

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, March 1, 2017

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Dr. Dale Magee, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary; Ms. Erin Canzano; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools. Mr. John Samia was not present for the meeting.

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

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:01 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer advised he attended and enjoyed the Black History Month Presentation at Shrewsbury High School; provided the following information in response to outreach from the press regarding support for transgender students at Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS): *Our school district is committed to the education and wellbeing of each and every one of our students, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, or any other defining characteristic. We work to ensure that all students are treated with respect and fairness, and that everyone's rights are protected under the law. We have supported and will continue to support transgender students by working with them and their families with sensitivity. I am proud that our school communities aspire to our district's stated core values of "honoring each person's individuality, celebrating our community's diversity, and supporting school cultures of mutual acceptance and respect."* Dr. Sawyer added that SPS respects all opinions, and referenced School Committee Policy 551: The Right to Study Controversial Issues; and - after hearing the Student Advisory Council presentation - noted that Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, would be leaving SPS on July 1, 2017, after

accepting the position of Superintendent for the Windsor Central Supervisory Union in the Woodstock/Killington area of Vermont.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Community Partnership Grant: Vote to Accept

Ms. Kara Frankian, Teacher, Floral Street School, gave a brief history of the the collaboration between preK-grade 8 schools SPS and The Home Depot regarding on-site gardening structures, and discussed how the project related to Pathway work on Professional Development at SPS. She advised that the work will vary depending on the school – as some will be upgrading existing gardens and some will putting in new gardens – and that a staff member has been appointed as a “team manager” at each school. Ms. Frankian noted that a site plan has been developed, pending the School Committee voting to approve the project and accept the community partnership grant.

Committee members noted the project exemplified project-based learning. Dr. Sawyer thanked the Home Depot and Ms. Frankian, noted that Ms. Frankian has been a recipient of numerous education awards, and recommended that the Committee vote to accept the Community Partnership Grant.

On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a community partnership grant of \$30,000 from The Home Depot to fund on-site gardening structures and related programming.

B. SHS Student Advisory Committee: Report

Benjamin George, Student, Class of 2018, SAC Chair; Vikram Pathalam, Student, Class of 2017; Mark Bray, Student, Class of 2017; Maya McCollum, Student, Class of 2018; and Prisha Singh, Student, Class of 2019, provided an update to the Committee on extracurricular activities including winter sports, Robotics, Speech and Debate Tournaments, and the Black History Month Assembly. They discussed school operations and advised that course selection is happening now for next year; noted that two new courses would be offered, and advised that discussion has begun regarding the budget and its potential implications for course signups and selection. In a discussion of technology, they noted that a number of surveys had been conducted which generated a great detail of information, including that 94% of students expressed a desire for iMessage to be reinstated, and that 86% of students felt that iPads had enhanced their overall educational experience.

The Committee asked clarifying questions and discussed the issue of distractibility due to technology. Dr. Sawyer thanked the students for their report, and noted the importance of students having a voice in conversations at Shrewsbury High School.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

A. School Year Calendar for 2017-2018: Vote

A draft school calendar was presented to the Committee at the meeting on February 8, 2017, and posted online afterwards, and Ms. Fryc advised that there had been no public comment or feedback. Dr. Sawyer noted that the draft calendar had been updated to include the start date for Kindergarten and preschool students, and reiterated that one significant change was the shift of the traditional parent conference day, typically held on the Tuesday election day in November, to the Thursday prior to observing Veterans Day on Friday, November 10, which would result in a four day break for families who do not have a parent conference. Dr. Sawyer advised the calendar had the support of the various groups consulted and recommend approval of the proposed calendar.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the proposed 2017-2018 School Year Calendar.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. FY18 Curriculum & Technology Budget Recommendations: Report

Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Mr. Brian L'Heureux, Director of Information Technology; and Ms. Shawna Powers, Director of Instructional Technology & Media Services, began the presentation by noting that investment in curriculum technology is important because the current work and learning environment is digital and connected; uses technology as a utility; involves self-directed learning; and is necessary to meet state testing protocol. Ms. Powers presented a video on technology integration at SHS that was compiled by students Allison Evans and Rachel Green, and an iBook created by student Lia Rabinovitch. Information was also presented on Apple Classroom, a free management tool that is utilized by teachers to monitor and control student iPads in the classroom.

In discussion around integration of curriculum and technology tools, Ms. Banios noted that Professional Development Pathways (which allow teachers to pursue self-directed areas of interest) are managed in the Schoology learning management system. The group provided an overview of the Fiscal Year 2018 Curriculum and Instruction Budget, noting costs had gone down over time from FY15 through FY18; provided an overview of the IT Budget, noting expected costs for hardware and software replacements and upgrades; described maximizing resources; and expressed their appreciation to the Colonial Fund and Shrewsbury Media Connection for providing alternate funding for various projects.

Committee members offered commentary on the technology discussed, recommended continued emphasis on cost-benefit analysis and thoughtful utilization of stretching the life of resources such as iPads, and asked about the usage of hard copy books versus online resources. Ms. Banios

noted that while physical books were still purchased in some areas like language arts, online resources and teacher-formulated materials are being used more and more in the science, social sciences, and foreign language environments. In response to an inquiry regarding stretching technology use time-frames, Ms. Banios and Mr. L'Heureux noted that reliability issues need to be balanced with utilization time frames, and that they always look for ways to reuse or repurpose older equipment. Dr. Sawyer thanked the group for their presentation and all the work done to advance the district's strategic priority of enhancing learning through technology.

B.FY18 Budget: Public Hearing

The public was provided with the opportunity to provide feedback to the School Committee and administration regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2018 Budget. One community member noted that they felt the budget presented a revenue problem, that legislators in Boston needed to be pushed for additional funding, and that the issue had moved beyond property taxes. Another community member advised that she is a parent of three children who is very dismayed by the budget, thanked the district for their work, and wanted to know what the community should do.

C. FY18 Fees & Tuitions: Recommendation & Potential Vote

Mr. Collins discussed fee amounts for the 2017-2018 school year for busing, athletics, student activities, preschool and full-day kindergarten tuition, at the School Committee meeting on February 8, 2017. Dr. Sawyer advised that after reviewing that information, looking at fees in other districts, and having adjusted fees for the current school year, he recommended no fee or tuition changes for Fiscal Year 2018.

Dr. Magee advised that this was a "gray zone decision," noted that the fees are for non-essential services, and stated that as such he felt there might be a place for a vote to make an incremental increase for the coming year. Ensuing discussion among the Committee members emphasized the benefits of looking at fees each year to ensure fees are keeping general pace with costs, determining the "tipping point" where increasing fees leads to lowered participation, and recognizing the burden of fees to families. No other member wanted to adjust fees or tuitions, and there was no vote, with the understanding that fees and tuitions under discussion would not change in the 2017-2018 school year.

D. FY17 Budget: Update

Mr. Collins provided a mid-year report on the FY 2017 Budget, and noted that the report included a new payroll encumbrance feature that would allow for more and better forecasting. While noting that some categories, like Special Education tuition, were subject to high volatility, Mr. Collins described the budget as stable, and predicted a modest 0.82% surplus at the close of the fiscal year. Dr. Sawyer added that any resultant Circuit Breaker funding surplus could be applied to the following fiscal year.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

A. Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B Contract: Vote to Ratify

Town Manager Daniel Morgado joined the meeting. Ms. Malone advised that the contract negotiation with the Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit B had been concluded and that Dr. Dale Magee and Ms. Erin Canzano were the School Committee representatives on the bargaining committee. She noted that the contract was for three years (including the current year), summarized changes from the previous contract which included a 2% cost of living adjustment in each year of the agreement, and added that negotiations had been very cordial. Dr. Sawyer advised that he supported the contract and recommended a vote to ratify it.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee and Mr. Morgado voted unanimously to ratify the contract with the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B per the terms outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement.

Mr. Morgado left the meeting.

X. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting on February 8, 2017.

XI. Executive Session

None.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Curriculum and IT Budget Report
2. Curriculum and IT Budget Slide Presentation
3. Garden Donation from Home Depot Report
4. Student Advisory Council Agenda
5. SEA Unit B Contract Memo
6. SEA Unit B Salary Spreadsheet
7. SEA Unit B Memorandum of Agreement
8. 2017-2018 School Year Calendar
9. School Fee Survey Report
10. FY17 Budget Status Report
11. FY 18 Fee & Tuition Superintendent's Recommendation