

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Gateway Regional School District will provide and exemplary education that challenges all students in an instructional setting appropriate to their needs.

JOINT BUDGET/REGULAR MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2018

Middle School 112/114

7:00 P.M.

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

I. OPENING OF MEETING

BLANDFORD
Michele Crane
Terri Garfield

CHESTER
Shirley Winer
Martha Otterbeck

HUNTINGTON
Melissa Nazzaro
Aaron Welch

MIDDLEFIELD
Sarah Foley

MONTGOMERY
Madelyn Austin

RUSSELL
Tara Balboni
Sarah Page

SECRETARY
Stacy Stewart

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

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit Principal
Jason Finnie, Middle/High Principal
Kurt Garivaltis, Pupil Services Director
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
Robert Austin

OTHERS: Peter Spotts, Andy Myers, Bill Levakas, Chris Tamburrino

- Mrs. Crane opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- Peter Spotts is recording the meeting.

7:05 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit) - None

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Robert Austin said student council has had two meetings. They have discussed spirit days- formalwear, pink for breast cancer, spooky, etc. They will be holding a display case competition. Student council elected officers today and created the daily announcement schedule.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS - None

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Safe Supportive Schools Competitive Grant Approval

- Mrs. Long talked about the STARS grant, which came in after the last meeting and the deadline is before the next meeting.

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Balboni to waive the two-meeting rule to approve grants.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Sarah F., Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Aaron, Shirley, Michele

Absent: Martha

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Garfield to approve the Safe and Supportive Schools Competitive Grant and the STARS Grant through Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Sarah F., Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Aaron, Shirley, Michele

Absent: Martha

B. FY '19 First Quarter Transfers

Mrs. Balboni made a motion seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro to approve the First Quarter Transfers.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 9 Nays Abstain Absent 1 (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Sarah F., Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Aaron, Shirley, Michele

Absent: Martha

7:30 VI. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Policy Approval – Minutes (Enc.)

- a. GBGE – Domestic Violence Leave Policy
- b. GBGF – Family and Medical Leave
- c. GBI – Staff Participation in Political Activities
- d. GCBA – Professional Staff Salary Schedules
- e. GCBB – Employment of Principals
- f. GCBC – Professional Staff Supplementary Pay Plans
- g. GCF – Professional Staff Hiring
- h. GCJ – Professional Teacher Status
- i. GDQD – Suspension and Dismissal of Support Staff Members
- j. IB – Academic Freedom

- Mrs. Crane said the minutes and policies were in your packet. There are some very minor changes. This is a first reading and we will vote at the next meeting.

7:30 VII. JOINT BUDGET SESSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS

A. FY '19 Financial State of the District

- Ms. Fisk gave a Powerpoint presentation.
- Mrs. Winer asked if it is saving us money owing our own busses.
- Ms. Fisk said it used to cost us a \$100 per day to transport a student to Moltenbreys.
- Mr. Garivaltis said Taconic was the last school approved for School to SPEC which is a chapter 74 program. They have a meeting with them, to understand the application process.
- Mrs. Nazzaro asked when we don't get bids, do we get feedback from the other companies as to why they didn't bid.

Mrs. Otterbeck arrived at 7:18 p.m.

- Dr. Hopson said this is a problem across the state. The state is looking into creating some competition.
- Mr. Levakis talked about the green community grant. He doesn't think it can be used for boilers. Blandford was going to use some of the money to update their boilers, and they got denied.
- Mr. Myers said if you can find a more efficient or green boiler you might qualify.
- Ms. Fisk said we would like to go from four to two more efficient boilers.

- Mrs. Crane asked how we compare to other districts in that only 8% of our students are not reimbursed for transportation.
- Mr. Garivaltis said because our out of district costs have decreased the reimbursement is less as well.
- Mr. Garivaltis said the IDEA Grant funded the playground for the preschool.
- Mr. Myers asked how the state reimburses the preschool.
- Ms. Fisk thinks it is \$3,800 per student. If factors into the chapter 70 as part of the foundation budget.
- Mr. Myers asked if we can we show it as a net.
- Ms. Fisk said you can a year later.
- Mr. Welch asked what the cost is of the health insurance.
- Ms. Fisk said about \$12,000 per year for the full-time preschool staff.
- Ms. Fisk said we have an out of district residential placement.
- Mr. Welch asked for clarification.
- Mr. Garivaltis said it can be a variety of private placements. It could be a day program, group facility or residential program which means the student goes there and lives there. A residential program is twice the price, but you don't pay for transportation.
- Mr. Welch asked what the net impact is.
- Dr. Hopson said we are on the hook for about 25% about \$90,000 and you pay the \$45,000 up front.
- Mr. Garivaltis said this student was already a day placement then landed in the Baystate hospital, then a hospital in NH to keep him safe. It goes from the day placement with transportation to residential without transportation.
- Dr. Hopson said you are saving in transportation.
- Mrs. Foley what accounts for the variability in cost?
- Mr. Garivaltis said OSD (operational services division). The state sets the rates for each individual private facility. The facility, the staffing ratio, the kind of services, etc., are what drives the cost. There are two different facilities that are willing to take the student. We had nine rejections before these two facilities. It will come down to which facility opens up first.
- Mr. Welch said it would be helpful to get the net impact because we have to explain this. He wants to be able to explain since this is a six figure bump.
- Ms. Fisk, there is a special education extraordinary relief act but you have to have a 125% percent increase.
- Dr. Hopson said the net is about \$25,000 after this year.
- Mrs. Nazzaro said it will be slightly offset by last year's circuit breaker.
- Mrs. Austin asked up to what age do we have to provide the care.
- Ms. Fisk said until the age of twenty-five.
- Mr. Garivaltis said we are well below where we were a few years ago.
- Mr. Welch and Mrs. Nazzaro know it is not debatable but they want to be able to explain it when they get questions from townspeople.
- Mrs. Coburn said she has thirteen new enrollments and seven of them are on IEP's. They have moved into district.
- Mrs. Foley said if you have a special education stabilization fund do they ever hold it against you for reimbursements.
- Ms. Fisk said no. They can't.
- Mrs. Nazzaro asked if any of the revolving accounts can help fund this special education stabilization account.
- Ms. Fisk we would have to budget and get all the towns to approve it.
- Dr. Hopson said revolving accounts are designated for certain items.
- Mr. Welch you have to start from scratch.
- Mr. Myers said there was a paper created that was well done. Several of the select board members have an opportunity to speak to senator Hinds. He is bringing it.
- Mrs. Crane said that is actually the white paper we talked about at the facilitated discussion.
- Mr. Levakis said on Monday the select board talked about the students in Gateway going to high school and moving out of district. Are there any surveys being done in 7th or 8th grade to see what they are looking to go to vocational to do. Can we do something here in Gateway to give them a chance to stay here that would help them out in their future and have them stay in gateway. It seems like the population is going down in the high school.
- Dr. Hopson said at the middle and high school they have a lot of career development.
- Mr. Finnie said the majority we lose are just movig somewhere and the other other is the two vocational schools. We are continuing to looking at other chapter 74 vocational programs. We have welding and are looking at chapter 74 with the preschool. We cannot offer the variety of a true vocational program.

- Mrs. Balboni said those programs cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- Mr. Finnie said we have a wood shop that we looked at converting over, but it was too expensive to over hall the duct work etc. It is tough to add vocational programs if you are not a true vocation program. Plus, as Kurt has mentioned there is an application process. Our goal is to make sure those kids aren't going somewhere else just to go somewhere different.
- Mrs. Balboni feels like the letters and recordings that go out about the vocational schools seem kind of weird.
- Mr. Finnie said it has taken a lot to push back on the vocational schools. It only applies to the area where the school is. The information you are getting is so that the towns are aware who goes where.
- Mrs. Balboni said Smith costs more than Westfield. If there is a program at Westfield why do we allow them to go to the more expensive school.
- Mr. Finnie hasn't done a complete audit, but most are not duplicated.
- Mr. Finnie said schools are very good at writing classes that sound differently, they are being creative to attract students.
- Mrs. Balboni said a lot of the kids went to vocational to learn a trade. Has Gateway ever considered creating a program to help the nontraditional program.
- Mr. Finnie said something that has been increasing is the high school is being flexible with things such as dual enrollment. We are trying to have a school to career position to help with internships, and flexibility for credits that are different; job shadows, phone interviews, communication and building networks with the community both in Gateway and out of Gateway.
- Mr. Myers said that issue came up at the facilitated discussion and a suggestion was made to form a task force. The challenge is the percentage of vocational and choice out increased and that is not sustainable. He thinks Mr. Finnie needs to be on that task force, school committee, town members, teachers, etc.
- Mr. Finnie said the biggest hurdle is transportation, and networking.
- Mr. Myers said almost 50% of the students who left moved out of the district. The towns have started marking.
- Mr. Welch asked do we and should we promote the welding course more. Can we bring in more students?
- Mr. Finnie said it is part of the work Mrs. Long and Ms. LeClair have been working on. To bring in too many more we would have to expand the program.
- Mr. Welch asked what we have currently and what about running in a direction of internet technology. That is a fast moving direction. We are already wired up. Are any other vocational techs moving in that direction?
- Mr. Finnie said we had a discussion at LTM today. Computer science is being pushed by the state. We had someone who did that but when they left we couldn't fill it.
- Mr. Welch asked are there student we have here now that might be interested in that.
- Mr. Finnie thinks what makes more sense for us is to see if we have interest and building the course of studies. It is part of the long-term plan to offer a larger variety of courses.
- Mrs. Otterbeck said Westfield tech offers some sort of computer programming/fixing computers and they are not necessarily getting a job from there. They are having to go to STCC after.
- Mr. Finnie said all of these require more staffing although he is excited these questions are coming up.
- Mrs. Nazzaro said we took the step for preschool in hopes there will be a draw of students. There is going to have to be an investment by the towns.

B. State Auditor – Unfunded Mandate – OPEB/Worthington

- Dr. Hopson the white paper has come up and Mr. Myers is bringing it to the legislators. He said at some point the six towns are going to have to figure out how to approach Suzanne bump. The state let Worthington out and they are still responsible for OPEB. Maybe it is a topic for our facilitated discussion. It needs to be a group effort. The more we can start funding OPEB accounts the better off we will be. The state should be paying into it to shrink the overall unfunded amount.
- Mr. Myers plans on bringing it up with senator Hinds. He also thinks the change in the assessment is a proactive thing.
- Mr. Welch said a link and email was sent to him. Pittsfield school committee passed some resolutions for the failure to Maybe we can take this up at the next meeting the house if failing to do business. Aaron read the letter. (see aaron for the letter) It would be a letter of solidarity.
- Dr. Hopson said we also need to support chapter 74 reform, but it isn't going to help gateway because we are held harmless. We most likely see a lot more money. The 80,000 we got from rural schools the chapter 74 will ever get us. What are we going to offer for the additional funding. School committee should think about that.

- Mr. Welch said there is a push for single payer health care. Provides health care for every citizen, democratic committee (fix it film)It effects the school districts bottom line.
- Also there is a growing group putting together a forum getting the WMass delegation to hear the real issues from schools.
- Mrs. Crane said can we discuss unfunded mandates.

VIII. CONSENT ITEMS 8/22/18 (Enc.)

Mrs. Foley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to approve the minutes of 8/22/18.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Sarah F., Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Martha, Aaron, Shirley, Michele

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

B. Chairperson

Donation Letter (Enc.)

- Mrs. Crane – correspondence of musical instruments. Did Mrs. Guertin.

C. Superintendent

Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Dr. Hopson – Girls soccer team won their 300th win Mrs. McVeigh Dave it is impressive that he retired several years ago and is still coaching. Also that e have several teachers who stay on after they retire.

D. Business Manager - None

E. Administration - None

F. Town - None

X. COMMITTEE REPORTING

A. Superintendent's Evaluation - Next Meeting 10/10/18

B. Legislative Liaison - None

C. Policy Subcommittee – Next Meetings 9/26/18, 10/24/18

D. Building Liaisons - None

XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XII. INFORMATION

Information

School Committee votes to eliminate Gateway student parking fee

Student expectations clarified at Gateway MS

Superintendent's Corner August 22, 2018

Band Instrument Rental Night

Gateway Picture Day

Support GEF at Comfort Kitchen on September 7!

Save the Date: 3rd Annual Homecoming at Gateway

September School Committee Meetings

New faces at Gateway!

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

Warrant

AP#1013 \$53,682.66

PR#004 \$108,461.72

AP#1015 \$109,509.42

PR#005 \$417,494.83

8:35-9 p.m. XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None
or earlier

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Welch made a motion seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro to adjourn at 8:32 p.m.

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

Yeas: Madelyn, Tara, Sarah F., Terri, Melissa, Sarah P., Martha, Aaron, Shirley, Michele

Respectfully Submitted,
Stacy L Stewart
School Committee Secretary