



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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April 22, 2020

To: School Committee

From: Joe Sawyer

Re: Continuity of funding of Assabet Valley Collaborative services during school closure

Dear School Committee:

As you know from previous memos and meetings during the school closure period, the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, Jeffrey Riley, is advising Massachusetts public school districts to continue to pay contracted service vendors, such as out-of-district special education organizations and school transportation companies, in order to avoid issues where those providers are unable to recommence operations when school resumes.

The Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC) is an educational organization made up of local districts who join together to pool resources in order to provide cost-effective educational services for its members. Shrewsbury Public Schools is a charter member of the collaborative, with shared responsibility for its current and future solvency. AVC provides various services to both member and non-member school districts, including special education services and consultations and special education transportation. As you know, I am our school district's representative in the AVC Board of Directors. Last Friday, the AVC board recognized that it is critical to member districts that AVC remain on solid financial ground during the school closure period, and unanimously advocated that all member districts continue to provide funding for the services AVC continues to

provide remotely to students and districts as possible and to enable its transportation contractor, Van Pool, to remain viable.

In order to maintain the crucial partnership between our school district and AVC, it is important that our district continue its contractual relationships with AVC for various special education and consultation services that are part of the current fiscal year budget. While the budget approved by the School Committee already authorized these expenditures, given the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the pandemic closure situation I wanted to highlight this partnership and ensure that the Committee understands the importance of maintaining it. In order to further validate the approach during school closure, I recommend that the School Committee vote to approve the following suggested motion:

That the Committee vote to authorize the district administration to take necessary actions to continue the funding of special education and consultation services contracted with the Assabet Valley Collaborative, with the understanding that those services are being modified as necessary during the school closure period, within the approved Fiscal Year 2020 budget.

I look forward to answering any questions you have regarding this recommendation at your meeting this evening.