



**School Committee
Meeting Book**

**January 8, 2020
7:00 pm**

**Town Hall -100 Maple Avenue
Selectmen's Meeting Room**



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

AGENDA

**January 8, 2020 7:00pm
Town Hall—Selectmen’s Meeting Room
100 Maple Avenue**

Items

Suggested Timed Allotments

(Note: The meeting will open at 6:30pm and immediately adjourn to executive session; when executive session is complete, the meeting will be recessed until 7:00pm)

Executive Session 6:30 – 7:00

- A. For the purpose of collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury Education Association – Unit A
- B. For the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes

I. Public Participation

7:00-7:10

II. Chairperson’s Report & Members’ Reports

III. Superintendent’s Report

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

- A. SHS Student Advisory Committee: Report 7:10 – 7:30

V. Curriculum

- A. SHS Program of Studies: Recommended Changes for 2020-2021 7:30 – 7:50

VI. Policy

VII. Finance & Operations

- A. Preschool Tuition Rates for 2020-2021: Vote 7:50 – 8:00

VIII. Old Business

IX. New Business

- A. State of the District: Report 8:00 – 8:25

X. Approval of Minutes 8:25 – 8:30

XI. Executive Session

XII. Adjournment 8:30

Next regular meeting: January 22, 2020



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: I Public Participation

MEETING DATE: 1/8/20

SPECIFIC STATEMENT OR QUESTION:

Will the School Committee hear thoughts and ideas from the public regarding the operations and the programs of the school system?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Copies of the policy and procedure for Public Participation are available to the public at each School Committee meeting.

ITEM NO: II. Chairperson's Report/Members' Reports

SPECIFIC STATEMENT OR QUESTION:

Will the School Committee hear a report from the Chairperson of the School Committee and other members of the School Committee who may wish to comment on school affairs?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This agenda item provides an opportunity for the Chairperson and members of the Shrewsbury School Committee to comment on school affairs that are of interest to the community.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

School Committee Members
Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson
Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson
Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary
Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Committee Member
Mr. Jason Palitsch, Committee Member

ITEM NO: III. Superintendent's Report

SPECIFIC STATEMENT OR QUESTION:

Will the School Committee hear a report from Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This agenda item allows the Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools to comment informally on the programs and activities of the school system.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

ACTION RECOMMENDED FOR ITEMS I, II, & III:

That the School Committee accept the report and take such action as it deems in the best interest of the school system.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:** MEETING DATE: **1/8/20**
A. SHS Student Advisory Committee: Report

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Under the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, school districts are required to have a Student Advisory Committee (SAC), consisting of five high school students who are elected by the student body. The SAC is required to meet with the School Committee during the year to review various issues of concern to the student body. Mr. Andrew Smith, Shrewsbury High School (SHS) social sciences teacher, serves as the faculty advisor to the SAC. The agenda for the SAC report is enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee accept the report and take such action as it deems in the best interest of the school system.

STUDENTS & STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Mr. Andrew Smith, SHS Teacher and Faculty Advisor to the SAC

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, SHS Principal

Students:

Sophia Peng, Chairperson

Max Evers

Aabia Hasan

David Lee

Nikitha Ram

Student Advisory Committee
Agenda for the School Committee on January 8th, 2020

I. Class Cup Update

With a little friendly competition as motivation, the four classes of SHS participated extraordinarily in numerous fall and winter events. Each worked to claim the coveted Class Cup.

- a) Spirit Week
- b) Fall Play and Concerts
- c) Dodgeball Tournament
- d) Fundraisers

II. Quarter 2 Progress

SHS students continue to exemplify hard work and dedication through extracurriculars and new initiatives, but are also grateful for opportunities that allow them to de-stress.

- a) Sports
- b) Capstone Exhibition
- c) Second Advisory Period
- d) No Homework Thanksgiving
- e) National Unified Champion School

III. Town Meeting

Through our annual town meeting, SHS students learned how they can make an impact by vocalizing and advocating for their opinions.

- a) Senior Privileges
- b) Textile Drive
- c) ALEKS and App Store
- d) Feminine Products
- e) Sign Language Class

Thank you for your continuous support of the SAC.

Respectfully submitted,

Sophia Peng
Chairperson

Maxfield Evers, Aabia Hasan, David Lee, Nikitha Ram
SAC Members



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

MEETING DATE: 1/8/20

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **V. Curriculum**

MEETING DATE: **1/8/20**

A. SHS Program of Studies: Recommended Changes for 2020-2021

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Each year, the high school leadership team makes recommendations for adjustments to the course offerings based on a variety of factors. Mr. Todd Bazydlo and Ms. Maureen Monopoli will highlight the proposed changes for 2020-2021, which are articulated in the enclosed memo. After hearing questions and feedback from the Committee, proposed changes will be incorporated into the complete draft of the proposed Program of Studies, which will be included in materials for the next meeting, when the Committee will be asked to vote to approve the document.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee hear the report, ask questions and provide feedback, and take whatever steps it deems necessary in the interests of the Shrewsbury Public Schools.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, Shrewsbury High School

Ms. Maureen Monopoli, Assistant Principal, Shrewsbury High School

Shrewsbury High School
64 Holden Street
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545
Office of the Principal



Memorandum

To: Dr. Joseph Sawyer
From: Todd Bazydlo
Date: December 27, 2019
Re: Proposed Changes to the 2020-2021 HS Program of Studies

I am pleased to present proposed changes and additions to the *Program of Studies* for the 2020-21 school year. The majority of the changes presented within this document are in response to the growing demands of our diverse school population and aligns with current educational research. I look forward to providing the School Committee more detail regarding the revisions listed below at the January meeting.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Family and Consumer Sciences Department

1. *Foods of the World* will be offered during the 2020-2021 school year; *Mediterranean Cuisine* will not be offered during the 2019-2020 school year.
2. Add a new course: *Baking and Pastry Arts*

In this course, students learn the fundamentals and the science involved in the making of quick bread, yeast bread, pastries, cakes, and cookies. Students learn the lost art of baking from scratch which is great on a budget and limits preservatives and additives. Emphasis on equipment, the function of ingredients, avoiding convenience products when possible, the importance of accurate measurements and baking terminology gives students the skills to ensure their success in the kitchen. The knowledge of ingredients and how those ingredients react when combined is an integral part of baking. This growing knowledge will be used throughout each lab. Teamwork, communication, organization, and conservation skills are integrated into the class as students read and follow directions, work together to complete each task, and make healthy substitutions whenever available. This course is aligned with National FACS Standards and follows a project/performance-based curriculum.

Baking and Pastry Arts will be offered during the 2020-2021 school year; *Culinary Methods for Nutritious Foods* will not be offered during the 2020-2021 school year.

Foreign Language

1. Add a new course: *AP Mandarin Chinese*

This course is designed for those students who have attained a high degree of proficiency in Mandarin Chinese and who are interested in completing studies comparable in content and difficulty to a full-year college-level course. The goal of the course is to prepare

students for the Mandarin Chinese AP Language examination by emphasizing the basic objectives of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All forms of writing are emphasized, especially the directed and the open-ended question. Weekly journals and critical writing pieces are included. Students hone listening and speaking skills through repeated practice in the form of dialogues, skits, interviews, and directed questions. Picture sequences are also used to practice for the exam, and grammar is reviewed, fine-tuned and applied in authentic communicative situations. Students are expected to take the Advanced Placement Exam in May. This class is conducted entirely in Mandarin Chinese.

2. Add a new course: *Accelerated French I*

The goal of this course is to prepare students for the high school French program. Students will hone their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This course emphasizes the key grammar concepts and vocabulary necessary to advance to *French II*.

Instructional Technology and Media Services (ITAMS)

1. Change the name of the *Intro to Computer Programming with JAVA* to *Computer Programming with JAVA*.

Mathematics

1. Add an honors level course: *Advanced Quantitative Reasoning Honors*

This course will be an option for advanced seniors who are interested in exploring how to analyze, think critically about and reason with data. There are a lot of careers that students will study in college that require them to manage and make interpretations about data. This course will support advanced students who want to use data to make models, interpretations and predictions for problems that are relevant in a wide variety of applications.

2. Eliminate a course: *Algebra & Geometry II/Advanced Math I Honors*.

This course was implemented in the 2019-2020 school year. During the first year of the offering, there were several students misidentified for the course, which caused unnecessary stress on students and their transcripts. This course was designed for students who are exceptionally advanced in their mathematical content knowledge and thinking. During the previous two years we were able to meet the needs of these students by offering an opportunity to co-study *Algebra & Geometry II* and *Advanced Math I Honors*. Through ALEKS and an after-school support program during the 2nd semester of their freshman year, approximately 3-4% of the freshman class were able to successfully complete the co-study. We have decided to return to the co-study option because it has been difficult for the Grade 8 teachers to identify the cohort of students who would be successful with the combined course. Students are better supported with the co-study option as they have the first semester to demonstrate their ability to be successful as they meet the benchmarks set forth by the co-study program.

3. Eliminate a course: *Advanced Math II Topics*

This course was originally designed in collaboration with Quinsigamond Community College(QCC), in order to help seniors who struggle with Math prepare for college

placement tests, to support them to qualify for credit-bearing math courses. During the four years we have offered this course, the standards assessed by the Accuplacer test have changed to better align with SAT content standards. QCC decided not to support the change, therefore the curriculum created by QCC to prepare for their placement test, does not necessarily support students who choose not to go to QCC. We feel most of our seniors who struggle with math will be better supported by our *Functions & Trig* course, whose curriculum better aligns with the current state and Accuplacer standards defined for college and career readiness as well as the rest of our high school program.

Performing Arts

1. Add a new course: *Foundations of Music* (Semester course)
This is an elective course for 11th or 12th-grade students who have an interest in pursuing careers in education or human services. This course may be taken to meet, in part, a student's music elective requirement or as an additional elective course. Students under the direction of the teaching staff, serve as peer partners in an inclusive music education setting. All students will have the opportunity to research, prepare and explore educational, music-based lessons, fostering creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking in a diverse setting. Previous musical skill is not a requirement. The course meets 2 days during the 7-day rotation
2. Change the title of *History of American Music* to *History of Rock and Roll*
3. Due to current staffing, the following courses will not be offered:
Stage Combat, Movement for Theater, Directing/Playwriting, Foundations of Dance, Musical Theater Dance, Jazz Dance 1, and iPad Ensemble.

Science & Engineering

1. Add new course: *Advanced Placement Physics C (Mechanics)*
Prerequisite: Intro Physics or Hon. Intro Physics or Honors Physics. Co-requisite: Enrollment in Honors Calculus or higher.
This course in mechanics is a calculus-based, college-level physics course, especially appropriate for students planning to specialize or major in one of the physical sciences or engineering. Students cultivate their understanding of physics through classroom study and activities as well as hands-on laboratory work as they explore concepts like change, force interactions, fields, and conservation. Topics include: kinematics, Newton's laws, work, energy, power, systems of particles and linear momentum, rotation, oscillations, and gravitation. Students are expected to take the AP Physics C - Mechanics version of the Advanced Placement Exam in May. This course is considered a Lab science.

This course provides students with an option to take an AP Calculus-based physics course. Our current AP physics course (AP physics 1) provides a strong AP-level physics background for some students, but it is an algebra-based course, which is often not recognized by colleges for students entering the fields of engineering and physics. This new course provides students wishing to pursue physics or engineering in college with a stronger background and preparation compared to AP Physics 1. We will continue to offer AP Physics 1.

2. Add a new course: *Human Body Systems*

Prerequisite: *Biology*

In this *Project Lead The Way* course, students examine the interactions of body systems as they explore identity, communication, power, movement, protection, and homeostasis. Students design experiments, investigate the structures and functions of the human body and use data acquisition software to monitor body functions such as muscle movement, reflex and voluntary action, and respiration. Exploring science in action, students build organs and tissues on a skeletal manikin, work through real-world cases, and act as biomedical professionals to solve medical mysteries. This course will be available to 10-12th grade students at the A level.

NOTE: This is the 2nd of 3 courses that will need to be introduced as a result of receiving a \$50,000 grant related to implementing a PLTW Biomedical pathway.

3. Eliminate DE (Project Lead the Way - Digital Electronics)

This course has been included in the program of students for a number of years, but being a 3rd PLTW Engineering option for students, it typically sees only 8-12 requests per year. Because the course has not run in a few years due to the dynamics of scheduling and staffing needs, eliminating this course from the POS will reduce counselor work-load as they will no longer need to re-configure schedules for the students who do not get the course in their schedule.

Social Sciences

1. Eliminate course *America in the World Today* as this course has historically been under-enrolled and overlaps with our *American Government* course and the *Global Studies* course.
2. Minor language change: *Psychology* and *Sociology* electives will be offered to students in grades 11-12.

Visual Arts

1. Add a new course: *Foundations of Art* (Semester course)
This course would be open to students in grades 11 and 12 as an elective and would meet two times per cycle opposite of *Foundations of Music*. This course is designed for juniors and seniors interested in pursuing careers in education or human services. Students under the direction of the teacher will serve as peer partners in an inclusive setting. Students will research and prepare educational, art-based lesson plans based on the physical, developmental, and emotional needs of pre-vocational students.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VI. Policy**

MEETING DATE: **1/8/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VII. Finance & Operations**

MEETING DATE: **1/8/20**

A. Preschool Tuition Rates for 2020-2021: Vote

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

At the December 18, 2019 meeting, Mr. Collins and Mrs. Robinson, Parker Road Preschool Principal, provided an overview of the District's Preschool Program, the rationale for why it is required, and suggested session offering changes and associated tuition rates for the 2020-2021 school year. Because of the recommended program offerings and timing of the mid-January lottery, the School Committee was asked to take the report under review with the goal of voting on the rates and new offerings this evening. A memo from Dr. Sawyer with his recommendations for preschool program and tuition adjustments for Fiscal Year 2021 is enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee vote to approve the adjustments to preschool tuition rates and program offerings for Fiscal Year 2021 as illustrated in the Superintendent's recommendation memo.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.
Superintendent

January 8, 2020

To: School Committee

Re: Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2021 Preschool Tuition Rates and Program Offerings

At your last meeting on December 18, Mr. Collins and Mrs. Robinson provided an overview of the District's Preschool Program and the rationale for why it is required, and suggested session offering changes and associated tuition rates for the 2020-2021 school year.

Recommended Change to Program Offerings

Based on demand from parents and current enrollment trends, we recommend eliminating the two and three half day programs and using that capacity to offer more seats for four and five half day seats. We expect this change to better match our parent community needs and also provide for increased beginning of year enrollment and greater stability of that enrollment during the course of the school year.

Our Preschool Lottery is on January 17, 2020 so we should have a clear picture in the coming weeks if this is a viable shift as our lottery entrants also state their preference once they enter the lottery. If sufficient demand did not materialize to fill seats as needed, then our "Plan B" would be to continue to offer two and three half day sessions as we do now.

Recommended Rates for 2020-2021

The rationale for annual tuition rate increases is to simply keep up with ongoing and increased costs for teacher salaries, health insurance costs, and costs of materials. The recommended rate increase is 3% and the net changes are depicted in the chart below.

Program	FY20 Current Annual Rate	FY21 Recommended Annual Rate	Dollar Difference
Two Half Days/Week*	\$2,174	\$2,239	\$65
Three Half Days/Week*	\$2,825	\$2,910	\$85
Four Half Days/Week	\$3,405	\$3,507	\$102
Five Half Days/Week	\$4,167	\$4,292	\$125

**Two and Three Half Day Rates are only if needed based on enrollment demand.*

Late Fee

We recommend continuation of the \$25 per month late fee for any monthly payment made after the deadline of the 15th of each month.

Registration fee

We recommend continuation of the \$100 per student registration fee. This is due upon offer and acceptance of a specific program seat to a family and ensures their placement for the upcoming school year.

Financial Assistance

We recommend continuation of the use of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care State Median Income Chart to determine eligibility for financial assistance. We also recommend continuation of the 10% sibling discount for all additionally enrolled tuition-paying children in one of our preschool programs.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VII. Finance & Operations**

MEETING DATE: **1/8/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VIII. Old Business**

MEETING DATE: **1/8/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **IX. New Business**
A. State of the District: Report

MEETING DATE: **1/8/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Dr. Sawyer will share his perspective regarding the current state of the Shrewsbury Public Schools.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee hear the report and take whatever steps it deems necessary in the interests of the Shrewsbury Public Schools.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.
Superintendent

January 8, 2020

To: School Committee
From: Joe Sawyer
Re: State of the District

Continuing the process I have followed since 2013, I am providing you with my annual perspective regarding the state of the Shrewsbury Public Schools.

The intent of this report is to provide my analysis of our school district's position relative to progress toward our strategic priorities in the context of the conditions within which we operate. As we end one decade and begin another, there is certainly much in which we can take pride, while at the same time there are concerns and questions that will need to be addressed.

Our schools provide an excellent education to our students and great value to our community

By traditional measures, such as [state MCAS testing results](#), [high school AP & SAT results](#), or [access to higher education](#), the Shrewsbury Public Schools excel. Our [results remain very strong](#) and are comparable to similarly strong peer districts within Massachusetts, which as a state has consistently been at or near the best in the nation on the [National Assessment of Educational Progress](#) and [on other measures of quality of public education](#).

Our students also excel in a variety of co-curricular endeavors, with the SHS Speech & Debate team winning another state championship for the second time in four years; the SHS musical earning the region's "best overall production" for the third time in four years; multiple musical ensembles and individual musicians earning festival medals and district and state recognition; several individual students honored in local and regional visual arts competitions; state championships in both science fair and Science Olympiad competitions; the SHS math team winning the league title; two state

championships in the inaugural seasons of “E-sports”; 90% of SHS athletic teams earning playoffs with multiple league and district championships and a state championship in rowing; and outstanding performances and experiences in a variety of other activities, from robotics, to model United Nations, to myriad clubs. This past year saw an expansion of opportunities for athletics at the middle school level, with the addition of interscholastic field hockey, softball, baseball, and track at Oak Middle School, and a continued expansion of after school and school vacation activities at the elementary and middle levels.

In addition to all these, the honor of which I am most proud during this past year is [Special Olympics’ designation of SHS as a “National Banner Unified Champion School.”](#) a recognition that only 179 high schools have received nationally for creating opportunities for inclusion of all students, especially those with intellectual disabilities, in sports, leadership, and whole-school engagement. This achievement signals that we are making wonderful progress toward our aspiration of providing all students with opportunities to thrive, regardless of their differences.

The success of our schools creates many benefits beyond improving the lives of our students and their families. Our community is a better place as a result, not only because our students continue to provide well over 10,000 hours of community service annually, but because strong schools that engage our youth make for a much better quality of life in our community and make our community a desirable place to live, do business, and raise a family. The return on investment for taxpayers is phenomenal, as our school district’s expenditures on public education (including funds spent by the School Department and other town departments on cleaning, maintenance, health insurance, etc.) [continue to place our community in the bottom 11% of all Massachusetts school districts](#) with regard to per pupil expenditures. When [broken down by individual category](#), our expenditures are significantly lower than the state average as well. However, as discussed later in this memorandum, this level of investment poses significant challenges to our continued success. There is no question that the quality of our schools results in the [continued strength of home values](#) within our Shrewsbury community.

The past year has demonstrated the confidence our community has in our school district through investments that community partners have been willing to make in our improvement. This past year, the improvements to the Shrewsbury High School athletic facilities were completed, thanks to raising \$1.8 million in sponsorships and gifts from local businesses and donors, including \$750,000 from Central One Federal Credit Union and \$250,000 from the family of the late David J. Adams. Additionally,

Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union committed to investing \$400,000 over five years to fund strategic innovations in real-world learning through a new program dubbed *Colonial Connections*. This includes funding of our new Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being, a role that has already begun further developing our district's ties with the local business community and Shrewsbury alumni, while also piloting a new, grant-funded mindfulness program to the district and facilitating a partnership with a local cancer prevention charity, the 15-40 Connection. This approach is significantly strengthening our district's commitment to the phrase in its mission: "in partnership with the community..."

The successes of our school district would not be possible without the ongoing strong leadership and stewardship of the School Committee; the constant support from students' families; the skill and dedication of our educators and support staff; the effective leadership of our administrative team; and collaborative support from Shrewsbury's municipal boards, administration, and town departments. Most importantly, our students continually work to rise to the high expectations held for them and demonstrate respect and responsibility as they strive for success. For all of this, I am grateful.

The remainder of this report will provide reflections on our district's standing relative to the [strategic priorities](#) that the School Committee has set forth to advance its [vision](#) of a *Portrait of a Shrewsbury Graduate*. Below, I attempt to outline how we should focus our energy across our four strategic priorities.

Learning environments where everyone's success matters

We are making strides toward becoming a district where "all means all" when it comes to ensuring that all students are getting what they need to succeed; it will take additional time and effort to get there.

Our practices to be more inclusive of students with disabilities in typical classroom settings continue to evolve, as we work to match our approach to research that demonstrates that all students are served better when instruction is differentiated effectively in a heterogeneous setting (such as in a co-teaching model). Programs such as the Unified Club and Unified Athletics are helping to promote this shift in the culture of our schools, but it must happen with the day-to-day work in our classrooms in order for our district to become truly inclusive of all of our students. I am confident that the more students feel that they are unconditionally accepted and belong in our schools for who they are, the more effectively they will learn; when combined with

skillful implementation of instructional strategies, we will succeed in helping our at-risk students achieve at higher levels.

Our commitment to honoring diversity must be backed by action, and the upcoming equity audit is one way in which we will determine where we have strengths and needs relative to ensuring that we understand and respond to our students and families who come from different cultural backgrounds. This audit will guide future plans for professional development on this topic.

We are piloting ways in which we can measure our successes and challenges related to inclusive practices, since measures such as the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education's (DESE) [accountability tool](#) show gaps between different "subgroups" of students relative to various measures of achievement. What I stated in this report last year remains true: If we believe that "all means all" when it comes to our students, we must invest time, energy, and resources to ensure that every single student's needs are being met in ways that promote their academic, social, and emotional growth, and to do this in the most inclusive manner possible.

Enhanced well-being of all

We have taken steps toward addressing stress and other social, emotional, and behavioral health issues, but we have much more to do.

During the past year, we have responded to feedback from students, families, and staff that coping with stress and improving social, emotional, and behavioral health are key needs for our schools. I am pleased that we have been able to add important resources to help address this area of responsibility, including the addition of three adjustment counselors at the elementary level (for the first time), the addition of 1.6 additional adjustment counselors at Sherwood (including the grant-funded addition of a "transitions" program, modeled after the successful program we have at SHS), and an additional adjustment counselor at SHS. As mentioned earlier, mindfulness programming for students, staff, and parents is being offered, primarily at SHS, through a no-cost pilot partnership with the Mindfulness Director Institute. The School Wellness Advisory Committee is almost done with creating an online resource for students, families, and staff that addresses several wellness topics, including key youth health challenges such as vaping and marijuana use. A new grant-funded partnership with Sandy Hook Promise through the Massachusetts Attorney General's office will address social isolation, suicide prevention, and school violence threat identification. We are awaiting data from the regional youth health survey given this past fall to see how it compares to prior data, and while we can't isolate variables, my hope is that we will see some progress regarding student mental, social, and emotional health

indicators. Anecdotally, there are still a small yet significant number of students who experience major challenges with behavioral and emotional health, and we are working to provide ongoing professional development to staff regarding identifying, preventing, and addressing student needs in this domain.

Overarching work in this area has included various approaches to strengthening school and classroom culture and climate with a focus on kindness and respect, while seeking ways to implement best practices in social emotional learning, or SEL. As you know from [this recent report](#), we are making solid progress in adopting various approaches to SEL so that this work is intentional, purposeful, aligned with best practices, and guaranteed to all students regardless of what school or classrooms they are in.

This work is all the more important given the remote, but real, threat of violence occurring in our schools. While we continue to take steps to make our schools more secure and better able to respond to emergencies, the most important work of preventing school violence is ensuring that we are addressing our students' mental, social, and emotional health needs.

Connected learning for a complex world

We have increased opportunities for students to participate in project-based and other authentic, connected learning experiences that help develop the skills they will need to be successful citizens, and we are making plans to do more.

In addition to the nascent work of the *Colonial Connections* project (mentioned earlier) to provide learning opportunities outside of the walls of our schools in connection with businesses and other organizations, the district is also adjusting curriculum to match new state expectations and standards for both more [hands-on and inquiry-based science](#) learning and [project-based approaches to learning civics](#). Students doing research and taking action on topics that are important to them have been implemented in various classes across grade levels, such as those featured in the [front page article of this issue of the Shrewsbury School Journal](#). Our students are getting opportunities to learn new skills such as coding, both at the elementary level using small robots in our media centers and through a new computer science offering at the high school level, as well as electives such as cybersecurity and biomedical science at SHS (using grant funding for materials). Our middle schools continue to utilize available technology to connect student learning to the outside world in innovative ways that provide outlets for students' voices through publishing websites, podcasts,

and videos, and the re-imagined Design Lab at Oak Middle School is providing students with highly authentic opportunities to practice design thinking to solve real-world problems solicited within the school community. The key is to grow these practices so that all students have access to authentic learning experiences across the grade spans.

Space and resources to support effective learning

It is critical for our district to have the space and resources necessary to achieve what the community expects of us.

The most concrete (pun intended) example of where our district is benefiting from our community's investment in space is the [construction of the new Beal School](#), which is on schedule and trending under budget. When the new building opens in August of 2021, it will provide much-needed space to relieve overcrowding in our elementary schools and provide equity of instructional spaces across what will then be five kindergarten through grade four schools.

At the same time, this category is where our district's greatest challenges will be in the year ahead. The structural realities of the public education funding model we are subject to, combined with the facts that we are still increasing our enrollment slightly each year while mandated costs, particularly those associated with special education, are increasing, will require a significant investment to maintain our current levels of programming and staffing. While we have made modest strides in increasing our capacity in some key areas (such as counseling services), we still need to address areas where our capacity is lagging behind what is necessary for a district our size, both for our educational program and for our operations. I will provide more specific information on our budget projections later this month, but it is important to note that our district will not benefit very much from the large infusion of state spending into an updated school finance formula, as our community is perceived by the formula to not have significant need of new state funding based on our relative property and income wealth. As we look ahead, we must not only look at our needs to maintain the important resources we already have in place, but we also know it will take significant additional resources to scale up our elementary program when the new Beal School opens in 2021. We have been working with the Town Manager on looking ahead at our budget needs, and I am confident that we will collaborate productively as we tackle the specifics of how to maintain the greatest level of funding possible for the School Department in the short term while looking ahead at our longer term needs. We will also continue to seek alternative funding sources, such as grants, partnerships, and

philanthropic gifts, in order to provide other means of supporting our educational programming.

As I stated in my last two State of the District reports, I fear that without creating additional capacity, the ability of the district to deliver on the expectations the community holds for us will be significantly compromised. The best of goals and aspirations will not come to fruition without the means required to achieve them.

Conclusion

The state of our district is very strong in many, many ways, mainly because of the people who populate it, work within it, and support it – thanks to them, there are wonderful things that happen for children in our schools every day. The Shrewsbury Public Schools have a well-deserved positive reputation for being innovative and successful in providing a meaningful education for our students. The culture is respectful, positive, and hard-working, and we are making progress toward fulfilling the vision and strategic priorities set for the district by the School Committee, which reflect the aspirations of our community and best practices in education. However, in an increasingly complex environment, there are challenges ahead, especially if resources are not able to keep up with the demands placed upon us.

As always, it is my honor and privilege to serve as the superintendent of this outstanding school district in a wonderful community. I look forward to working with the School Committee, my colleagues, municipal leaders, families, and students to help maintain and improve upon the excellence of our schools.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **X. Approval of Minutes**

MEETING DATE: **1/8/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on December 18, 2019 and the minutes from the School Committee Workshop held on December 19, 2019 are enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee accept the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on December 18, 2019, and the School Committee Workshop held on December 19, 2019.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson

Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson; Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan; Mr. Jason Palitsch; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being; Ms. Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Ms. Barb Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

A complete audio/visual recording of this meeting is available on the Shrewsbury Public Schools website.

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:01 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Dr. Magee reported that Mr. Wensky recently completed a new episode of School Talk - *Turf Talk* - which is available for viewing on local cable channels or YouTube.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer reported that students of John Aloisi, Social Studies Teacher, Shrewsbury High School (SHS), were featured on local cable program *Ask the Manager* in an episode about the ongoing project at Edgemere Crossing in Shrewsbury.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Unit B of Shrewsbury Education Association Contract: Vote

Ms. Malone noted that contract negotiations with the Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit B had concluded, that Unit B members voted to approve the changes on December 10, 2019, and described changes in the new contract. Mr. Wensky thanked all participants in the process; Dr. Magee added that it was a fair contract and more accurately recognizes the number of days that the Athletic Director had been working. Ms. Fryc noted that while Town Manager Kevin Mizikar was entitled to a vote, he was unable to attend the meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to ratify the contract with the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B per the terms outlined in the enclosed Memorandum of Agreement.

B. Mindfulness Partnership at Shrewsbury High School: Report

Dr. Jane Lizotte; Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, Shrewsbury High School (SHS); Mr. Marc Waxman, Co-Founder, Mindfulness Director Initiative (MDI); and Mr. James Frank, Mindfulness Director, SHS, gave an update on the partnership between SHS and MDI since September 2019. Dr. Lizotte described the initial goal of the partnership and its relevance to the Strategic Goals and Priorities of Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS). Mr. Bazydlo provided an overview of activities enabled through the partnership. Mr. Waxman presented the results of a survey on the recently conducted 8-week mindfulness session that included participant (students, staff, and parents) demographics, attendance, satisfaction, interest in future participation, likelihood of recommending the program to others, and extracurriculars (students only). Mr. Frank presented information on participant expectations, program helpfulness, and overall themes of the program, and shared anecdotes from participants. Mr. Bazydlo, Mr. Waxman, and Mr. Frank addressed how the survey was administered and plans for future assessments, and provided data on student interest collected after the entire school had an opportunity to view a brief (10-15 minute) video advisory about the program.

The Committee noted the importance of: articulating the value of the program - in terms of time and budget resources - to the community; looking at a group of control participants; offering participants the opportunity to self-report other support they are receiving; increasing the sample size and the number of participants surveyed for feedback; and being able to provide data on long-lasting positive effects from participation. Presenters noted in response that more students wanted to participate than were able to because of scheduling difficulties, that not all participants chose to respond to the assessment survey, and that two groups from the Girls Track Team (approximately 20 of 100 team members) would be participating during their practice times starting after the vacation break (which would provide data on stressors relative to athletics and also provide a “control” group). Dr. Sawyer noted that the data from this innovative practice relative to the Strategic Priorities was important, and acknowledged positive interactions with the MDI team.

V. Curriculum

A. Social & Emotional Learning Implementation Plan: Report

Ms. Belsito, Ms. Clouter, and Dr. Lizotte gave the report. Ms. Clouter noted the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Implementation Plan was grounded in the District’s Strategic Goals and supported by state frameworks, and described four general SEL approaches. Ms. Belsito discussed the district and building based steering committees, and presented an implementation overview and timeline. Dr. Lizotte presented information on SEL programming and approaches by level: preschool through grade 4, middle school, and high school.

In response to questions from the Committee, presenters provided additional information on free-standing explicit lessons, involving and communicating with parents, and potential barriers to full implementation. Dr. Sawyer noted the importance and cohesive nature of the work, opportunities for its measurement through the report card at the middle school level, its relevance to the District’s Strategic Priorities, and its alignment with state frameworks.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Foster Child Transportation State Reimbursement Program: Discussion

In his report, Mr. Collins provided an introduction to the program with background information; described two example situations; noted eligibility requirements; detailed recent historical costs and estimated reimbursement; noted next steps, and answered clarifying questions from the Committee. Dr. Sawyer noted that the Committee might be asked to conduct a vote of affirmation at a future meeting if the program will appear as a warrant article at the next Annual Town Meeting.

B. Preschool Tuition Rates and Program Offerings

Mr. Collins and Ms. Lisa Robinson, Principal, Parker Road Preschool, gave the report, with Mr. Collins noting it was being presented earlier than in previous years so that the Committee would be able to vote on recommended changes in early January 2020. Ms. Robinson gave an overview of the preschool program that included student demographics, program locations, and current session information. Mr. Collins provided detailed information on enrollment history; noting lower recent enrollment numbers, Ms. Robinson described recommended changes for FY21 that were informed in part by parent demand for more four and five day/week programs. Mr. Collins presented tuition comparisons for preschool programs in DART (District Analysis and Review Tools) and neighbor districts, and recommended a 3% tuition increase for FY21. Ms. Robinson provided information on late fees and financial assistance available to families.

In response to questions from the Committee, the presenters provided additional information on the rationale for a 3% tuition increase (labor costs are increasing and the district has found that regular, incremental fee increases are more palatable to families than infrequent, large increases) and the methodology utilized for determining financial assistance. Dr. Sawyer noted that he supports the changes, and that documents from the meeting would be posted for public viewing and comment in advance of a vote by the Committee on January 8, 2020.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee meeting held on December 4, 2019 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

None.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. SEA Unit B Contract Memo
2. SEA Unit B Salary Table
3. SEA Unit B MOA
4. Mindfulness Partnership Memo
5. Mindfulness Partnership Slide Presentation
6. SEL Implementation Plan Report
7. SEL Implementation Plan Slide Presentation
8. Foster Child Transportation Reimbursement MOU
9. Foster Child Transportation Report Slide Presentation
10. Preschool Tuition/Programs Report Slide Presentation
11. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above

**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
100 MAPLE AVENUE
SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS
MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE
December 19, 2019
Principal's Conference
Shrewsbury High School
64 Holden St.
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts**

Present: Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson; Dr. Dale Magee, Secretary; Ms Lynsey Heffernan; Mr. Jason Palitsch. Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools; Ms Amy Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Well-Being; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations; Ms. Barbara Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources; Ms. Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services. Guest: Ms Anna Balcora, Client Services Manager, ClearGov.

The meeting was convened by Ms Fryc at 6:00 PM.

- I. **Orientation to ClearGov School District website.** Ms Balcora provided an overview of the content and functionality of the ClearGov Shrewsbury School District website including functions related to finances, demographics of student body, staff, and performance measures as well as other standard features. She also went over data sources and the ability of the district to add content, use the site for updating the public on school projects and track data for other interests.

Questions from Committee members and staff were answered and Ms. Balcora recorded concerns regarding data sources (including sources of SAT results) as well as questions regarding changes in data collection (including tracking results for non-binary students).

The Committee recessed for dinner at 7:07 PM, reconvening at 7:33 PM.

- II. **Preliminary Budget Review.** Mr. Collins presented an overview of anticipated costs and revenues for the 2020-21 school year. The initial "Status Quo" budget (flat services and staffing) is anticipated to result in an increase in the Town Appropriated budget of \$4,564,509 (6.88%). Discussion occurred regarding other pressures on the Town Budget, anticipated increase in available revenues from the town, potential sources for cost cutting and other revenue sources including the potential for holding

off on the planned tapering of tuition for full day kindergarten. The Committee felt that the commitment to tapering the tuition for full day kindergarten should be kept, but final decisions would have to take into consideration what trade-offs would need to be made.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM: Mr. Wensky; Second: Mr. Palitsch. Roll Call: Mr. Palitsch: yes; Ms. Heffernan: yes; Dr. Magee: yes; Mr. Wensky: yes; Ms. Fryc: yes.

Respectfully submitted: B. Dale Magee, MD, Secretary

Documents Referenced:

Budget Workshop Slide Presentation

ClearGov Slide Presentation



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **XI. Executive Session**

MEETING DATE: **1/8/20**

- A. For the purpose of collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury Education Association – Unit A**
- B. For the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Executive session is warranted for these purposes.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee enter into executive session for the purpose of collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury Education Association - Unit A, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body, and for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes, and return to Open Session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

Ms. Barbara A. Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources

ITEM NO: **XII. Adjournment**