

**GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2014**

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

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

**I. OPENING OF MEETING**

BLANDFORD  
Michele Crane  
Terri Garfield

CHESTER  
Martha Otterbeck

HUNTINGTON  
Ron Damon  
William Hathaway  
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD  
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY  
Anne Marie Buikus  
Sandra Haas

RUSSELL  
Ruth Kennedy

WORTHINGTON  
Sue Levreault  
Gretchen Eliason

SECRETARY  
Stacy Stewart

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

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

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

**7:35 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit)**

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**III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT**

- Brennan Foley said they have not had another school council meeting. They held a school climate meeting today. They will be sending out a survey about what students feel is a healthy relationship. They will laminate the answers and post them around the high school. They will hold a white ribbon campaign later in the year. White ribbon is prevention of violence against women. Brennan is still selling pies.
- Mrs. Otterbeck said students going to Costa Rica in April served a meal yesterday and will again tomorrow before open house for teachers.
- Brennan Foley said there is a trip in the works to Emerson College to see the studio and John Wyand.

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**IV. CONSENT ITEMS 9/24/14(Enc.)**

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to approve the minutes of 9/24/14.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain 3 Absent*

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**V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS**

**A. Student Performance Update – Principals**

- Dr. Hopson gave a brief district overview PowerPoint.

- Mrs. Coburn gave a PowerPoint about the Middle and Elementary Schools.
- Mrs. Foley asked how they decide which students we are compared to.
- Mrs. Coburn said it's by the percentage of special education, low income, and ELL.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked when they put the statistics together, how are they getting the statistical information?
- Dr. Hopson said they are collecting it from SIS data. They are not looking at size, wealth, etc.
- Mrs. Levreault asked do you know if it is just certain kids in a group who don't get it or is it just that some groups are getting further along in the curriculum.
- Mrs. Coburn said students can either explain their thinking or they can't.
- Ms. Cabral said the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade open response is much easier than 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The third grade is a single question. The fourth grade has multiple parts. If they get the first part wrong because they don't understand it, they are going to get part two and three wrong as well.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked how much time is used to prepare for this.
- Mrs. Coburn said this year they did the testing over the summer for 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades so the teachers were ready. She would say 25/75%
- Mrs. Crane asked how the participation for the early week was.
- Mrs. Coburn said it was much better than expected; about 90%. She didn't include the new enrollments until school started.
- Mrs. Eliason said from previous presentations, she believes we don't have a math intervention.
- Mrs. Coburn said that is true, but the Go Math program has an intervention component. There are materials the teacher can use in the classroom.
- Mrs. Eliason said it is pretty heavy on either end, but not a lot in the middle like Mrs. Levreault said.
- Mrs. Coburn agrees.
- Ms. Cabral spoke about the elementary Math results. They look for patterns. Littleville and Chester are very similar.
- Ms. Hamaoui spoke about elementary ELA.
- Mrs. Eliason said with regards to developing rubrics how are you using them in the classroom.
- Ms. Hamaoui said it's about learning how to create and then use them.
- Mrs. Eliason said what concerns her is the number of kids who need improvement or are getting a warning score. How do we make sure kids aren't getting stuck; it's the 55% that concerns her.
- Ms. Cabral said we are asking all kids to take the same test even though we work with kids at their individual level. A big chunk of this test is writing prompt and it doesn't happen in the other grades.
- Mrs. Foley said there is a night and day difference between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA test. In 2013 it looks like 19 % and in 2014 it is 0.
- Mrs. Coburn said those are two IEP students.
- Mrs. Levreault said there was concern about writing the 5 paragraph essay.
- Mrs. Coburn said topic was development and inventions. They are really focusing on introduction, body and a closing. The Lucy Caulkins really focuses on writing skills.
- Mr. Finnie said the 7<sup>th</sup> grade is a literary analysis. The PARCC assessment is looking at different sources and pulling examples verses creativity.
- Mr. Finnie gave a PowerPoint of the High school and the Jr. High School
- Mrs. Eliason asked how the DDM's are collected and used. Is it a pre test, a lesson, a test, and then measure?
- Mr. Finnie said it could happen at the unit level or at the course level. They sit down with their evaluator, and talk about how they are gathering results. Some are different and some departments are looking at the same things. Some using pre and post and some coordinate efforts.
- Mr. Finnie said teachers have to come up with a student learning goal. A lot of the progress is how they are using the DDM's and sharing with departments.
- Mrs. Eliason said for the portfolio which may be required by a teacher, would the teacher come up with a rubric for the portfolio.
- Mr. Finnie said yes.
- Mrs. Eliason said teachers are collecting information on DDM's all throughout the year.
- Dr. Hopson said the flexibility and variety of DDM's was to focus on the students. What started them this year was the evaluation system.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked how we are helping the students who don't want to go to college.
- Mr. Finnie said you are not seeing what we are doing because these are just an overview.
- Mrs. Crane asked who is taking PARCC and who is taking the MCAS.
- Dr. Hopson said grades 3-8 will go to PARCC and the High School is staying with MCAS.

- Mrs. McVeigh said students that are proficient in Massachusetts get a certain rate correct. It has nothing to do with the schools you are compared to. The only time the levels enter (comparison comes into the equation)
- Dr. Hopson said you can compare individual but not growth.
- Mrs. Eliason said we did that on the bench mark study. She can update that and input last year's scores. We compared Gateway to 11 similar districts.
- Dr. Hopson said this all ties into the superintendent's and school committee goals.

## **VI. BUDGET**

### **A. FY '16 Budget**

#### **a. Ms. Laurie's Budget Proposal**

- Ms. Fisk said the initial documents have been sent to principals and department heads.
- Dr. Hopson said we put Ms. Laurie's proposal on the agenda and we can talk about that at the next meeting. Keep in mind when we look at this we would have to do it for 1,000 students.
- Mrs. Levreault asked to have a copy sent to them, as there weren't enough copies to go around at the last meeting.

## **VII. COMMUNICATIONS**

### **A. School Committee**

- Mrs. Kennedy said she has been delving into PARCC. She has been looking at the Fall PARCC Survey. She read the questions on the survey. She is going to try to fill it out. The information was sent to her by DESE. We should understand what is going on. If it is good, great; if not we need to do something about it.
- Mrs. Levreault said she received it also.
- Mrs. Coburn thought it was spam. It looks more like they want you to buy something.

### **B. Chairperson**

- Mrs. Crane asked for an executive session for the purpose of union negotiations.

*Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to go into executive session at or before 9:30 for the purpose of union negotiations update, not to return to open session.*

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

Yeas: Ruth, Bill, Anne-Marie, Sandra, Terri, Sarah, Ron, Jeff, Martha, Sue, Gretchen, Michele

### **C. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)**

- Dr. Hopson said last Monday the water folks came in regarding a water test that was done a year ago. They were upset as they took it the test appropriately and the state lab didn't do it correctly. We posted a notice and sent home an all call. No one was in any danger we were just following protocol.

### **D. Business Manager**

- Ms. Fisk said she is waiting for one bank statement and will have the first quarterly report at the next meeting.

### **E. Administration**

- Mrs. Long said we received the Professional Practice Innovations grant. Funding came through with \$25,000. We were one of six to win one this round. We wrote the grant to help math, but we worked with DESE to flip the content area to ELA to help improve our scores.
- We also received a \$5,000 loss prevention grant through MIIA. This will fund step stools for every office and classroom in the schools. Working on funding grants through the mass cultural council – big yellow school bus grants – help with instate school field trips. Submitted a \$5,000 stars grant and she is working on a school safety grant from DESE.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked Mrs. Long about a PARCC grant to help schools get computers.
- Mrs. Long hasn't heard anything.

## **VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTING**

**A. Superintendent's Evaluation**

- Mrs. Crane said they met tonight. The next meeting will be November 12 at 6:30. They are working on the management meeting.

**B. Finance Subcommittee**

- Mrs. Kennedy said she is looking into getting together at the end of the month.

**C. Legislative Liaison**

- Mrs. Kennedy has been in contact with Don Humason's office and the governor's office. There is conflicting information about a letter that was supposed to have gone out. She tried to push to them because we are on a timeline. She would like to have a letter from our committee to Senator Humason to get a bus and tour the state house. He would also like an invitation to come to our school committee.

**D. Policy Subcommittee** – Nothing at this time.

**E. School Committee Goals Subcommittee** - Nothing at this time.

**F. Community Curriculum Committee** – Nothing at this time.

**7:45 - IX. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS****A. Model UN Field Trip to UCONN** – with travel update

- The policy doesn't allow students to drive themselves, but parents can drive.

*Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to approve to field trip to UCONN for the Model UN Conference.*

*Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays Abstain Absent*

**B. Committee Self Evaluation**

- Mrs. Crane had asked for a less score driven evaluation.
- Mrs. Levreault said she read through it and it pretty much says it is a guideline so she feels it could be changed. Maybe we can change it.
- Mrs. Eliason doesn't see why we can't come up with our own. The emphasis on the scoring is not particularly helpful. We could always take Pat's questions and modify them.
- Mrs. Crane asked for school committee to send her questions they'd like added.

**C. Boys' and Girls' State Discussion** – Move to next meeting

**D. School Committee Reimbursement/Payments for Travel Discussion**

- Mrs. Crane asked if the school committee wants the policy committee to look at these.
- Dr. Hopson said the policy allows you to reimburse, but you have to put money in the line item to travel. You need to look at transferring money for this year or just adding it to next year's budget.

**E. School Committee/Superintendent Goals** – Move to next meeting

**F. Worthington Withdrawal**

- Dr. Hopson said DESE set up a phone conversation with Ms. Fisk and himself. They are looking for a potential date for the needs conference. Christine Lynch and Jay Sullivan said the commissioner has approved the plans for both Worthington and Gateway and we should be getting a letter. The indication was that this is going through. Worthington has to get approval from union 66 and Hampshire (regarding central office management and tuition agreement), before December 31 in order for Worthington to leave for July, 2015. They all agreed that the meeting should be held out here. DESE has no money to mitigate the impact and would refer to the legislature. This would be part of the needs conference; to discuss the impact of Worthington leaving the district.
- Mrs. McVeigh is upset and we should be contacting our legislatures because DESE is not doing their job. She would encourage everyone in here to contact their legislature.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked if is going to be an open meeting.

- Dr. Hopson said it will be open to the public. They are setting up the agenda based on legislation to collect information on student impact bussing, mitigate withdrawal impact, etc. They talked about the regional agreement amendments and failure to do so won't stop Worthington from leaving. Things that need to be changed are the constitution of the committee, assessments, etc. They are looking at the week before or the week after Thanksgiving. We've talked a lot about at GTAC. Dr. Hopson said the bottom line is this is a done deal as far as DESE is concerned. We are going to have another conference call in a couple of weeks.
- Mrs. McVeigh would like a summary to forward to GTAC and the towns.
- Mrs. Kennedy said they already have that information all they need to is come out here and help us out.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if DESE will be making recommendations to the legislature in terms of finances.
- Dr. Hopson said he believes so.
- Ms. Fisk said the two people they spoke with have been the biggest help to this district.
- Mr. Damon left the meeting 9:31 p.m.

## X. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS – None

## XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

### Future Agenda Items

November 12 - FY '14 Audit Report – Stan Kulas

## XII. INFORMATION

### Information

School committee votes budget schedule  
 Superintendent's Corner September 26, 2014  
 October School Committee Meetings  
 October Calendar  
 Gateway projects wait for funding  
 Gateway Open House on 10/9  
 Hartley looks forward to adding food options at Gateway  
 Gateway High School Elections  
 Weight Watchers returning to Gateway  
 Annual heating oil raffle  
 Superintendent's Corner September 22, 2014  
 Gateway School Safety Hotline

### Warrants

AP# PR# 6 \$382,507.83

## 9:00-10 p.m. XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION or earlier

A. Union Negotiations

*Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to go into executive session at or before 9:30 for the purpose of union negotiations update, not to return to open session.*

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

## XIV. ADJOURNMENT: *Mrs. Otterbeck made a motion seconded by Mrs. Foley to adjourn at 9:44 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,  
 Stacy L Stewart,  
 School Committee Secretary