

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2016

Mr. John Samia, Chairperson; Ms. Sandy Fryc, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Erin Canzano, Secretary; Dr. B. Dale Magee, and Mr. Jon Wensky; Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent; Ms. Barbara Malone, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

The meeting was convened at 7:00 pm by Mr. Samia.

I. Public Participation

None

II. Chairperson's Report and Members' Reports

Dr. Magee and Ms. Canzano announced that they would be running for re-election to the School Committee.

Mr. Wensky mentioned that he had the opportunity to join the Paton fourth grade students on their field study to the Tsongas Industrial History Center. He enjoyed the students' enthusiasm and explained that they learned about immigration and the industrial revolution. He also said they held a reenactment of a Town Meeting from 1831 where each student had a speaking role.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer discussed the communication that he sent to the community about the appropriate protocol that would occur if the district received a threat like the ones that had been in the news recently, many of which were non-specific, pre-recorded threats. He explained that the district is working very closely with the police and fire departments to determine what steps to take. He thanked Mr. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, Mr. Steve Rocco, Safety, Security and Transportation Coordinator, and the police and fire chiefs for their efforts.

Next he announced that he recorded a segment of the Superintendent's Update with Kate Lewis and Elin Dolen, both teachers from Oak Middle School, who shared a presentation they had created for a recent conference regarding the work that is being done by Oak educators to help students use technology to promote creativity in their approach to learning.

Dr. Sawyer also shared some student successes including students taking the Mathematical Modeling course who participated in an international competition on Mathematical Modeling and earned meritorious ratings. He also shared that the High School Quiz team qualified for the final 16 on WGBH's High School Quiz Show. Next, he offered congratulations to a member of the quiz team, Gokul Ajith, who received a perfect score on the ACT college entrance exam, and to a recent graduate, Celine Chandra, Class of 2015, who received the highest possible score on her Advanced Placement art drawing portfolio. She was one of only 16 students in the world to do so.

He then congratulated two SHS alumni, undergraduates at UMASS Amherst, Kacey Smart and Dylan Briggs, who were part of a research team that created a design that has a provisional patent for a device that creates 3D models of animals in the wild.

Finally, he thanked all the community members who made a donation to the Colonial Fund and especially Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union who donated \$5,000 and matched another \$5,000. He explained that the total \$24,599 more than doubled last year's amount.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Calendar Committee: Report

Dr. Sawyer introduced the members of the committee, many of whom were present at the meeting. Two of the members, Ms. Lisa Robinson, Director of Preschool Programs and Mr. Mike Albertson, parent, presented information and survey results from the School Calendar and Start Time Committee. This committee was established to advise administration and the School Committee on any potential for changes to the school year calendar and the scheduled start time of schools. Ms. Robinson explained that the Committee was charged with considering alternatives for the most effective calendar to meet the education needs of students, professional development of educators, and the needs and preferences of families and staff. They noted important factors for establishing this study included state laws, contracts between SPS and the Shrewsbury Education Association, weather, and whether to add religious holidays back in to the calendar.

Highlights of the report included research of nearby districts for comparison and results of a survey the committee developed to get feedback from parents, staff, and students. Based on the responses, the committee provided recommendations on the following topics: start of the school year, religious holidays, vacation days surrounding holidays, school vacations, parent teacher conferences early release days and professional development. They shared that the Calendar Committee recommended that the district continue its current approach to the calendar, and they advised that the district focus on enhancing communication with families and staff regarding policies for when students miss school for religious obligations.

The Committee inquired as to what questions received the most comments and if there was anything the Committee should monitor. They thanked Ms. Robinson, Mr. Albertson and all other members for the very comprehensive report.

B. Calendar for 2016-2017 School Year Recommendation

Dr. Sawyer provided a review of the draft calendar explaining the reasoning for the various dates chosen to observe holidays, and for including professional development and early release days. He noted that the draft was developed with the Calendar Committee's recommendations in mind. He stated that the draft calendar along with the presentation and report from the Calendar and Start Time Committee would be posted on the website for public feedback before the vote at the next meeting.

V. Curriculum

A. SHS Program of Studies: Recommended Changes

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, Ms. Maureen Monopoli, Assistant Principal and Ms. Liza Trombley, Director of English at Shrewsbury High School, presented their recommended changes to the 2016-2017

Program of Studies that the Committee would be asked to approve at their next meeting on February 3. After a brief review of the course selection process, efficiencies and building occupational concerns, the administration provided highlights of their recommendations. These included additional courses in social studies, mathematics, and performing arts and minor language changes to courses in English, visual arts, health, physical education, consumer science, engineering, and science.

Committee members asked clarifying questions about the addition of the Advanced Math II course and preparation for college level classes at Quinsigamond Community College, as well as the proposed changes to the English curriculum for the senior year.

Dr. Sawyer stated that the report, presentation and complete Program of Studies would be posted on the website for review prior to the vote.

VI. Policy

None

VII. Finance and Operations

A. Fiscal Year 2017 Budget: Superintendent's Recommendation

Dr. Sawyer, Superintendent and Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations presented the fiscal year 2017 budget recommendation which included the following topics: Mission, core values, strategic priorities, sustaining all classroom and co-curricular programs, meeting demands of mandated services, level services budget recap, financial and enrollment summaries, indicators of value, and next steps.

Dr. Sawyer indicated that a total of \$2,310,008 is estimated to sustain personnel, \$1,500,771 is recommended to sustain operations, and \$180,000 for additional staffing for mandated services, equaling a total of \$3,990,779 which is a 6.83% increase. Including these suggested increases, the total budget recommendation is \$62,446,298. Dr. Sawyer explained that the two-year annual average increase (2.20% for FY16, which was much lower than usual, and 6.83% for FY17) is equal to 4.51%, a number that is in-line with previous budget recommendations.

Next, Mr. Collins provided a 10-year overview of the operating budget history in dollars and percent increases. He illustrated that the average annual percent increase over the past ten years was 4.57%. He also included projections for enrollment figures; special education tuition, which is showing an increase of \$934,881; vocational tuition, which has gone down slightly; and transportation, which is showing a slight increase of \$49,805. He then supplied a summary on special revenue funds, Chapter 70 state aid and Circuit Breaker reimbursement funding. He wrapped up his presentation with comparisons to other like districts and Assabet Collaborative districts. He also provided statistics on per pupil spending and various state aid figures.

In summary, Dr. Sawyer emphasized the School Committee's budget priorities, which are to sustain the current level of personnel and programming, meet mandates in cost-effective ways and advance School Committee strategic priorities. He also reviewed a timeline of next steps.

Committee members shared concern that the cost estimates for a level service budget are substantial. They commented that given the 15-year budget history and the reality of continually rising education costs, the proposed budget is very reasonable. They also noted while Shrewsbury is not unique in its inability to raise revenue that equals expenses, it is however unique that there is a tremendous amount of

assets in the schools and in the community and the district continues to use innovative approaches to work with what we have to remain a district that does more with less. They acknowledged that there is a considerable amount of work to be done given the constraints of mandates, levy limits, and lack of state aid but will continue to watch as the situation unfolds.

The Committee thanked Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Collins for their hard work and comprehensive report.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. New Business

None

X. Approval of Minutes: Vote

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meetings on December 2 and December 16, 2015.

XI. Executive Session

Mr. Samia requested a motion to adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with the Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit A, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and for the purpose of discussing a student residency issue. On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Wensky, on a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 9:13PM.

XII. Information Enclosures

None

XIII. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the meeting was adjourned at 9:34 PM. On a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Samia, yes.

Respectfully submitted
Kimberlee Cantin, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Calendar Committee Report and Slide Presentation
2. Draft Calendar for 2016-2017 School Year
3. SHS Program of Studies Recommended Changes Memo, Program and Slide Presentation
4. Fiscal Year 2017 Superintendent's Budget Recommendation and Slide Presentation