

**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
100 MAPLE AVENUE
SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS**

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, October 11, 2017

Present: Dr. Dale Magee, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Sandy Fryc, Secretary; Ms. Erin Canzano; Mr. Jason Palitsch; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

A complete audio/visual recording of this meeting is available on the Shrewsbury Public Schools website.

The meeting was convened by Dr. Magee at 7:01 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Mr. Wensky offered thanks and congratulations to everyone who contributed to making the Colonial Way Experience at Shrewsbury High School (SHS) a success. He added that it was a student's idea to set up music, activities, and food trucks (in the manner of Yawkey Way in Boston) prior to a football game with St. John's High School.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer also offered congratulations and thanks to everyone involved with the Colonial Way Experience at SHS, noting that outstanding student leadership, and hard work by SHS staff, made it a success, adding it was a terrific evening for our community. He noted SHS concerts happening that evening and the next day and wished good luck to the performers in the band, orchestra, and choirs. Finally, he advised that this evening was the annual dinner for families of our English language learners, happening at Oak Middle School. Dr. Sawyer offered thanks to all of our English Language Education staff for their efforts to reach out and make these families feel welcome in our schools and our community.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Beal Early Childhood Center Building Project

i. Report on Future Grade Configuration Survey Data

Dr. Sawyer began by noting that the surveys on grade configuration options (Kindergarten-Grade 1; Kindergarten-Grade 4) for the Beal Early Childhood Center enjoyed outstanding participation, with 922 respondents to the Parent & Community Survey, and 245 respondents to the Staff Survey. He addressed survey items in order for the K-Grade 1 configuration first, providing both Parent & Community and Staff responses regarding benefits and drawbacks for each consideration, and noted that the two were often aligned. Dr. Sawyer advised that overall, the weighted averages of almost all K-Grade 1 considerations were in the “drawbacks” category (with a score of less than 3 on a 5 point scale). Dr. Sawyer then similarly addressed survey items for the K-Grade 4 configuration, and noted that the weighted averages of all K- Grade 4 considerations were in the “benefits” category (with a score greater than 3 on a 5 point scale.)

Dr. Sawyer provided quotes from the survey in support of both configurations, and highlighted themes around the perceived strengths and challenges of both options. He noted that both configurations are currently in play, and work well, in the district. Dr. Sawyer advised that more information and his recommendation would be provided to the Committee in advance of their vote on a configuration choice at the meeting on October 25. In response to a question from the Committee, Dr. Sawyer advised that both options would expand the availability of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK), and that based on enrollment projections the new school would provide the ability to offer FDK to all students.

A. Beal Early Childhood Center Building Project

ii. Public Hearing on Future Grade Configuration

This public hearing was the second of two that gave community members an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback in advance of the School Committee vote on October 25, 2017, to decide which of two grade configurations (K- Grade 1; K- Grade 4) to adopt.

Ms. Margaret Aulenback, a kindergarten teacher from the Beal Early Childhood Center (BECC), spoke on behalf of BECC staff and advocated for the K-Grade 1 configuration because of its collaborative learning environment and focus on the social, emotional, and academic learning of young students.

Mary Aicardi, a community member with children in SPS, commented on the number of transitions between schools that students make, asked about transportation costs and equity among schools, and felt both choices were good. Mr. Collins advised that the K-Grade 1 model would incur higher transportation costs and longer rides for students, and Dr. Sawyer noted that all district schools follow the same curriculum regardless of the grade configuration.

A. Beal Early Childhood Center Building Project

iii. School Committee Discussion of Future Grade Configuration

Committee members thanked survey respondents for their participation and thoughtful feedback; encouraged community members and staff to continue to provide feedback; noted that both

models would allow for continued student success at SPS; and acknowledged the thoroughness of the process being utilized to explore and compare both configuration options.

B. School Transportation Annual Report

Mr. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, and Mr. Stephen Rocco, Transportation, Safety & Security Coordinator, began their annual report with an overview of services and transportation providers. They provided information on: “Regular Day Busing” vehicles (47) and routes (254); bus utilization for high, middle, and elementary school students; contract and rates (SPS is in the last year of a 5 year contract, and anticipates a significant rate increase - greater than 1-2% - going forward); system changes; online payment and increased process automation; ridership statistics (4780 total daily riders); registration data by month; payment methods utilized (92% of families pay online by credit card); budget resources and state reimbursement; and challenges and areas of improvement for the future.

Mr. Wensky noted the availability of the federally-funded *Safe Routes to School Program* which offers information on bike and walking routes; Committee members also asked clarifying questions about the potential for an up-front, electronic bus change request portal; the percent of late registrants that were new residents; and the longest current bus ride for students (approximately 1 hour). Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Collins both acknowledged the close working relationship that SPS enjoys with local provider AA Transportation.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Calendar: Vote

Mr. Collins advised that he presented the initial Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Calendar at the School Committee meeting on September 27, 2017, and provided a brief summary of the upcoming year. He presented a copy of the Town Manager’s FY19 Budget Town Calendar, noting it had been approved at the Board of Selectmen meeting on October 10, 2017. Mr. Collins advised that the calendar was solid, and added that Town Manager Mr. Kevin Mizikar would release his initial budget to the Finance Committee on February 7, 2018.

On a motion by Mr Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Calendar as presented.

B. Fiscal Year 2019 Fiscal Priorities & Guidelines: Discussion

Mr. Collins began his report by noting that it included input from Subcommittee on Fiscal Projections members Dr. Magee and Mr. Palitsch. He advised that the overarching goal is to provide sufficient resources to maintain the excellence of our public education and make targeted improvements where needed. Mr. Collins summarized FY19 Budget assumptions, and listed FY19 Budget priorities. When addressing the priority of maintaining class sizes, he noted that SHS is now at all time high enrollment of 1,835 and projected to be at 1,868 for FY19. Mr. Collins added that as new district Strategic Priorities evolve and are voted on in December, FY19 Budget Priorities will align with them to allow for allocation of funding.

Dr. Sawyer thanked Fiscal Projections Subcommittee members Dr. Magee and Mr. Palitsch for their work and contributions to the report.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes of the School Committee meeting on September 27, 2017, and the Workshop meetings on September 25, 2017 and September 27, 2017 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

None.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. FY19 Budget Calendar
2. FY19 Fiscal Guidelines and Priorities Draft
3. FY19 Budget Slide Presentation
4. FY19 Budget Town Calendar
5. Annual Transportation Report Slide Presentation
6. Beal Grade Configuration Slide Presentation
7. Beal Grade Configuration Parent Survey Data
8. Beal Grade Configuration Staff Survey Data
9. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above