrote on it that the port was in place. The first stage has gone in, this past week. They put a pre-fabricated stairwell in there.
- Mr. Wyand asked if the change was made that we want to put in the pressure tanks and take the old one out.
- Dr. Hopson said we probably won't take the other one out, but bypass it and put in a smaller one or a variable speed pump.
- Mr. Wyand so it is not in writing. He is just concerned because he saw we had a little bit of a different plan.
- Dr. Hopson we should be okay.

E. Student Performance Goals – PowerPoint by Mrs. Eliason

- Mrs. Eliason pulled the Math MCAS scores from 2008-2013, using the same schools that we looked at for other benchmarks. People expressed an interest in looking at this more closely.
- Mrs. Eliason said at the last meeting we talked about student performance goals. What do we want to focus on. Do we reiterate everything or pick a focus area. It is up to the committee, she would like to have a discussion.
- Mrs. Eliason the goal we pick should be understandable in English.
- Mrs. Blocker said one thing that comes to mind is we just appropriated some money for tutoring.
- Mrs. Levreault asked which grades is the tutoring for and could we include Study Island? Could we say our students will be at the state average by this date.
- Mrs. Blocker said you need to have some preliminary data.
- Mrs. Winer asked about the MAP Test.
- Mrs. Blocker said you could, but they have the glitch right now.
- Mrs. Eliason said the goal we pick must be aligned with what the teachers are doing.
- Mrs. Blocker said you could use Go Math for the math piece.
- Mrs. Eliason would like the committee to appoint subcommittee.

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to form an ad hoc subcommittee to work with administrators to set school committee performance goals.

- Mr. Kronholm could see this as undermining the superintendent's authority.
- Mrs. Winer doesn't think we are unless we should take a goal from the LTM in line with what we are doing.
- Mrs. Crane said this is going to be a short-term project. It is a good idea to set this goal, since we've been going without goals for so long. Let's create a starting point.
- Mrs. Laurie suggested we reform the school committee goals subcommittee.
- Mrs. Eliason said we are putting ourselves on the line by picking one thing and making sure it gets done.
- Mrs. Kennedy it is our job to oversee what goes on in the school. This is a doable project. This is within our boundary.
- Mr. Wyand suggested involving our time by doing a self evaluation as another goal.
- Mrs. Blocker said it could be that you supported the funding and we are going to track the progress. The goal is to improve instruction.
- Mrs. Eliason would like a more specific goal.
- Mrs. Foley believes if it is our goal it should be something we do.
- Mrs. Eliason believes it would be something like set money aside for new curriculum, etc.

- Dr. Hopson said if you are going to look at if you wisely spent the tutoring money, tracking that group of students, in terms of their performance one item like MAP, Go Math, whatever you think is best Did these students improve on the measures we use in the district. You'd be able to have a direct correlation to the \$10,000.
- Mrs. Buikus is also trying to find something we as a committee are working on in conjunction with the school that can be relayed to the selectmen, assessors, community. We put aside this amount of money and this is what came out. It would promote good will with our towns.

Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to postpone executive session 10 minutes.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 10 Nays 4 Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Martha, Sarah, Shirley, Sue, Sandi, Ruth, Anne-Marie, Jeff, Mary Ann, Gretchen

Nays: Michele, Ron, Jim, Bill

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to form an ad hoc subcommittee to work with administrators to set school committee performance goals.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays 1 Abstain 1

F. Calendar Change – School Committee Schedule

- Dr. Hopson said school committee doesn't usually meet during school vacations. The week we moved April vacation to has a meeting. He is suggesting cancelling the April 23, 2014 meeting.

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to cancel the April 23, 2014 school committee meeting.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent

IX. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Policy BDA - School Committee Organizational Meeting (Enc.)

- Mrs. Eliason said we have been in the habit of reorganizing in July after Chester members come on board and then we discovered there was a policy and there was disagreement between the policy and the district agreement. The new policy would state after everyone is seated but no later than the July meeting.
- Move to old business for a vote. This is the first reading.

X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

Pupil Services Update – October 9

XI. INFORMATION

Information

Gateway's After-School Program expands with new grant

Superintendent's Corner September 6, 2013

College planning night for seniors

Superintendent's Corner September 16, 2013

Save the Date: Author, Mountaineer, and Photographer Ed Webster Coming to Gateway

Weight Watchers at Gateway

VHS to DVD-R conversion

Elementary Open Houses next week

Gateway Changes April Vacation

Warrants

AP# 1020 \$85,610.14

PR# 04 \$93,750.98

AP# 1021 \$61,916.55

PR# 05 \$385,194.64

PR# 5.1 \$20,034.57

PR# 5.2 \$1,799.38

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to go into executive session at or before 9:45 for the purpose of negotiations update not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Sarah, Shirley, Sue, Sandi, Ruth, Anne-Marie, Michele, Ron, Jim, Jeff, Mary Ann, Bill, Gretchen

XIII. ADJOURNMENT *Mrs. Crane made a motion seconded by Mrs. Buikus to adjourn at 10:00 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L. Stewart
School Committee Secretary