

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES****WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2014****Library
7:30 P.M.****(A PORTION OF THIS MEETING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION)****I. OPENING OF MEETING**BLANDFORDMichele Crane
Jim KronholmCHESTERShirley Winer
Martha OtterbeckHUNTINGTONRon Damon
William Hathaway
Jeff WyandMIDDLEFIELD

Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY

Anne Marie Buikus

RUSSELLEllen Hirtle
Mary Ann LaurieWORTHINGTONSue Levreault
Gretchen EliasonSECRETARY

Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIONDr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Business & FinanceADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILAmy 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
Anthony Sabonis, High/Jr. High Assistant Principal
Alice Taverna, Pupil Services DirectorSTUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: _____

7:35 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA

- George Webb a resident of Huntington attended a public hearing to discuss the Worthington withdrawal. All towns are concerned and it will be hurtful to the budgets. He asked what would it take to resolve the issue and the chair lady couldn't respond. He suggested letting Worthington keep their school. He thinks the worst case would be to let the legislature make the decision for us. If we can't make the decision locally, they will make it for us. He is still asking what Worthington wants and what it would take for us to work together.
- Mrs. Eliason said one is they want a local elementary and feel very strongly about it. That is why they opened the private school. They want an excellent education for all their kids they want a responsive leadership. The disappointment for her is we haven't all realized that we all want the same thing.
- Mrs. Winer asked where our budget would be if we had all three of our elementary schools. It is already a tight budget. It would be much higher.
- Mr. Webb said the worst thing would be for Worthington to leave. We should let them keep their school.
- Mrs. Winer asked how we could open one and not the others.
- Mr. Webb said the other towns have already come to terms with their schools being closed.
- Mrs. Eliason said there are different ways to go about things. What is important to people in Worthington is not so much the configuration, it is making sure their needs and concerns are being met. Worthington is also proposing a union. Even if we aren't part of the district there could be a tuition agreement.
- Mr. Mason said there were a number of points made at the earlier meeting with DESE about the roles of DESE. Jeff Wulfson said the key players are Worthington, School committee and the other towns. Will school committee represent itself at a meeting?
- Mrs. Eliason said one of the things she has been disappointed about is she feels there has to be a specific opinion. So at this point you may find people are afraid to act independently.
- Mrs. Winer doesn't agree.

- Mrs. McVeigh asked if you could take that objective out of school committee goals and objectives.
- Mr. Kronholm said certainly on the budget, the school committee has already passed it, they have to support the issue.
- Mrs. Eliason said political issues should be left to the school committee and they should be a buffer between the administration and the community. She is not sure all of the school committee members feel comfortable doing that.
- Mr. Mason said the school committee and the administration do that in negotiations.
- Mrs. Eliason said yes we did vote against the withdrawal. The Blandford delegate was behind the vote.
- John McVeigh said now is the time to talk about it. That is what DESE said today in the earlier meeting.
- This will be put back on the agenda for the next meeting.
- Mr. Kronholm asked how many students are in Worthington.
- Dr. Hopson said we will get that information to him.

II. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brennan Foley said they are meeting tomorrow.

IV. CONSENT ITEMS 3/5/14, 3/12/14 (Enc.'s)

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to approve the minutes of 3/5/14 and 3/12/14 subject to corrections.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain 2 Absent

V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Student Representative

- John Wyand said Friday is the talent show at the high school, next Thursday is the Cabaret and Show Choir, and the week of March 10 is the performance "Much Ado About Nothing".

B. School Committee

- Mr. Wyand attended the PARCC workshop last week and brought a few PowerPoint handouts. Their idea of how much it will cost is different than Dr. Hopson's. They did talk about looking into whether they would continue with PARCC. That final decision has not been decided.
- Mr. Kronholm handed out a well written article by Todd Gazda former principal who is now a superintendent. He doesn't agree; he is very optimistic.

C. Chairperson

- Mrs. Eliason went over the goals of attending the Charting the Course - and then the ethics commission training. She recommended everyone take the ethics.

D. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.) - None

E. Business Manager – None

F. Administration

- Mr. Finnie introduced Mr. Sabonis. Mr. Sabonis has 12 years in education; he was a classroom teacher for 10 years. Coached soccer at the high school and college levels, and is now our assistant principal at the high and Jr. high school level.

VII. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee

- No meeting tonight. We will go over the survey later in the agenda.

B. Finance Subcommittee

- Met earlier today and talked with the finance committees of the towns.

C. Legislative Liaison – None

D. Policy Subcommittee - None**E. School Committee Goals Subcommittee - None**

VIII. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**A. Superintendent's Evaluation Discussion**

- They did a mid-year evaluation in the fall. At the last subcommittee they had a management review. Dr. Hopson reminded them to share the information with the full committee. This will help when doing the final evaluation later this year.
- Mrs. Levreault said what we have is a copy of Dr. Hopson's goals which he updates them several times a year. We did a survey last fall. In the survey there were comments and he had some questions on those. He's looking for our direction. This is our chance to ask questions.
- Mrs. Levreault started with student enrollment numbers since they didn't get to her numbers during the meeting. What is the process? One part said Ms. Fisk sends them and another place said Mrs. Stewart sends them. She asked if we give those numbers to the state?
- Ms. Fisk explained that we don't send the census numbers to the state.
- Mrs. Stewart explained that we send the school attending children report to the state, which consists of voke, private, parochial, school choice, home school etc. We send those as of January 1 every year. Information is collected between schools as of January 1 but the deadline to submit this year was March 7. It does take time to get responses from some of the schools.
- Mrs. Eliason said one of the things that came up is we debated if we can ask these types of questions or level of specificity, that it is districting, but she disagrees. The DESE is asking us to evaluate the superintendent and we should follow the rubric and give reasons for evaluating him the way we are. It is to help Dr. Hopson understand our priorities and improve his performance. That should be our focus with the evaluation documents.
- Mrs. Winer said to a certain extent you are right. The designations are very hard to define. What that means and where to draw the line is unclear. When it comes to a checklist, it is up to them to do the process, we should be asking if it is working, if it's not why isn't it, and what do we need to do. We don't have the time or the patients do to checklist. She felt the questions were so specific, that it is hard to get to the overview.
- Mrs. Eliason agrees with Mrs. Winer. One of the things we got stuck on is the interventions and measuring the outcome. Dr. Hopson said he hadn't collected that mid-year. It is a timing issue.
- Mrs. Winer doesn't feel it is out job to ask.
- Mrs. Laurie asked about capital plan section 4 the physical plant, window protection, and what does upgrade our ability to integrate certain actions.
- Dr. Hopson said we can push a button to close the doors and lock certain parts of the building. A 911 trigger has been installed in the offices and security. We are looking into putting a magnetic lock on the second door in the main entrance and also in central office.
- Mr. Kronholm said we did get bogged down on interventions. He thought some of the members were being threatening and pressuring by micromanaging. He trusts the administrators.
- Mrs. Levreault said the superintendent evaluation subcommittee is in place to make sure the superintendent is doing his job and that his goals are unfolding the way he wants them to. We also found out there was technology that wasn't in place yet that could have helped find out about interventions that could have been in place. We want to help Dr. Hopson do the best job he can.
- Dr. Hopson said the program could have helped us gather the information, but to ask them to hand calculate them two or three times a year is too much for his administrators. If they don't meet them that his job and his responsibility. The software doesn't block the interventions from being done, it just helps in knowing how many are being done.
- Mrs. Eliason said you weren't asked on a monthly basis. There is never a point in the cycle where we can get it before the evaluation.
- Dr. Hopson said this is the first time that it has been asked for, so to do it by March and then again in April is a lot of time.
- Mrs. Levreault said if the technology helps, if by the push to find out the numbers.
- Mrs. Foley said that program doesn't help with the intervention it just gives you the numbers. What does the number actually mean since they fluctuate on a daily basis?
- Dr. Hopson said we do spend a lot of time talking about things at management meetings. We should be able to take that and show growth. Two or three people ask specific questions, so he asked to have it shared with the full committee. Questions came up about what the curriculum director does; she gave several presentations this year. Until the committee starts looking at their actions as a whole, it is going to be a

pretty divided committee. You need to reflect where you are going as a generic whole. If he asked that question right now he would get many different answers. In all his time as the superintendent he doesn't think the committee has actually done that. This is the first time in his nineteen years in the district that there is very little communication between the Superintendent and the Chair. It leaves him out in the cold.

- Mrs. Eliason thinks the committee needs to create an independence and confidence. We ask him to do things he shouldn't have to do. He has a big job. She doesn't think we should have him create policy. We have him tallying up all the staff and school committee surveys and we ask him to do that because he has the capability to do it.
- Mrs. Laurie said the school committee being divided is like the country and the bipartisan. Just because we have a difference of opinions doesn't mean we can't work together.
- Dr. Hopson said the goal is that we try to put the kids first. He would like to feel in his heart that every school committee member has student's best interests at heart. Of course you have disagreements. Do you as a school committee with the administration put student's best interests first? What do we want and have and how do we put that together so the average citizen or parent can understand it. How do we work collaboratively to put that together?
- Mrs. Eliason said we have to recognize we need to start from a common ground and understand there are going to be differences of approach.
- Dr. Hopson said do we want to go over all of these questions. I think Mrs. Levreault shared this so you have all the information. We are probably way ahead of the curve for superintendent's evaluations but need to find a common ground.
- Mrs. Levreault said it is important to have goals. If we can't communicate these goals to the community, they have nothing to hang on to. Was it specific, was it measurable; a goal is specific and measurable. That is something that we haven't done in the past.
- Mrs. Winer said her problem is we are getting hung up on specific goals. We don't have to measure everything, and we don't have to evaluate the superintendent on every single one of them. We don't get paid.
- Mrs. Foley said any person who asks about the school committee asks if you are doing it for the kids.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if there were specific questions or if people wanted to go over them.
- Mrs. Laurie said people should go over them and ask if they have specific questions.

B. Maintenance/Capital Improvement Plan

- Mrs. Eliason said Mr. Wing was here at the last meeting. At tonight's finance meeting we did bring up the stabilization fund, and if the towns would want to fund it. They wouldn't mind putting money in it if there was leftover money at the end of the year, but they probably would not put a large sum of money in there.
- Mr. Mason said they thought it would be hard to sell to the towns. It might be easier to set up funds in each town and set aside money for the school.
- Mrs. Eliason said it may be funded in many ways, left over in stabilization, borrowed or have the towns set up individual funds.
- Mr. Jacques said it was important to explain the difference between E & D and Stabilization. Some towns have raised and appropriated into their stabilization funds, but it is more typical if money left over money went into stabilization. It was suggested the school set up the same as towns, some goes to E & D and some goes to stabilization.
- Dr. Hopson said he put this together with the business office and maintenance department, it was hard to separate the difference between maintenance and capital. We are doing things that allow us to save money in the longrun. The epoxy floor, allows us to use less product on the floors in the long run. Then there is the small plow truck we've had for several years now. It is getting to be time to look at replacing that. We have a technology plan in place too. The plan was to start replacing smart boards this year. We decided to upgrade our infrastructure for help with the PARCC testing instead. The smart boards work fine, but the cables don't and the replacements don't work with the old machines. We are working on the grounds. GYAA is helping with that. We replace scrubbers. We have finally got down to using stuff we can buy in bulk. We also have boilers which we have been replacing part by part. We talked about purchasing mini buses for special education. We wanted to wait till the bus contract is up. Looking at replacing the middle school roof. It is okay right now, but it is past its life. Repairing the well is something we can't put off. Longterm DEP wants us to do something about a new well. It would be better to put a well near the old one. We are looking about 10 years out. PARCC comes along and we find that 30% of our computers don't work for PARCC.
- Mrs. Laurie asked if we volunteered or got picked for PARCC.
- Dr. Hopson said Ware declined, but no one else did. We needed to do it to go through the process.

- Mr. Wyand said there was talk about bring your own device at the PARCC workshop. They talked about a mainframe at each school. They said they are going to allow paper and pencil for a couple of years which defeats the purpose of the PARCC test.
- Dr. Hopson said what we are essentially doing is taking 40 computers out of use for 2 weeks. So they can be imaged and then put them back in the classroom. PARCC is just one piece.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if there can be an information session about what PARCC is. Do we have to participate in this? We've had MCAS for years and we can do longitudinal studies finally. Who says we have to do this.
- Dr. Hopson said it is one of two national assessments of the common core.
- Mrs. Mcveigh said at some point we need to have a reasonable discussion. Can we have informational session on it?
- Mrs. Blocker said PARCC is one of two tests and PARCC is what Massachusetts chose. They want to look at the data and then they will make the decision to change or not change after this trial. If our state adopts it as the new replacement of MCAS we will have to do it. There is a lot of controversy.
- Dr. Hopson said Jeff Wulfson said it is with the common core, they were sharing cost with 20 others. The commissioner chairs the PARCC Committee.
- Dr. Hopson said Ware tried opt out of the trial but the state made them do some of their schools.
- Mrs. Eliason asked about the schedule, is this a prioritized list?
- Dr. Hopson said we are holding out on buses, until the contract ends. These are just windows of opportunity.
- Mrs. Eliason said this is a window, not necessarily that the costs being spread out.
- Dr. Hopson said the cost estimate is below. You could essentially put in \$100,000 to 125,000 a year and budget it.
- Mrs Buikus said so it would be similar to the phones.
- Mrs. Hague asked if there were copies we could share.
- Mrs. Eliason asked how the committee wants to proceed.
- Put it on the agenda under old business again.

IX. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee – Public Request

- Mr. Mason handed out his request.
- Dr. Hopson said the deadline is March 1. Mr. White does a presentation about vocational programs. Dr. Hopson has signed all the vocational applications that have come in. One came in later, but it did meet the deadline.
- Mrs. Eliaon is interested in knowing the students primary motivation for vocational. Do they have a specific career in mind or just want hands on, or do they go for other reasons, such as family or social reasons. It is a logical place to start in offering to better fit needs.
- Mrs. Winer said at that age they know if they are hands on. How good is their academic education? She knows very little about either school.
- Mrs. Foley is wondering if Mr. Sabonis could shed some light on this.
- Mr. Sabonis said their MCAS rates are high, because they can send their kids back to their sending schools if they are not good. They factor in time spent in specific subjects. Some of the other classes are affected by it. They have an admissions process so they can see what and why students are coming in. They are looking at grades, attendance, interview, and recommendation letters. It is easy to get them out.
- Mrs. Winer asked if they do some of the things that pertain common core.
- Mr. Sabonis said most vocational programs don't offer honors and AP programs.
- Mr. Finnie said one thing that came up is when they see our status level they are not looking at the high school because the high school is high performing. This would be a great opportunity to talk about what we are doing, what we need to change.
- Mr. Kronholm is less than enthusiastic about this, medaling with teaching professionals. Are the people on this committee going to be professionals in the field?
- Mr. Mason is not a professional educator, he went to school, and helped a school incorporate something like this in Maine. He doesn't see it as interfering. He would see it as advising the school committee and doing community outreach and exploring the opportunity not imposing on the school district.
- Mr. Sabonis said when vocational schools set up Chapter 74 programs you have to have an advisory committee, and they help make decisions. If that is the goal this is the place to start a relationship between the school and the community.

- Mrs. Blocker agrees with Mr. Sabonis. This could extend to course offerings in general.
- Mr. Finnie said we need to look at what are the college and career readiness, what are our plans. This is an opportunity. Similar discussions have come up in student councils. These are good opportunities.
- Mrs. Eliason said as we start talking about changing to a 7 period schedule, what is our plan for filling those extra time periods.
- Mr. Finnie said it is not just adding course offerings, it is flexibility. It is a two year process. Some will happen right away and some later on.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if there is there a point to try to gauge interest across the spectrum. If we have the opportunity to expand course offerings what would it be? What kinds of experiences are you interested in. If you choose vocational what was your primary motivation. Sometimes people choose out because there are different strings attached. It might be football. How do we collect information?
- Mr. Finnie said Mr. White is always collecting information and he knows the kids well. Some of these things are already being discussed. How do we make them see these are the things we are focusing on?
- Mrs. Foley asked if there is a trend?
- Mr. Finnie said the trend is down right now. They have developed connections. There are lots of different things this group could do.
- Mrs. Winer asked Mr. Mason how they were able to raise money to add to the program. Was adult education part of that?
- Mr. Mason said it was set up by a group similar to this what he is proposing. They got volunteers to come in to teach. A small amount of money was involved so there was low overhead.
- Mrs. Hague said HVAC program they used to have in Westfield was started through donations. The person who started it wrote letters.
- Mrs. Otterbeck said there is an adult education that happens through the hilltowns.
- Mr. Mason said it is hosted here at Gateway. They have a small grant from UMASS. They have had some well attended courses.
- Mrs. Otterbeck feels some of the students attend vocation because of what they are presented with at home. She said there was a volunteer program where a grandparent came in to read to the students at Chester Elementary.
- Dr. Hopson said there was a short lived grant for that.
- Mrs. Eliason asked if it would be helpful to Mr. Finnie and Mr. Sabonis to have a committee to help them read data, about course offerings, etc.
- Mr. Finnie said it would be helpful. Maybe this group can help us with donations, and solve problems of internships etc. The more people who know the details the better off we are.
- Move to old business for next meeting for a vote.

B. Superintendent's Request to Attend ASBO Meeting

- ASBO stands for American Society for Business Officials. Dr. Hopson is requesting to go to to this instead of the National Superintendent's Conference because he gets more out of it.
- The conference is in September.
- Mr. Wyand asked what is on the agenda.
- Dr. Hopson said curriculum work, how you pay for it, business aspects, how to automate processes, Special Education. .
- Ms. Fisk said there is not an actual agenda yet.
- Move to old business for next meeting

X. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

Field Trip Policy

School Committee Reorganization

XI. INFORMATION

Information

Superintendent's Corner March 14, 2014

View and vote for Gateway!

Grammy winner Joseph FireCrow at Gateway

Softball season opener

Weight Watchers at Gateway

Gateway JRHS Effort Awards Recipients treated to Breakfast with the Principal

Gator Toss for good causes
Chester, Littleville celebrate 100 days of school
College planning workshop for juniors, parents
Middle School Term 2 Effort Awards
Superintendent's Corner March 7, 2014
Start of the spring sports season

Warrants

AP# 1071 \$53,803.99 PR# 19 \$410,156.81
AP# 1076 \$23.72

**9:00-10 p.m. XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
or earlier**

Mrs. Levreault made a motion seconded by Mrs. Winer to go into executive session at 9:38 p.m. for the purpose of union and non-union negotiations not to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

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

XIII. ADJOURNMENT *Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Levreault to adjourn at 9:46 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L Stewart,
School Committee Secretary