

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2014**

Present: Dr. B. Dale Magee, Chairperson; Mr. Jason Palitsch, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Erin Canzano, Secretary; Ms. Sandra Fryc, Mr. John Samia, Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent, Shrewsbury Public Schools; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent, Shrewsbury Public Schools; Ms. Cecelia Wirzbicki, Director of Business Services, Shrewsbury Public Schools; Ms. Barbara Malone, Director of Human Resources, Shrewsbury Public Schools

The meeting was convened at 7:00 PM by Dr. B. Dale Magee

Dr. Magee shared that Helen Lipkin, who was an accomplished teacher in the Shrewsbury district and active in the community, had passed away. He expressed sympathy to her family members. Dr. Magee requested that a moment of silence be taken to remember Helen Lipkin.

**I. Public Participation**

None

**II. Chairperson's Report and Members' Reports**

None

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer extended sympathies to the Lipkin family on behalf of the Shrewsbury School district. He said he has heard from former students and colleagues about how much she will be missed. Dr. Sawyer said that Helen Lipkin made a real impact in education and the community.

Dr. Sawyer congratulated Marc Rischitelli, Coach of the SHS Speech and Debate Team, on being named as a recipient of the fourth honors distinguished service plaque by the National Speech and Debate Association. He said that since 1925 only twenty speech and debate coaches, out of tens of thousands, have earned this remarkable honor. Dr. Sawyer said that Mr. Rischitelli is one of the most outstanding speech and debate coaches in the United States.

Dr. Sawyer thanked all the students and families who made remarkable contributions in community service over the Thanksgiving holidays. He said he appreciates students and families being willing to help those that are less fortunate in the community.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments**

**A. Representative Matthew Beaton: Legislative Update**

State Representative Matthew Beaton presented an update to the School Committee on state level issues affecting education. He shared that the State Legislature has been out of formal session since the end of July and the legislature will begin the next formal session starting the first week of January. He said it has been shared that the state has a budget shortfall of \$320-350 million dollar but he believes it will likely end up being at least \$700 million to \$1 billion. He said the state is behind in revenue projections and the budget shortfall is out of a \$37 billion budget. Representative Beaton said the Governor has proposed a wide range of things including cuts to local aid but that the legislature does not share this view. Representative Beaton said that he will work to help keep local aid intact until he is done with his role. He said he is excited about the final report regarding Chapter 70 funding and that hopefully the legislature will take action. Representative Beaton said he thinks that this is long overdue and is positive. He said that this will be his last update to the School Committee as the State Representative since he has accepted Governor Elect Baker's invitation to become his Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Representative Beaton said the subject matter is a passion of his and assuming this role is a great honor. He said that while he has greatly enjoyed representing the communities of Shrewsbury and Westborough, he is excited about this new opportunity and the challenges that lie ahead. Mr. Palitsch asked Representative Beaton about recent developments at the State House regarding how the budget would be balanced. Representative Beaton said he could not speak about details since he has not seen the specific budget proposal yet or had a chance to speak with his colleagues. He said he thinks the budget will end up being a combination of cuts, revenue generating initiatives and some use of the rainy day fund. Representative Beaton thanked the School Committee members for their support over the last four years and bringing him up to speed on the issues. School Committee members and Dr. Sawyer thanked Representative Beaton for his service and wished him well in his new role as the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

#### **B. SHS Student Advisory Committee: Report**

Dr. Magee introduced the SHS SAC members and shared that Ms. Canzano is the liaison with the SAC Committee. SAC members Kayla Freeman, Class of 2015 and SAC Chairperson; Nithya Pathalam, Class of 2015; Emily Taylor, Class of 2015; and Surabhi Godbole, Class of 2015 presented a report to the School Committee members. The SAC students shared updates on electronics in the classroom, SHS Town Meeting and the Class Cup competition. They said several students at the Town Meeting discussed ways that school counseling can be more helpful including changing the student appointment schedule to coincide with the classroom schedule. In addition, they said some students at the Town Meeting asked if a guidance counselor could be available for students to drop in to ask quick questions without making an appointment a week in advance. SAC members said students asked if they can make SHS more green and if the styrofoam trays used at lunch can be exchanged for something biodegradable. SAC members shared that students at the Town Meeting discussed having a rotating class schedule and that this idea had quite a bit of backing from the SHS student population. They said Mr. Bazydlo made an announcement at the Town Meeting about the new technology advisory group, which will be vital to communicating student voices to the administration. SAC members shared information about the great activities that SHS students are engaging in related to the Class Cup competition and said that currently the seniors are in first place, sophomores and juniors are tied for second place, and the freshmen are in third place. School Committee members asked a variety of questions related to the technology program regarding number of students lacking access to the Internet at home, general technology accessibility at the high school and students level of excitement for the program. SAC members responded that even though there

is only a small number of students without home internet access, it is important because it affects work on group projects and the biggest issues with using iPads at SHS are the lack of keyboards, the ability to be connected to printers and the fact that the upperclassmen need to learn more about iPad use. SAC members also said they have spoken with underclassman about the benefits of technology and they said a potential benefit is not having to carry around textbooks.

Next, Dr. Magee asked the SAC members if students discuss the desire to have a later school start. SAC members said they have spoken with students informally about this issue and they said they do so much after school that they think they would end up staying up later in the evening if school started later. Dr. Sawyer said a study was previously completed and a potential later start time for the day at SHS has been discussed in the past. Dr. Sawyer said he thinks a later start time at SHS would be beneficial but other factors need to be worked out such as transportation and parents needing to get to work.

### **C. SHS School Improvement Plan: Update**

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, Shrewsbury High School, and Ms. Caroline Trabucco, Class of 2015, presented an update on the SHS School Improvement Plan. They discussed progress and examples for the goals of the plan under these categories: Engage and Challenge All Students, Enhance Learning Through Technology, Promote Health and Wellness, as well as goals specific to Shrewsbury High School. Mr. Bazydlo said that SHS has really focused on community service and volunteerism. He said the goal is that when a class graduates they will have completed 10,000 hours of community service. Mr. Bazydlo said the Class of 2015 will be the first class to cycle through the community service and volunteerism process with the goal of completing 10,000 hours of community service. Ms. Canzano asked Mr. Bazydlo to elaborate on the citizenship experiences for SHS students. Mr. Bazydlo said that in terms of social interactions, we think of how students collaborate within a community. He said that these experiences help students improve their skills with working with each other. Ms. Fryc asked if SHS has been able to contact SHS alumni who have been working for a few years. Mr. Bazydlo shared examples of alumni speakers who have discussed details about their career and educational experiences with SHS students. He said SHS parents are great volunteers too. Dr. Sawyer said the Volunteer Coordinator can assist with getting people to come in and speak with students about careers. Dr. Magee said that he is very pleased to see that SHS is doing surveys and learning about what graduates are doing. Dr. Sawyer thanked Mr. Bazydlo and Ms. Trabucco for their excellent presentation and report. He shared that Ms. Trabucco is an accomplished student leader and athlete. Dr. Sawyer said the leadership team at SHS is being very smart about where they are focusing their energy and the community service aspect is tremendous.

### **D. Role of the SHS Assistant Principal: Report**

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, Shrewsbury High School; Ms. Maureen Monopoli, Assistant Principal, Shrewsbury High School; Mr. Greg Nevader, Assistant Principal, Shrewsbury High School and Mr. PJ O'Connell, Assistant Principal, Shrewsbury High School presented a report about the role of the Shrewsbury High School Assistant Principals. Mr. Bazydlo commended his team for their great work and said that the Assistant Principals accomplish many tasks behind the scene and are very humble regarding their vast accomplishments. He explained the titles, roles and caseloads for the Assistant Principals and discussed their common responsibilities. Mr. Nevader, Ms. Monopoli and Mr. O'Connell each shared details and examples about their individual duties and responsibilities as Assistant Principals at SHS. School Committee members inquired as to changes in students' mental health to which the assistant

principals stated that one trend being seen is that there is much more anxiety than in the past and student anxiety is often a discussion topic that comes up in the Student Support Team. Administrators all agreed that this is something the teams work with on a weekly basis as they continue to try and meet the needs of these students. The assistant principals also commented that they often have to talk to families and students about strategies to reduce stress when students overextend themselves.

Next, the decreased level of secretarial support and impact on administrators' workload as a result of additional teaching staff were discussed. Administrators remarked that the decrease in secretarial support and additional teachers have increased workloads but the students needs take a priority and administrator's other responsibilities often are addressed after the school day ends.

Ms. Fryc stated that she thinks it would be great to make the public aware of the Assistant Principals' duties and roles. Dr. Sawyer thanked the team for the presentation and hard work. He commented that he thinks the SHS Principal and Assistant Principals have complementary skills and work very well together.

## **V. Curriculum**

None

## **VI. Policy**

None

## **VII. Budget**

### **A. FY15 Grants: Report**

Ms. Cecelia Wirzbicki, Director of Business Services, presented a report on the grants the district is receiving for Fiscal Year 2015. She provided an overview of the funding the district is receiving this year through grants and how the funding is used. Ms. Wirzbicki shared that 79% of the entitlement grant funding goes to special education needs. She said that federal and state grant funding is up 3.01% over the previous year and up 4.02% over a five-year period. Ms. Wirzbicki discussed the grants the district has received and said the district is pursuing multiple competitive grant opportunities. Dr. Magee asked if the definitions for Title I and Title II could be explained for the benefit of those viewing the meeting. Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Schools, explained that Title I funds are targeted to schools depending on the socioeconomic status of students and are used to provide reading support. She said that Title II funding is targeted for professional development for teachers. Dr. Sawyer said the Shrewsbury district does not qualify for the vast majority of grants that are available because of the criteria for a low performance level and/or socioeconomics. Dr. Magee commented that the budget comes from a variety of sources. Ms. Wirzbicki thanked Ms. Elizabeth Callahan, Executive Assistant for Business Services, for the great job she does managing the grants.

## **VIII. Old Business**

None

## **IX. New Business**

None

## **X. Approval of Minutes**

The School Committee members accepted the minutes of the School Committee meeting for November 12, 2014.

#### **XI. Executive Session**

Dr. Magee requested a motion for a vote to enter into executive session for the purpose of reviewing student residency issues, where confidential student information may be discussed. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Samia, the School Committee members voted to enter into executive session. On a roll call vote: Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Dr. Magee, yes.

Dr. Magee said the School Committee members would reconvene after Executive Session for the purpose of adjourning the meeting.

#### **XII. Information Enclosures**

None

#### **XIII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Samia, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 pm on a roll call vote: Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; and Dr. Magee, yes.

Respectfully submitted  
Christine Taylor, Clerk

Documents referenced:

- 1) SAC Agenda for the SC Meeting on 12/3/14: Report
- 2) Shrewsbury High School Improvement Plan 2013-2015 Update: Report
- 3) The Role of the Assistant Principal: Shrewsbury High School: Report
- 4) FY15 Grants Update: Report