

School Committee Composite Superintendent Evaluation (May 2025 - April 2026)

	Choose rating from dropdown menu in cell below (click on triangle)	
<p>Student Learning Goal By April 2026, the Superintendent of Schools will have successfully facilitated a review of the district's student services by an outside expert in order to provide insight into what best practices are already in place, consider opportunities for improvement, and look for potential efficiencies, to inform the work of meeting the district's strategic commitments to educational excellence, the enhanced well-being of all, and optimization of resources.</p>	Significant progress	<p>Dr. Sawyer made meaningful progress on this goal by building on the strong, data-driven foundation established in last year's District Management Group (DMG) assessment. He focused this year's work on student services, an area that is both complex and critical to ensuring we are meeting student needs while also operating as efficiently as possible.</p> <p>By facilitating a review with an external expert, Dr. Sawyer is leading a comprehensive evaluation of current practices. This approach helped validate where the District is performing well, while also identifying clear opportunities to improve service delivery, streamline structures, and better align resources. The Committee values that this work is grounded in data and benchmarking, rather than anecdotal input, which strengthens the credibility of the findings and recommendations.</p> <p>This is as a continuation of a multi-year effort to thoughtfully assess and refine how the District operates. Dr. Sawyer's leadership in this area positions the District well to make informed decisions that balance high-quality student support with responsible stewardship of District resources</p>
<p>Professional Practice Goal By April 2026, the Superintendent of Schools will have taken steps to facilitate a smooth, positive, and supportive transition of superintendent leadership for the district.</p>	Significant progress	<p>Dr. Sawyer has done an outstanding job prioritizing a smooth transition to the next Superintendent. He's been proactive in working with Dr. Ostrander since her appointment in March, meeting regularly and involving her with the leadership team to ensure she has a clear understanding of the district's priorities and challenges. Dr. Ostrander has already been included in School Committee meetings, budget workshops, and meeting with the Town's Finance Committee.</p> <p>Given this is the first leadership transition in 17 years, the Committee appreciates the focus on continuity and setting Dr. Ostrander up for success from day one. Dr. Sawyer's approach has been thoughtful, collaborative, and clearly centered on maintaining momentum for the district.</p> <p>Overall, this is an ongoing strong and professional effort that positions the district well for a stable and successful transition into the next school year.</p>

<p>Progress toward District Strategic Goals The district's Strategic Goals & Action Steps for the 2025-2026 school year are linked below for reference.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<p>Significant progress has been met on advancing the District's key strategic goals. School improvement plans have continued to align well with the District's strategic priorities and goals. The annual dinner workshop with the School Committee and District leadership and the joint meeting of all school councils continue to be valuable opportunities to advance this work. Promising gains have been made with the continued full implementation of year two of the literacy program in grades K-6 and year one in grades 7-8, with continued focus on using assessment data to provide interventions to students who have not yet reached benchmarks. Data that has been reported at School Committee meetings indicates that the fewer students are requiring interventions, particularly at the K-4 level. CTE programming implementation has continued in a positive direction with almost 200 new students joining Career Pathways at SHS and career awareness activities have also increased particularly at the middle school level. The next phase of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports program has been implemented. The potential SHS expansion project has continued to move forward after receiving overwhelming approval by Town Meeting to receive the necessary funding for the feasibility study and schematic design phase and an owner's project manager has been recently selected.</p>
<p>Link to Strategic Goals & Action Steps 2025-2026</p>		
<p>Standard I: Instructional Leadership</p>		
<p>I-A. Curriculum:Ensures that all instructional staff design effective and rigorous standards-based units of instruction consisting of well-structured lessons with measureable outcomes.</p>	<p>Exemplary</p>	
<p>I-B. Instruction:Ensures that practices in all settings reflect high expectations regarding content and quality of effort and work, engage all students, and are personalized to accommodate diverse learning styles, needs, interests, and levels of readiness.</p>	<p>Proficient</p>	
<p>I-C. Assessment:Ensures that all principals and administrators facilitate practices that propel personnel to use a variety of formal and informal methods and assessments to measure student learning, growth, and understanding and make necessary adjustments to their practice when students are not learning.</p>	<p>Proficient</p>	
<p>I-D. Evaluation:Ensures effective and timely supervision and evaluation of all staff in alignment with state regulations and contract provisions.</p>	<p>Proficient</p>	
<p>I-E. Data-Informed Decision Making:Uses multiple sources of evidence related to student learning—including state, district, and school assessment results and growth data—to inform school and district goals and improve organizational performance, educator effectiveness, and student learning.</p>	<p>Exemplary</p>	

Overall Rating for Standard I: Instructional Leadership	Proficient	Dr. Sawyer leads by example and does not expect more of others than he does of himself. His number one concern is student learning and ensuring that all students receive the educational services they need to be successful. Dr. Sawyer has continued to support the implementation of the K-8 literacy program and the use of data to determine student academic interventions. Reading progress is monitored and interventions are determined using the Star Assessment. The high school and middle school levels have partnered with consultant TNTP to promote instructional strategies to advance both excellence and equity. Dr. Sawyer has participated in and reinforced professional development to the District Leadership Team on addressing opportunities and challenges posed by artificial intelligence as follow up work to the AI Study Committee's recommendations from last year. Dr. Sawyer has continued to support SHS leadership, Dr. Lizotte, Ms. Ares and Ms. Flynn in the connection with the continued implementation of career and technical education opportunities at the high school. Dr. Sawyer stays abreast of new trends in education and seeks to bring into the district instructional practices that reflect the high standards the community expects.
Standard II: Management & Operations		
II-A. Environment: Develops and executes effective plans, procedures, routines, and operational systems to address a full range of safety, health, emotional, and social needs.	Proficient	
II-B. Human Resources Management and Development: Implements a cohesive approach to recruiting, hiring, induction, development, and career growth that promotes high-quality and effective practice.	Proficient	
II-C. Scheduling and Management Information Systems: Uses systems to ensure optimal use of data and time for teaching, learning, and collaboration, minimizing disruptions and distractions for school-level staff.	Proficient	
II-D. Law, Ethics, and Policies: Understands and complies with state and federal laws and mandates, school committee policies, collective bargaining agreements, and ethical guidelines.	Proficient	
II-E. Fiscal Systems: Develops a budget that supports the district's vision, mission, and goals; allocates and manages expenditures consistent with district- and school-level goals and available resources.	Exemplary	

Overall Rating for Standard II: Management & Operations	<p style="text-align: center;">Proficient</p>	<p>In the area of school and management systems, Dr. Sawyer's work with the informational technology team for the District has strengthened the District's optimal use of technology and data. Additional use of technology to complete business needs, including automatation of tasks, could provide valuable time for Central Office employees to devote to other important work. Dr. Sawyer does a good job of managing his staff in light of the increased demands on his time. Per last year's DMG report, Shrewsbury spends 17% less per pupil on administration than comparable districts. During the FY27 budget process, Dr. Sawyer has continued to provide outstanding leadership with regard to the management of the district's budget. He has continued to provide clear communication regarding the district's needs, explaining the context of education funding in Massachusetts, and highlighting the cost effectiveness of our district's financial management. The management of the FY26 budget has continued to be successful with the stability provided through the override agreement and the district's careful use of those local funds, while also using grant and philanthropic funds to address key needs and strategic priorities. Dr. Sawyer has also worked diligently to provide a FY27 budget recommendation that has been more challenging than the previous post-override years due to rising cost pressures related to inflation in transportation and special education out of district tuition rates, plus the volatility of how many students require out of district services. Dr. Sawyer supported the efforts to create the first opportunity for full day preschool programming, which has been very successfu. He also supported the expansion of full day preschool from two to four sections next year. This is in response to family feedback and increased participation and tuition revenue. Dr. Saywer has spent significant time working with the new Executive Director of Human Resources during her first year in the role to support her transition to applying her HR skills in a public education environment and to the District's approaches to HR issues.</p>
Standard III: Family & Community Engagement		
III-A. Engagement: Actively ensures that all families are welcome members of the classroom and school community and can contribute to the effectiveness of the classroom, school,district, and community.	<p style="text-align: center;">Exemplary</p>	
III-B. Sharing Responsibility: Continuously collaborates with families and community stakeholders to support student learning and development at home, school, and in the community.	<p style="text-align: center;">Exemplary</p>	
III-C. Communication: Engages in effective communication with families, community stakeholders, and the media about key district issues, including student achievement, district needs, and best practices in education.	<p style="text-align: center;">Exemplary</p>	
III-D. Family Concerns: Addresses family and community concerns in an equitable, effective, and efficient manner.	<p style="text-align: center;">Exemplary</p>	

Overall Rating for Standard III: Family & Community Engagement	<p style="text-align: center;">Exemplary</p>	<p>Dr. Sawyer's performance in this area continues to be exemplary and one of his core strengths as a leader. He consistently communicates clearly and thoughtfully, maintains a strong presence across the community, and approaches both routine interactions and more challenging situations with professionalism and care. The District's response in connection with the tragic shooting death of a Coolidge parent on the second day of school helped manage an incredibly challenging situation in a manner that supported students, families and staff with clear communication, strong partnership with law enforcement and public safety, and thoughtful ongoing support. Over Dr. Sawyer's long tenure, his family and community engagement has been a defining aspect of his leadership. He has built trust with families, staff, and the broader community through consistent messaging, visibility, and a steady, respectful approach. The Committee appreciates Dr. Sawyer's ability to navigate complex or sensitive issues while keeping the focus on transparency and the district's core values.</p>
Standard IV: Professional Culture		
IV-A. Commitment to High Standards:Fosters a shared commitment to high standards of service, teaching, and learning with high expectations for achievement for all.	<p style="text-align: center;">Exemplary</p>	
IV-B. Cultural Proficiency:Ensures that policies and practices enable staff members and students to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment in which students' backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges are respected.	<p style="text-align: center;">Proficient</p>	
IV-C. Communication:Demonstrates strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills.	<p style="text-align: center;">Exemplary</p>	
IV-D. Continuous Learning:Develops and nurtures a culture in which staff members are reflective about their practice and use student data, current research, best practices, and theory to continuously adapt practice and achieve improved results. Models these behaviors in his or her own practice.	<p style="text-align: center;">Exemplary</p>	
IV-E. Shared Vision:Successfully and continuously engages all stakeholders in the creation of a shared educational vision in which every student is prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and become a responsible citizen and global contributor.	<p style="text-align: center;">Proficient</p>	
IV-F. Managing Conflict:Employs strategies for responding to disagreement and dissent, constructively resolving conflict and building consensus throughout a district or school community.	<p style="text-align: center;">Proficient</p>	

<p>Overall Rating for Standard IV: Professional Culture</p>	<p>Exemplary</p>	<p>Dr. Sawyer's performance in fostering a strong professional culture is exemplary and reflects a consistent, intentional leadership approach over time. He leads by example, supporting a school culture that centers on students, sets clear expectations for professionalism, respect, and accountability, and reinforces those expectations through his communication with staff and the broader community. The School Committee received favorable feedback regarding Dr. Sawyer's performance in the feedback it requested from staff, families, students, and the community in connection with developing the leadership profile for the new superintendent as part of the superintendent search process.</p> <p>The Committee appreciates his focus on building a culture grounded in high standards and continuous improvement, particularly through the use of data to inform decisions and guide district priorities. His efforts to engage directly with staff through advisory groups, leadership meetings, and ongoing communication help ensure that perspectives from across the organization are heard while maintaining alignment with the district's mission and strategic goals.</p> <p>He has also demonstrated strong leadership in navigating complex cultural challenges, including promoting respectful discourse and reinforcing core values during more difficult moments for the community. Overall, his leadership has helped sustain a professional, collaborative culture that supports both staff effectiveness and positive outcomes for students. During the past year, our district has dealt with a significant increase in public records requests, almost entirely from two individuals in the same household. This has required a significant amount of time and resources to be devoted to this, which meant shifting work priorities and work needs. Since March 14, 2025, the district has received approximately 38 separate public records requests from these individuals, many of which have multiple parts/requests. The district has spent significant time, resources, and legal fees to respond to these requests in order to ensure compliance with student record and personnel record laws. This year is the first time in 29 years that a formal complaint has been received with regard to Dr. Sawyer's performance. The complaint is in connection with the timeliness of responses to public records requests. The School Committee has conducted an investigation into this complaint. While Dr. Sawyer is not directly responsible for managing public records requests, the School Committee has made suggestions to improve the District's ability for its public records process to better address response times. The sheer number, timing, and complexity of the public record requests this year was an anomaly and was challenging to handle in light of the many other responsibilities of the Public Records Officer. The Committee has asked Dr. Sawyer to consider ways to improve the District's capacity to respond to these requests in a more timely manner and to ensure that any district employees involved in fulfilling these requests are provided with sufficient capacity and training to perform these duties.</p>
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<p>Overall Summative Rating for the Superintendent's Performance (Please consider the preponderance of the ratings above to provide an overall rating, as well as any comments on the superintendent's overall performance over the past year).</p>	<p>Exemplary</p>	<p>Dr. Sawyer's overall performance has been exemplary, and the School Committee members agree that our district has been incredibly fortunate to have had his leadership over such a long and impactful tenure. Dr. Sawyer has consistently demonstrated what it means to be a professional, data informed superintendent who not only sets a clear vision, but delivers results in a disciplined and thoughtful way.</p> <p>What stands out most is his ability to balance high quality educational outcomes with strong financial stewardship. Dr. Sawyer has guided our district through extremely lean budget years, the building of needed new schools to deal with outdated facilities and tremendous growth in student population. The data tells a clear story. Shrewsbury continues to be one of the most high performing and cost efficient districts in the state, delivering a strong return on investment for residents while maintaining operational and financial stability. That combination is not easy to achieve, and it reflects years of intentional leadership and decision making.</p> <p>Dr. Sawyer has also been an outstanding communicator and a steady, visible presence for families and the community. Whether in times of success or challenge, he has consistently led with transparency, clarity, and professionalism, which has built a high level of trust and respect across stakeholders. He has been a strong advocate for public education and for this district, and that reputation extends beyond the community. He is widely recognized as one of the most respected and accomplished superintendents in the state.</p> <p>Most importantly, our students and staff have been well served under his leadership. Students graduate from Shrewsbury High School with the education they need, including strong soft skills that are required to navigate the next phase of their lives. The strength of our schools has made Shrewsbury a highly desirable place to live, benefiting the entire community, including increased property values and sustained confidence in our public school system. Dr. Sawyer has championed public education in Shrewsbury for almost three decades. His impact will be long lasting and the district is in a strong position for continued excellence in education for all students because of the foundation Dr. Sawyer has built.</p>
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