

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, May 24, 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. Mary Beth Banios, 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 7:00 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer offered congratulations to students whose artwork was displayed in the recent elementary, middle and high school art shows; to the new members of the National Honor Society, who were inducted on May 11; and to all Shrewsbury High School (SHS) students who were honored at Academic Awards Night on May 16.

Dr. Sawyer expressed his appreciation to Town Meeting members for their strong approval of the budget and overwhelming endorsement of the SHS athletic field project. He also thanked Karen Isaacson and Beth McCollum for their work on the 2016 Annual Report, gave special thanks to SHS Senior, Kevin Murphy, who did the graphic design work, and noted the report would be mailed soon to all households, and featured on the district's website.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Project 351 Student Ambassador: Report & Recognition

Dr. Ann Jones, Principal, Oak Middle School, began by providing a summary of Grade 8 student Preston Karp's achievements that qualified him for this honor. Dr. Jones then introduced Preston, who gave a report on his experience at Project 351, the largest youth-led service project in Massachusetts. Preston's presentation provided an overview of his year so far, noting Launch Day, the Spring Service Project "Clothes of Fury", and an opportunity to serve in the Service Honor Guard greeting guests at a May dinner held at the JFK Presidential Library. Preston finished the presentation by detailing his future plans for service with the program.

Committee members congratulated Preston on his achievements and thanked him for taking on a leadership role among his peers. Dr. Sawyer added his congratulations, and noted that in addition to his roles as a student leader and Project 351 Ambassador, Preston was an outstanding student who had also attained great success in the performing arts.

V. Curriculum

A. Strategic Priorities Progress Report: Engaging & Challenging All Students

In the spring of 2011, the Shrewsbury School Committee set four strategic priorities for our school district for a five-year period, and one of those adopted was the priority of "Engaging & Challenging All Students". Ms. Banios' presentation gave an overview of the key goals of the program - having all students participate in projects involving real world problem solving; fully implementing the Shrewsbury Writing Project; providing all educators with Professional Development opportunities to support 21st century teaching; and having 90% of students, parents, and educators "agree", when surveyed, that student learning experiences are engaging and that students participate in appropriately challenging coursework that meets their needs. Ms. Banios gave examples of projects implemented that support the problem solving and Writing Project goals, described several Professional Development Pathways available to educators, and noted that 87.43% of those surveyed "agree" that student learning experiences in SPS are engaging, which was very close to the goal of 90%.

The Committee noted that the "teacher-driven, student-focused" approach being utilized was a recipe for success, and that SPS was ahead of the curve on engaging students with real-world-driven projects. Clarifying questions were asked relative to next steps resulting from the Engagement Survey, balancing Project Based Learning time with core curriculum standards, compiling student achievement information that standardized tests don't reflect, and how teachers manage students working on group projects. Dr. Sawyer noted that the cutting edge Professional Development work being done in the district was a direct result of Ms. Banios' vision, advised that he was proud of this work, and added that he looked forward to publicizing an online "evidence board" that Ms. Banios and her team are assembling to show examples of the work that was done to meet the strategic priorities and goals.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Extended Learning Programs: Report & Tuition Recommendation

Ms. Karen Isaacson, Director of Extended Learning, noted that the Extended Learning Program at SPS includes Extended School Care (ESC), Summer Enrichment programs, the Elementary After School Activities Program, and vacation week programs. Her presentation, the first since March 2015, illustrated the tremendous growth in participant enrollment (from 555 student full time equivalents in 2015 to 653 in 2017) and provided information on staffing, noting that many employees also work during the school day at SPS. Ms. Isaacson noted that a June 2016 Parent Satisfaction survey showed 87% of respondents noting they were “very satisfied”, which was the highest rating option offered.

When discussing finances, Ms. Isaacson provided a local rate comparison table showing SPS among the least expensive programs; noted that ESC rates have been steady for five years; advised that revenue no longer covers expenses; noted costs were increasing; advised that more families were qualifying for financial assistance; and noted that more students were needing support services. As a result, Ms. Isaacson recommended a rate increase of 3% (\$8/month), which would be the first since 2012.

In response to clarifying questions from the Committee, Ms. Isaacson noted that the program does not accept vouchers, but utilizes the state’s sliding scale for subsidized child care; advised that participants who qualify for free lunch may not necessarily qualify for extended day child care assistance; and noted the rate increase would not cover the overall net loss, but would be a reasonable initial step towards adjusting rates over time to address the shortfall. Mr. Collins added that the program is self-financed and covers some energy and health care costs, which helps the town by easing the financial burden on the municipal side.

Committee members and Dr. Sawyer recommended adopting the 3% rate increase, noted that ESC adds tremendous value to the overall SPS program, and Dr. Sawyer acknowledged Ms. Isaacson’s thoughtful and innovative approach to her work as the Director of Extended Learning. After an opportunity for public feedback, the School Committee will vote on the recommended increase at their June 7 meeting.

B. School Safety & Security: Report

Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, began by noting that Bus Registration for 2017-2018 was open, then introduced Mr. Stephen Rocco, Coordinator of Transportation, Safety & Security. Mr. Rocco began by summarizing the security goals and objectives of the district. He went on to provide updates on the Video Surveillance Camera system at SPS and the Standard Response Protocol utilized in the district, and gave examples of Emergency Management table top exercises that had been conducted over the course of the year in partnership with other emergency response personnel. Mr. Rocco gave a description of the

Building Assessment Team, which includes School Resource Officers, a representative of the Public Buildings Department, and himself, and their work to annually review each school building's physical layout and condition with regard to safety and security. He also described ongoing training, and discussed future plans relative to the safety and security in the district.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Rocco advised that the video surveillance system has a two week archive capability, and that the best practices being utilized are based on FEMA or Homeland Security guidelines. Dr. Sawyer added that he was grateful for the addition of the Safety and Security components to Mr. Rocco's role (which historically addressed just transportation needs); appreciated the community's support for a fourth Assistant Principal at SHS, which would enhance safety and security at the school; and noted the great relationship SPS enjoys with the Shrewsbury Police and Fire Departments.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee meeting held on May 10, 2017 were approved as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

Dr. Magee requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with non-represented employees, adding that the Committee would reconvene to open session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, on a roll call vote: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes, the Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 9:04 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; and Dr. Magee, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Project 351 Ambassador Nomination Memo
2. Project 351 Slide Presentation
3. Engaging & Challenging All Students Report
4. Engaging & Challenging All Students Slide Presentation
5. Extended Learning Programs Report
6. Extended Learning Programs Slide Presentation
7. School Safety & Security Report
8. School Safety & Security Slide Presentation