

GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

12 Littleville Road Huntington, MA 01050

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Wendy V. Long, Public Relations
(413) 685-1003

Vocal improv seminar at Gateway

Huntington – “Part of this process is trusting that you have good ideas, because I already know that you do,” advised Dr. Stephen A. Paparo, as he led a vocal improvisation workshop for Gateway choir members.

Paparo spent the morning of October 12 with about 25 choir members from Gateway Regional High School, leading them through a ‘voices only’ improvisational workshop. Producing original music in the style of the popular “Pitch Perfect” movies, Paparo helped students establish a rhythm, bass, harmonies, and lead musical line, that included complementary rhythms.

“The idea is locking the sounds together, but not at the same pitch or rhythm,” he noted. “Just start a groove, a simple pattern, and we’ll build from there.”

During one long improv, a student with a microphone established a bass line. Other students added patterns and “chords” to the piece, while individuals exchanged a second microphone and improvised a lead using basic syllables, not words. As the lead singer improvised a melodic line, the remaining singers repeated that line in a “call and response” fashion.

At one point, Paparo stopped the group and asked for observations or questions.

“Can we do that again?!” one student quickly asked.

Jerilyn Beauregard, Gateway’s Vocal Music Director, brought Paparo to the school through a *Funds for Learning Grant* awarded by the Gateway Education Foundation. Her goal for the workshop was to have choir students understand what vocal improvisation is and how to do it. Beauregard first met Paparo during a vocal jazz improvisation workshop she attended at UMASS last December, and invited him to come to Gateway.

Dr. Stephen A. Paparo is an Assistant Professor of Music Education at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, where he teaches courses in music education, supervises student teachers and conducts the University Chorale. He holds a Ph.D. from Michigan State University, and degrees from Syracuse University and Ithaca College. He has presented at numerous state, national and international conferences.

A video excerpt from this workshop may be found on the Gateway Education Foundation’s website (<http://www.gatewayeducationfoundation.org/photos/>)

###



Photos: members of Gateway HS choirs create acapella music during their improv workshop, funded by the Gateway Education Foundation.

