

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2014

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

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 shared that he attended the SHS Art show and said the quality of work, craftsmanship and creativity was tremendous. He congratulated the SHS students who participated and the Visual Arts Department faculty members on their wonderful accomplishments.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. SHS Senior Scholars: Recognition

Dr. Sawyer shared that each year the School Committee (SC) recognizes the ten SHS senior students with the highest grade point average in their class. Each student was introduced, Dr. Sawyer read their brief biographical sketches, and each student briefly commented on school experiences and future plans. The students were congratulated by SC members and will be receiving awards. These SHS seniors were Catherine Zhang, Nick Mroz, Olga Yushkova, Sooyoung Jeong, Amber Jiang, Jessica Perkins, Mira Magner, Shriya Jamakandi, Kathy Bi and Chloe McCollum.

B. SHS Student Advisory Committee: Report

Dr. Magee invited SAC members Kira Sommer, Kayla Freeman, Nithya Pathalam and Emily Taylor to come forward to share their report. The SAC members discussed the expected changes at SHS that would result from a successful override vote including greater course offerings, smaller classes and more scheduling flexibility. Students discussed the current SHS challenges and expected changes at SHS without a successful override including limited class offerings for students, students being excluded from first choice class selections, crowded classes and uncertain and difficult scheduling. SAC members discussed the SHS participation in the NEASC accreditation process. The students shared that they had the opportunity to participate in a second class spirit day including the final events of the Class Cup competition with a trophy presentation. SC member Ms. Canzano asked the SAC students what the concern is among students about college admissions depending on the outcome of the override vote.

SAC members responded that some students are concerned about not being able to take AP classes if the override fails and that they will not be competitive in the college admissions process. Mr. Palitsch asked the SAC members if they think Shrewsbury students have been paying attention to the override process. SAC members responded and said they believe that all the students know about the override, everyone understands this is important, lots of information is being shared on Twitter, and SHS seniors who are eighteen are registering to vote because they see that the outcome will impact the future of the Shrewsbury district. Dr. Sawyer thanked the SAC students and SAC advisor Mr. Smith for the great leadership. SAC presenters were congratulated and invited to shake hands with SC members.

C. SHS Accreditation Process: Presentation

Dr. Sawyer gave a brief overview of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation process. He said he was proud of the presentations made to the NEASC visiting committee and thought it would be good to share an abbreviated version with the Shrewsbury community. The staff members and students who shared the abbreviated presentation at the SC meeting were Mr. Todd Bazydlo, SHS Principal, Mr. PJ O'Connell, SHS Assistant Principal, Mrs. Pamela Krause, SHS Physical Education Teacher, Erin Bean, Student, Class of 2017 and Meghan Collins, Student, Class of 2016. During the abbreviated presentation, information was shared including 43% of the current tax revenue from the Town of Shrewsbury is designated to the school district; the Shrewsbury district has strong academic and internship partnerships for students; SHS core values; SHS mission statement; SHS Standout Initiative; low budget per pupil expenditure in the district; examples of SHS courses that have limited sections or are not offered due to budget constraints; reductions in after school and field study activities; and greater reliance on fundraising for resources. Mr. Bazydlo shared that all of these issues and challenges put a strain on the great SHS mission and core values. Ms. Fryc stated that she thinks we have all the right pieces in place but we do not have adequate funding. She said that as an SC member and a parent the NEASC independent assessment of the Shrewsbury district is validating. Mr. Palitsch congratulated the presenters on a great job and commented that the NEASC visiting members were having a hard time reconciling the school performance with the available resources. He said he also felt that NEASC visiting committee members were asking what the SC and the Shrewsbury community intended to do about the challenges. Dr. Magee and Dr. Sawyer thanked the students and staff for presenting at the meeting. Mr. Bazydlo said that once the report editing process is complete, and the NEASC report is finalized, he will make this available to the Shrewsbury community.

V. Curriculum

None

VI. Policy

None

VII. Budget

A. FY 2015 Budget Recommendations: Discussion & Vote

Dr. Sawyer shared that he had no formal presentation for the SC members this evening and he explained that the school budget line item information for the two budgets will be mailed to the Town Meeting members if the SC members vote in favor of the proposed FY 2015 budgets. He said he would answer any questions and respond to comments. Mr. Palitsch commented that he believes the difference between the yes and no override budgets is vast and he does not think the no override vote is in the best interests of the Shrewsbury students or community. Ms. Fryc stated that she agrees with Mr. Palitsch's comments and the facts are available and very transparent. Ms. Canzano commented that she thinks if the override fails and people are short-sighted the impact on students and the opportunity for them to reach their

potential will very negative. She stated that she believes the yes override makes financial sense for our community investment. Mr. Samia stated that we have seen great student scholars, heard a lot about committed staff members and we have great parent support. He said that without additional resources we cannot provide what is needed for our students. Mr. Samia said it is up to the community to decide whether we want to be a level 1 or level 2 school district. He said he thinks most will choose a level 1 district and that high property values will bring in business to the community. Mr. Samia discussed the example of the Spags area development. He mentioned Dr. Sawyer's comments that if the community does not invest now we will end up paying more later. Dr. Magee said he would like to comfort the community in that this is the biggest investment our community makes and that we have had a process that is as transparent as possible. He stated that what the Town can afford to pay now is not enough to meet the needs of the system. Dr. Magee said that it is important to vote on the bottom line and gave the example of putting \$.90 into a system that is unraveling or putting \$1.00 into a system that excels. Dr. Sawyer thanked everyone for the work on the budget and suggested that the SC take two votes. He said the first vote is for the budget under the available revenue and the second vote is for the budget based on the operational override.

Dr. Magee requested a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2015 budget of \$55,468,239 based on the expected revenues. On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the Fiscal Year 2015 budget for \$55,468,239.

Dr. Magee requested a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2015 budget for \$57,196,278 that would include additional funding from a supplemental budget, contingent upon town approval of an operational override. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the Fiscal Year 2015 budget for \$57,196,278.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. New Business

A. SHS Exam Schedule Change: Vote

Mr. Bazydlo presented to the SC and discussed a request from the SHS administration to change the final exam schedule to add an additional half day session. He shared that he has surveyed the SHS faculty regarding the pilot of an additional half day session that was added for midterm exams in order to provide more flexibility for students who require extra time and/or special accommodations and to provide more flexibility for faculty to calibrate grading. Mr. Bazydlo said the faculty saw this change as very favorable. Ms. Canzano said that she heard that students felt they benefited from the schedule change and support. Mr. Bazydlo requested that the SC members vote to adopt this schedule for final exams this spring and for midterm and final exams going forward. Dr. Magee requested a motion to change the SHS exam schedule so that it consists of four half day sessions for midterm and final exams. On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to change the SHS exam schedule so that it consists of four half day sessions for midterms and final exams.

B. Personal Technology Repair & Late Fee: Vote

Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, presented information for the proposed changes to the Personal Learning Device Program. The proposed changes for the at-school liability for accidental damage occurring at school be changed so that: there is no charge for the first repair; the family is charged \$50 for the second repair; the family is charged \$100 for the third repair; and the family is charged the full repair costs for subsequent repairs. The proposed recommended change to the Personal

Learning Device Program for late payments and a program administrator may impose a \$25 penalty on: any program fees not received by the stated deadline; any program fees or repair charges outstanding 45 days after being invoiced; and any bounced checks. Dr. Sawyer and faculty members commented that the majority of students take very good care of the devices and the number of incidents of damage is small. Dr. Magee requested a motion to accept the proposed changes to the Personal Learning Device Program. On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the School Committee voted unanimously to accept the proposed changes to the Personal Learning Device Program.

C. Assabet Valley Collaborative Quarterly Update & Establishment of Capital Reserve Account: Vote

Dr. Sawyer shared that the Assabet Valley Collaborative administration and board wish to establish a capital reserve fund to address ongoing capital repairs and purchases required by the collaborative. He said that under Massachusetts law, member School Committees must vote to approve the establishment of this fund and that the funds used for this fund come from the collaborative, not from the Shrewsbury public schools. Dr. Sawyer asked that the SC vote to approve the establishment of a capital project reserve account by the Assabet Valley Collaborative. Dr. Magee requested a motion for the School Committee to vote to approve a capital project reserve account by the Assabet Valley Collaborative in the amount of \$722,500 and preliminary funding for it in the amount of \$25,000 as part of the Assabet Valley Collaborative's Fiscal Year 2015 budget. On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the establishment of a capital reserve account by the Assabet Valley Collaborative.

D. Beal Early Childhood Center Declaration of Removal From Statement of Interest Process: Vote

The Shrewsbury district needs to send a formal letter to the state of Massachusetts regarding the Beal Early Childhood Center Declaration of Removal from the Statement of Interest Process. Dr. Magee requested a motion for the School Committee to approve sending a formal letter to the state for the Beal Early Childhood Center Declaration of Removal from the Statement of Interest process. On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Mr. Samia, the School Committee voted unanimously to send a formal letter to the state for the Beal Early Childhood Center Declaration of Removal from the Statement of Interest Process.

X. Approval of Minutes

None

XI. Executive Session

A. To discuss strategy for collective bargaining (Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B)

XII. Information Enclosures

XIII. Adjournment

Dr. Magee requested a motion to adjourn the School Committee meeting for May 14, 2014. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the meeting was adjourned at 9:01 PM. On a roll call vote: Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Dr. Magee, yes.

Respectfully submitted
Christine Taylor, Clerk

Documents referenced:

- 1) SHS Senior Scholars Recognition: Student Bios
- 2) SHS Student Advisory Committee: Report
- 3) SHS Exam Schedule Change: Memorandum
- 4) Proposed changes to Personal Learning Device Program: Memorandum
- 5) Assabet Valley Establishment of Capital Reserve Account: Report