

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 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

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 and Ms. Fryc shared that they attended the Beal PTO meeting last evening and said that it was a very good meeting. Dr. Magee said that they listened to attendees' observations and concerns. He said that the offer has been extended to have School Committee members attend PTO meetings for all the schools. Dr. Magee said that School Committee members are very anxious to visit all the schools throughout the year.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer thanked and recognized Cliff Leoni, who has served as a technician in the Technology Department at the Shrewsbury Schools for approximately twenty years. He said that Cliff is retiring at the end of this week and he has given many years of service to the community. Dr. Sawyer shared that Cliff is a Shrewsbury community resident, his children attended the Shrewsbury Schools, Cliff is a real gentleman, and he will be missed by the district. He said that Mr. Leoni will be enjoying a well-earned retirement and congratulated him.

Dr. Sawyer shared that Patty McCaffrey, lead nurse for the district and nurse at Sherwood Middle School, is leaving for an exciting new job opportunity. He wished Ms. McCaffrey well and said that she has done a great job for the Shrewsbury district.

Dr. Sawyer congratulated educators in the Shrewsbury district who have recently received grant awards. He said the district appreciates the generosity of local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce for providing that funding. He congratulated the mini-grant award winners from the Shrewsbury district: Jessica Crosby, Grade 8 Science Teacher at Oak Middle School; Stacey Militello, Grade 8 Science Teacher at Oak Middle School; Robert Wilson, Visual Arts Teacher at Floral School and Kathryn Dowling, Classroom at the Parker Road Pre-School, Wesleyan Terrace.

Dr. Sawyer shared that the Shrewsbury Educational Foundation (SEF) has recently announced grant recipients who will be honored at the SEF January 24, 2015 awards dinner. He congratulated the SEF grant award recipients. Dr. Sawyer said he really appreciates it when educators go above and beyond to seek funding for innovative projects. He said that some of these projects end up being seeds that start exciting new initiatives within the schools and thanked the SEF for the support and funding.

Dr. Sawyer reminded Shrewsbury residents that the first issue of the Shrewsbury School Journal (fall edition) was mailed to community members. He said the Journal is also available on the Shrewsbury School district website in a PDF format.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Mathematics in Grades 6-8: Student Presentation & Report

Ms. Banios, Ms. Melissa McCann, Curriculum Coordinator, Math, Grades 5-8; Ms. Megan Graham, Grade 6 Math/Science Teacher, Sherwood Middle School; Ms. Kate Dowd, Grade 7 Math Teacher, Oak Middle School and Sherwood and Oak students presented a report on the mathematics in grades 6-8. Ms. McCann shared information on the middle school math program and said the common thread that carries through grades K-12 is the Standards for Mathematical Practice. She discussed shifts in teaching and learning at the middle school level including having students investigating topics, solving complex problems and representing work in detail. Ms. McCann, Ms. Graham and Aryan Shah, a 5th grade student, demonstrated how modeling mathematics is used to solve 5th grade Math in Focus curriculum problems. Ms. McCann, Ms. Dowd and Joseph Flionis, 7th grade student, presented information regarding communicating mathematical thinking to solve a mathematical problem. Ms. McCann presented information on the Connected Mathematical Project 3(CMP3) Dash. The Committee asked a few questions about the recent parent meeting and the level of competency students are showing for the new math program. Ms. McCann said the formal pre-assessments that happen at the beginning of a unit are the first way to identify where individual students are at with their skills. Dr. Sawyer referred to the Common Core standards and said that, as an observer, he thinks the experiences the students are having this year are much more rigorous. Ms. McCann shared that students from Oak Middle School competed in a math competition at the St. John's School invitational and were awarded second place. She said one Oak student got a perfect score. Ms. McCann said 150 students recently participated in another competition and students with high scores will continue on to the next level. Ms. McCann shared that they have the largest number of participants ever with over 100 students participating in the math extracurricular program at the Sherwood Middle School and over 80 students participate in the Math Counts Program at Oak Middle School.

B. Role of the Middle Level Curriculum Coordinators: Report

Ms. Banios, Ms. Lisa Daly, Curriculum Coordinator, ELA, 5-8; Mr. Robert Dunn, Curriculum Coordinator, Social Studies, 5-8; Ms. Melissa McCann, Curriculum Coordinator, Math, 5-8; Ms. Pam Poitras, Curriculum Coordinator, Science/Technology, 5-8, Ms. Susan Andrews, Grade 7 ELA/Social Studies Teacher, Ms. Carol Virzi, Grade 5 ELA/Social Studies Teacher, Ms. Caroline Peacock, Grade 6 Math/Science Teacher and Ms. Emily Broderick, Grade 6 Math/Science Teacher, Sherwood Middle School presented information on the role of the middle level curriculum coordinators. Ms. Banios discussed the connections between the curriculum coordinator positions in different areas. Ms. Banios

referenced research about the positive effects of coaching for educators. She said that the coaching positions in the Shrewsbury district will help all of our educators reach their highest potential. Ms. Daly and Ms. Andrews, a 7th grade ELA teacher, discussed the ways that curriculum coordinators and teachers work together. Mr. Dunn and Ms. Virzi, discussed a project they collaborated on together and shared successful teaching results and ideas. Ms. Broderick and Ms. McCann discussed a performance-based project that students from Ms. Broderick's math class are working on as part of the implementation of the new math curriculum. Curriculum Coordinators presented information about projects and examples of the work that is benefiting the Shrewsbury students. School Committee members and Dr. Sawyer thanked the presenters for their great work and acknowledged the important role the curriculum coordinator positions have in the Shrewsbury district.

C. Middle School Improvement Plans: Update

Dr. Ann Jones, Principal, Oak Middle School and Dr. Jane Lizotte, Principal at Sherwood Middle School presented updates on the 2013-15 Middle School Improvement Plans. They shared information on the common middle school improvement plan goals: Engage & Challenge All Students; Enhance Learning Through Technology; and Promoting Health and Wellness. Dr. Jones and Dr. Lizotte shared information about progress made in content areas including the example of students working on research projects and utilizing technology resources such as Noodle Tools. During the discussion about promoting health and wellness, Dr. Jones and Dr. Lizotte discussed the mental health first aid training programs that some Sherwood and Oak personnel, including nurses, counselors and school psychologists, have been participating in this year. Dr. Lizotte and Dr. Jones shared information about the benefits of the iPad program including the feeling of removing the classroom walls, and how the ability to share information immediately and in real time is allowing educators and students to accomplish more in-depth learning in the classroom. Dr. Lizotte and Dr. Jones each addressed school specific improvement plans. Committee members asked questions in regard to students' use of digital media, and how teachers are dealing with mental health issues and if the number of reported incidences has been decreasing. The principals were also asked to comment on the innovation piece of the curriculum and how teachers come up with new ideas and ways to re-engineer teaching. They responded that students are becoming increasingly aware of how to use the technology tools to leverage their learning. Dr. Lizotte and Dr. Jones said they are still very busy with counselors and mental health issues, but anecdotally, things are better this year. Dr. Jones said that we are trying to address students' issues as soon as possible and put prevention supports in place. Dr. Lizotte stated that teachers are very good at sharing tech tips both, formally or informally and the greatest resource for new ideas is educators sharing ideas with each other. Dr. Jones said teachers also read blogs and some write their own blogs.

V. Curriculum

None

VI. Policy

None

VII. Budget

A. Fiscal Year 2015 Update

Ms. Wirzbicki presented an update on the 2015 year-to-date budget status. She said she was pleased to report the district is right on track with salaries for the budget. Ms. Wirzbicki said that during the hiring process this year, the district was able to save \$163,672. She said the district budget is running on target for in-district and special education transportation. Ms. Wirzbicki said the district is ahead of the game in regards to vocational tuitions but running a little behind in the special education area. She said the district is only .02 percent over budget as to what we have projected at this point in the year. Dr. Sawyer said the district budget will be monitored carefully and that he is confident that the district will end the year on budget. Dr. Sawyer discussed potential budget cuts that the state of Massachusetts may be making at the mid-year point. He said that budget cuts at the state level may affect things for the Shrewsbury district in 2015-16. Dr. Sawyer said there could be a \$40,000 reduction in what the Shrewsbury district expects to receive from the state. He said that some local aid to the Shrewsbury community could also be cut as a result of state budget reductions, but this remains to be seen.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. New Business

None

X. Approval of Minutes: Vote

None

XI. Executive Session

None

XII. Information Enclosures

None

XIII. Adjournment

Dr. Magee requested a motion to adjourn the School Committee meeting for November 19, 2014. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee members voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted
Christine Taylor, Clerk

Documents referenced:

- 1) Update on Middle Level Math Initiative: Report
- 2) Middle Level Curriculum Coordinators: Report
- 3) Middle School Improvement Plan 2013-2015 Update