

GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gateway Assistant Superintendent Stephanie Fisk appointed to special commission

Huntington – Stephanie Fisk, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations of the Gateway Regional School District, was recently appointed by Governor Baker to serve on a Special Commission to Study and Make Recommendations to Improve Efficiencies Relative to Transportation for Students. “I am excited to have the opportunity to offer input while serving on this committee and to work on a common goal of improving efficiencies as well as developing ideas for increasing transportation reimbursement funding,” said Fisk.

The commission shall study and report on: methods districts use to transport students, including current costs and bid processes in procuring transportation; a budget assessment for said costs; and recommendations for improving transportation services. The commission shall take into account the best policies and practices in other states as well.

According to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71; Section 16C, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is legally required to fully reimburse regional school districts the costs associated with the transportation of students living more than a mile and a half from school, subject to appropriation. In recent years, Massachusetts has been inconsistent and well below the 100% reimbursement for these costs, leaving school districts with the burden of shifting those costs to the towns or reducing their school budgets to cover the lack of transportation reimbursement. Fully funding regional transportation was further energized after State Auditor Suzanne Bump released her 2017 report, “*Supporting Student and Community Success; Updating the Structure and Finance of Massachusetts Regional School Districts*” which states that the act of fulfilling its promise to fund 100% of transportation costs would have a massive impact on the budgets of all regional school districts and their contributing towns.

This commission’s first meeting is scheduled for March 15 in Boston. The commission is scheduled to file its report and recommendations with the clerks of the Senate and the House of Representatives by December 1, 2019.

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