

GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Superintendent's Corner

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Huntington – Our summer weather pattern continues with an unusually warm start to our school year. Despite the warmer weather, our staff and students continue to work, remain pleasant, and make some minor adjustments in our warmest rooms during the hottest days. Another benefit to living in this area is that it's usually much cooler than in the valley and cities during the heat of the day and, perhaps due to the lack of large parking areas and concentrated numbers of large masonry buildings, our area tends to cool down fairly well at night. Because of this we've been able to hold school, as have other schools in the hills of Western Massachusetts, rather than cancelling classes or having early releases. I've even been told by bus drivers and bus monitors that the hottest location on the buses is in the driver's seat as there is significant airflow throughout the rest of the bus due to open windows and roof vents.

The idiom Mark Twain was credited with--"If you don't like the weather in New England now, just wait a few minutes"—seems to still be on target given the variations in temperatures over the past few weeks. So, if the past is any indication of the future, it won't be long before some are complaining about the cold and we'll be watching weather forecasts carefully to try and predict whether it will be safe to run buses due to the potential for inclement weather. At least we've been very fortunate in not facing erupting volcanoes, hurricanes, large scale forest fires, damaging floods or the other challenges nature seems to be unleashing in many other places throughout our country.

Despite the weather we've had a fairly quiet start to the school year. As happens every year there have been situations that have necessitated last minute changes to bus runs, some student schedules have had to be revised, we've had to finish hiring staff just before school started and we're all getting used to some of the enhanced security measures. As always our staff has supported students through these changes and done their best to minimize the impacts on the learning process.

I shared the following thoughts with our outstanding staff on their first day back and I believe it points out that the district and our member towns are making progress together:

“Despite the many challenges we face, the past few months have shown that the light at the end of the tunnel is not an oncoming freight train but rather some rays of hope. As you may know the towns and our school committee worked collaboratively to pass this year's budget on the first try as well as changing the method of assessing towns. We are continuing this model of success in working together to update the regional agreement and move forward with a positive attitude in developing a new budget. We're also pleased that the state did provide some funding for small and rural school districts that we hope will grow in the future as well as providing some additional funds in regional transportation.

When you combine this with the efforts of the towns to work together to share services, to develop the economic infrastructure, the progress in bringing broadband to every town, and the potential for

future growth in our six towns seeded by state grant money we're able to begin seeing those rays of hope brightening and bringing some stability into the area.

Couple this with the continuing support of the school committee and our families for focusing on the development of the whole child, for integrating skills and knowledge with the need to support our students' social emotional growth rather than simply focus on standardized test scores and perhaps one can begin to recognize what a real gem we have here at Gateway."

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