

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, January 7, 2015**

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; Ms. Melissa Maguire, Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services.

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

**I. Public Participation**

None

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

Dr. Magee shared that there were no chairperson's and members' reports. He encouraged community members to watch the most recent episode of School Talk on SELCO Channel 329.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

With record cold weather forecast for the following day, Dr. Sawyer said he was aware that people were wondering about the status of school. He indicated that he had consulted with the Public Buildings Department and bus company and, as of that time, the schools would be opening on time the following day. Dr. Sawyer said that if something were to change he would let the community know.

Dr. Sawyer reminded community members about the opportunities to attend the Shrewsbury Education Foundation Awards Dinner scheduled for Saturday, January 24, 2015 and the Shrewsbury School Music Association fundraising event scheduled for Friday, January 30, 2015.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments**

**A. State of the District: Annual Report**

Dr. Sawyer shared a report and slide presentation on his perspective regarding the current state of the Shrewsbury Public Schools relative to the district's mission, core values and strategic priorities. He shared with School Committee members that increased resources have greatly improved the ability to meet students' needs. Dr. Sawyer said that class sizes have improved and students and teachers are seeing the positive effects. He said that additional resources have also provided for updated curriculum, instructional resources, technology and increased support for mental and behavioral health. Dr. Sawyer said that unrelenting educational mandates continue as well as the need to continue to respond to

heightened security and safety concerns. He shared that the morale of teachers and staff members is strong. New teachers were asked to respond to an anonymous survey and 100% said they would recommend working in the Shrewsbury district to a friend. Dr. Sawyer said he believes this positive morale has a great deal to do with good mentors and leadership in the district. He said he is proud of the exceptional culture and the abilities of educators and staff members to collaborate and innovate to cope with demands. Dr. Sawyer acknowledged the contributions of a supportive parent community and financial support from the community at large. He said the overall challenge for 2015 is to successfully incorporate new staff and for the district educators and staff members to continue to work and thrive in the environment. School Committee members commended Dr. Sawyer and his team for the great work and strong leadership. In addition, School Committee members said the public should know the pressure is never off and the district continues to innovate.

### **B. Special Education: Annual Report**

Ms. Maguire presented the annual report for special education services in the Shrewsbury district and provided information regarding programming for students who are eligible for special education services. Highlights of the comprehensive report provided by Ms. Maguire included information regarding federal and state regulations, eligibility requirements for special education services, the process to determine eligibility, and problem resolution options. Ms. Maguire shared that she believes it is very positive that the Shrewsbury district has been able to expand the Family Access Partnership Program through the Assabet Valley Collaborative. She said this has been an effective partnership because this helps parents get support at home. School Committee members asked Ms. Maguire if the numbers of referrals for special education in the district are as high as they were last year. Ms. Maguire said the numbers are still high and she will have the exact numbers to share at a later time. School Committee members asked Ms. Maguire about the need and demand for special education professionals. Ms. Maguire said that districts are competing for professionals because the needs of students are increasing. She shared that two students will be presenting with her at the next School Committee meeting. Ms. Maguire said the students will speak about their learning experiences and services received in the Shrewsbury district. She said that Shrewsbury has been very consistent in supporting families and building fruitful partnerships. Dr. Sawyer said measures of success are that students are receiving what they need from their education and their preparation for the workforce. He commended Ms. Maguire and her team for doing a very good job.

## **V. Curriculum**

### **A. SHS Program of Studies: Recommended Changes**

Mr. Bazydlo and Ms. Monopoli presented a report on the proposed changes to the SHS High School Program of Studies. Ms. Bazydlo and Ms. Monopoli highlighted the proposed changes that the School Committee will be asked to approve at the next meeting on January 21, 2015. The recommendations they shared with School Committee members included additional courses in many areas such as English, math, music, performing arts and physical education. School Committee members said they were excited to see many elective courses being brought back and added at SHS. In response to a question, Mr. Bazydlo shared that the SHS team takes a look at the courses comparative high schools are offering when making recommendations for the SHS programs. School Committee members asked if SHS would have any more course seats for the Virtual High School online program. Mr. Bazydlo said that SHS has twenty-five seats per semester. He shared with the School Committee members that there is the possibility of other

online electives through a different program, and they are also looking at options for online credit recovery. Dr. Sawyer thanked Mr. Bazydlo and Ms. Monopoli for presenting the report and said the School Committee will be asked to vote on these recommendations at the next meeting.

## **VI. Policy**

### **A. Technology 1:1 Device Program Policy: Vote**

Ms. Banios made a follow-up to the presentation and recommendation made at the December 17, 2014 School Committee meeting for the implementation of the 1:1 device program for the 2015-2016 school year at Shrewsbury High School, as well as recommendations for changes to the existing middle level 1:1 device program. She discussed the recommendation for the Shrewsbury district to move to a district device-owned model. Ms. Banios displayed a chart and discussed why the committee believes the iPad is the best fit for the Shrewsbury district. School Committee members said they viewed the proposal as favorable, they believe the iPad allows more practical problem solving, and the idea that the district is removing a fee and doing this in a budget neutral way is commendable.

Dr. Magee requested a motion for the School Committee to approve the proposed policy for the FY16 1:1 Device Program with the following five components: 1. Expand the 1:1 Device Program to include grades 5-12 to use the Apple iPad device and provide a single learning management system for the high school; 2. Change the program to a district-owned device and district-provided apps option only; 3. Provide a transition option for families who currently utilize the “Take- Home” option to either continue payment towards ownership of device per original terms at the conclusion of the four-year term or to cease payment and turn over the device to the district; 4. Change the district policy for responsibility for damage, theft or loss of the device so that families assume full responsibility regardless of where or how the damage occurs; 5. Utilize a model where funding for the program is provided through a mix of means including shifting funds from other areas, using funds from eligible revolving accounts and using a leasing model where warranted to provide financing for the program with an overall goal of shifting to a district owned device without requiring additional funds in the appropriated budget. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Samia, the School Committee voted unanimously to authorize the proposed policy for the FY16 1:1 Device Program and for the administration to proceed with implementing the district’s 1:1 technology program as described above and in the memorandum from the Superintendent of Schools dated December 26, 2014.

## **VII. Budget**

None

## **VIII. Old Business**

None

## **IX. New Business**

### **A. Regional Substance Abuse Prevention Grant: Vote**

The Worcester Department of Public Health, the lead agency for the Central Massachusetts Regional Health Alliance (CMRPHA, of which Shrewsbury is a member), is in the process of applying for a grant that would provide funding for substance abuse prevention measures. The CMRPHA has contacted the Superintendent of Schools and requested a letter of support as part of the grant proposal. The CMRPHA

has also requested a vote of the Board of Selectmen, which is a requirement of the grant. A suggested draft letter of support and additional information regarding the grant was presented to the School Committee members. Dr. Sawyer asked the School Committee members for approval for him to write a letter related to the grant. Dr. Magee said this \$100,000 grant is for initiatives the Shrewsbury School district is doing now. He said he hopes the Shrewsbury district can leverage whatever support is provided to the CMRPHA, get their support in return, and that this translates into something to help address this problem. Dr. Sawyer said that Dr. Magee's comment was noted. Dr. Magee requested a motion to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to provide a letter of support for a proposed regional substance abuse prevention program. On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the School Committee voted unanimously to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to provide a letter of support for a proposed regional substance abuse prevention program.

#### **X. Approval of Minutes**

None

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

None

#### **XII. Adjournment**

Dr. Magee requested a motion to adjourn the School Committee meeting for January 7, 2015. On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the School members unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted  
Christine Taylor, Clerk

Documents referenced:

- 1) State of the District: Annual Report
- 2) Special Education: Annual Report
- 3) SHS Program of Studies Recommended Changes: Report
- 4) Summary of Recommended Policies for Technology 1:1 Device Program for FY16: Report
- 5) Suggested Language for Superintendent's Letter of Support for Substance Abuse Prevention Grant: Draft Letter
- 6) Support for Substance Abuse Prevention Grant: Overview