

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, January 21, 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, Shrewsbury Public Schools

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

I. Public Participation

None

II. Chairperson's Report and Members' Reports

None

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer recognized and congratulated the staff members who will be receiving the John P. Collins Awards for excellence at the upcoming Shrewsbury Educational Foundation (SEF) Awards Dinner. He thanked the SEF for the great work and for acknowledging the educators and staff members.

Dr. Sawyer congratulated the Shrewsbury Speech and Debate team members and coach on outstanding recent performances and accomplishments.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Special Education: Student Presentation

Ms. Maguire and students James Canzano, SHS Class of 2017 and Dominic Hawes, SHS Class of 2017 addressed the School Committee. The students shared their experiences and perspectives relative to their participation in the district's special education program. Students said that without the special education resources and great teachers they would not be able to accomplish their academic and life goals. Ms. Maguire read some comments that were made by Shrewsbury teachers about the students' hard work, dedication and confidence. Students discussed the important impact teachers have had on their success. School Committee members and Dr. Sawyer commended the students on their hard work and perseverance.

V. Curriculum

A. SHS Program of Studies: Vote to Approve

Dr. Magee requested a motion to vote to approve the proposed changes to the Shrewsbury High School Program of Studies. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee

members voted unanimously to approve the proposed changes to the Shrewsbury High School Program of Studies.

VI. Policy

None

VII. Budget

A. Special Education: Budget & Finance Report

Ms. Maguire presented the annual report on the district's Special Education Department budget and finances. She provided the School Committee members with information related to the cost of Special education programming and state funding. Ms. Maguire discussed information and shared graphs illustrating the in-district versus out-of-district costs for educating special education students. She said the district saves about \$3 million dollars a year by supporting and educating special education students within the Shrewsbury district. Ms. Maguire said that there is always volatility within the Shrewsbury Special Education program, such as students who move into the district during the year with special education needs. She discussed the Fiscal 2016 requests for the Shrewsbury Special Education program including additional personnel. School Committee members asked Ms. Maguire about her greatest concerns and she said one of her biggest concerns is the need for resources for students with mental health issues. Committee members expressed the desire to help communicate with legislators and advocate for special education resources. Ms. Maguire said she has been involved with communicating with legislators and can provide Committee members with some contacts to initiate communications. Mr. Palitsch asked Ms. Maguire if she could speak about the need for a nurse position as outlined in the FY 2016 budget requests. Ms. Maguire and Dr. Sawyer shared information about the current absence of a director level position for the nurses department and the complex medical needs of some students. Mr. Samia suggested that it may be beneficial for the special education program, along with other Shrewsbury district program areas, to have program reviews conducted by an external source. He said this may help to continue foster innovation and enhance programs. Committee members expressed that they believe Ms. Maguire and the rest of the Special Education Department members are doing a very good job educating students and providing services. Ms. Maguire acknowledged and thanked her fellow department members for the great work. Dr. Sawyer commended Ms. Maguire and her team. He said he wanted to emphasize that Shrewsbury is saving about \$2.9 million each year by expanding programs within our district. Dr. Sawyer said in addition to tuition costs, there would be at least \$200,000 in transportation costs required for educating special education students outside the Shrewsbury district. He said the transportation costs would not be reimbursed by the state. Dr. Sawyer said a vast number of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) are going to college or pursuing desired training after leaving the Shrewsbury district.

B. State Commission on Chapter 70 Funding: Discussion

Dr. Sawyer presented information and the Committee members engaged in a discussion related to the state's Chapter 70 funding program. He shared that the Massachusetts Legislature has established a "Foundation Budget Review Commission" to review the state's Chapter 70 program. Dr. Sawyer said this commission has been holding public hearings, and will hold one in Central Massachusetts on February 24, 2015. Dr. Sawyer provided an overview of the Commission's charge, as well as information from his work as part of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendent's School Finance Task Force. Dr. Sawyer said the revision of the Chapter 70 formula will hopefully take place in 2016. He said

he is seeking questions and comments from the School Committee in preparation for the testimony he will provide at the upcoming public meeting. Dr. Sawyer said the revised formula will continue to look at wealth factors in communities related to income levels and property values. He said his hope is for a revised formula to stimulate an infusion of funding for all districts and that this would help Shrewsbury.

C. Fiscal Year 2016 School Department Budget: Superintendent's Recommendation

Dr. Sawyer and Ms. Wirzbicki provided the SC with information regarding a recommended budget for Fiscal Year 2016. Dr. Sawyer shared the good news story that the district is in a different situation than in the past. He shared information about the Shrewsbury district mission, values and strategic priorities. Ms. Wirzbicki and Dr. Sawyer shared details regarding the Fiscal Year 2016 budget priorities. Ms. Wirzbicki said that \$1,623,350 is the total needed to sustain programs and personnel. Dr. Sawyer discussed the need for additional positions in areas including nursing services, special education, elementary aide support, and secretarial support. He said the recommended additions include 8.7 full-time positions with only five of these positions being eligible for benefits. Dr. Sawyer and Ms. Wirzbicki shared information for the total recommended increase of \$1,933,519 (sustain personnel: \$1,675,476; sustain operations: \$52,126; recommended additions: \$310,169). Committee members shared that they are positive about the Fiscal Year 2016 School Department Budget recommendations and believe this is a responsible proposal.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. New Business

None

X. Approval of Minutes

Dr. Magee requested a motion to approve the minutes of the School Committee meetings for December 17, 2014 and January 7, 2015. On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meetings for December 17, 2014 and January 7, 2015.

XI. Executive Session

None

XII. Adjournment

Dr. Magee requested a motion to adjourn the School Committee meeting for January 21, 2015. On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the School Committee members voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted
Christine Taylor, Clerk

Documents referenced:

- 1) Annual Special Education Budget Report: January 2015
- 2) Massachusetts Foundation Budget Review Commission: Public Hearing Notice

- 3) Fiscal Year 2016 School Department Budget Superintendent's Recommendation: Report
- 5) School Committee Meeting Minutes for December 17, 2014
- 6) School Committee Meeting Minutes for January 7, 2015