

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, October 9, 2013

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

The meeting was convened at 7:00 PM by Ms. Sandra Fryc.

I. Public Participation

None

II. Chairperson's Report and Members' Reports

None

III. Superintendent's Report

A. Dr. Sawyer shared an update about the successful activities with the exchange program between SHS and a sister high school in Beijing China. Some SHS students traveled to Beijing. Beijing high school students and teachers traveled to the United States to visit and spent time engaging in activities at SHS. Dr. Sawyer said it is great to see so many students becoming fluent in Mandarin and congratulated SHS students and staff members for organizing and hosting a successful exchange program.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments

SHS students Kayla Freeman, Nithya Pathalam and Emily Taylor presented the SAC report. SHS has updated computer software this year and the new technology is enhancing students' learning experiences; SHS Spirit week was a great success with lots of participation from students; Great visit to SHS by 16 students and three teachers from Beijing China who stayed with SHS students and families during their visit. SHS student presenters shared their observations that there are challenges at SHS with class sizes being too large (i.e. math class with 28 students and this makes it challenging for teachers to provide enough individual attention to students); students are not able to register for all desired classes because there are not enough sections and/or classes (i.e. AP/Advanced) are not able to be offered each year because there are not enough faculty members to teach classes. Dr. Sawyer and School Committee members expressed concerns that SHS students are not being offered some educational opportunities and the quality of students' education may be declining. Dr. Sawyer said the annual report on student class sizes will be presented at the next School Committee meeting. He thanked SHS students Kayla Freeman, Nithya Pathalam and Emily Taylor for presenting the Student Advisory Council Report and participating in the School Committee meeting.

B. SHS Class of 2013 Post-High School Plans: Report

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, SHS Principal, and Ms. Nga Huynh, Director of Guidance, presented the report. There were 393 graduates from the SHS Class of 2013: 81% are attending a four year college; 16% are attending a two year college or technical school; 3% entered the employment sector, military or were undecided about plans. Ms. Huynh shared information about The College Application process at SHS and details about the programs available to students and parents. SHS guidance counselors carry a caseload of 60-70 students and spend between 60-90 minutes preparing unique letters of recommendation for each SHS senior applying to colleges. For SHS students attending colleges and universities, 57% are attending public institutions and 43% are attending private institutions. A trend being observed is that greater numbers of students are attending public colleges and universities than private institutions. SHS guidance counselors work with students on exploring the best fit when deciding on college choices and post-high school plans. Dr. Sawyer thanked the guidance department for continuing to provide a great level of service to students and families.

C. SHC Accreditation: Update

Mr. Bazydlo provided an update on the NEASC accreditation process. He stated that the accreditation process is a ten year cycle and that SHS is working on the final report due in April 2014. Mr. Bazydlo shared details about the visiting committee work that will take place April 6th-9th and the self-study that SHS will complete. Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Bazydlo said the accreditation report will point out the School's strengths and challenges. They are looking forward to participating in the process in April 2014.

D. Athletics Annual: Report

Mr. Jay Costa, Athletic Director, and Mr. Will Shipman, Senior-MIAA Ambassador, presented a report summarizing athletic participation and achievements during the 2012-13 school year. SHS continues to offer diverse sports with 350-400 students participating per season. Mr. Costa discussed the accomplishments of athletic teams and championships won. He thanked the Shrewsbury Colonials Support Groups and shared that the Shrewsbury Colonials Athletic Sponsors Program is going very well. Mr. Costa thanked the sponsors and is grateful for their help in maintaining the current level of athletic programs for the students. He said that \$650,000 is the approximate total operational costs to run the athletic program and there is a short-fall of approximately \$47,000 in the budget. Sponsorships and donations help close the gap with the budget shortfall deficit. Mr. Will Shipman discussed student fundraising activities for the athletic programs. Mr. Shipman shared an update about the successful MIAA Student Leadership Program and activities including the Sportsmanship Summit held at Gillette Stadium. Mr. Costa thanked Will Shipman and Devan Michael, Senior-MIAA Ambassador for their positive contributions and great work. Mr. Costa discussed some future considerations for the athletic programs including the need for facility improvements, expansion of high school and middle school teams, and a full-time athletic trainer position. Mr. Jason Palitsch asked Mr. Costa to quantify the level of support received from boosters for the athletic programs and Mr. Costa said it was in the range of \$30,000-\$60,000 per year. Ms. Erin Canzano asked if Shrewsbury has a similar athletic budget compared to those of other area schools. Mr. Costa confirmed the budgets are similar and said that the Shrewsbury athletic program is on the lower end for being funded from appropriations in budgets. Ms. Sandra Fryc thanked Mr. Costa for his work including fundraising and helping students to become good athletes and leaders.

V. Curriculum

None

VI. Policy

A. FY 2015 Budget Guidelines & Priorities: Vote

Mr. Palitsch stated that this is the third discussion regarding the FY 2015 Budget Guidelines & Priorities. Mr. Palitsch suggested a minor amendment to the language to include that the technology piece is enhancing the value of the school learning experience. Dr. Magee asked Dr. Sawyer a question about details for restructuring special education and Dr. Sawyer stated that the issue is two-fold. He said there is a need to add programs but there is not current sufficient administrative capacity to make this happen. Dr. Sawyer said the administrators who are members of the task force will explore what the Shrewsbury model looks like compared to some other school districts. He said that in addition to special education he is concerned about other program areas including the mathematics curriculum.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the FY 2015 Budget Guidelines and Priorities, which will be shared in final format on the District's website and on social media channels.

B. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Update: First Reading

Dr. Sawyer said the Massachusetts Legislature recently passed an amendment to the anti-bullying law that requires school district anti-bullying policies and plans to specifically indicate that they apply to staff members as well. He said that as a result of this amendment, the district will be making language changes to the policy with some guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Education. Dr. Sawyer said the changes to the district language and policy will be posted for public comment.

VII. Budget

A. Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Update

Mr. Hurley, Director of Business Services, presented an update on the 2014 Fiscal Year operation budget. He shared information and a chart about adjustments in the budget including raising the daily pay rate for substitute teachers and adding a new school bus to the fleet.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. New Business

A. Assabet Valley Collaborative Quarterly Update

Dr. Sawyer provided a report on the Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC) including AVC's programs and services. He said the largest AVC program that SHS participates in is the Evolutionary Program. Dr. Sawyer said there are some ongoing discussions about consolidating the school collaboratives in Massachusetts with the result being fewer collaboratives and larger numbers of members. He said he feels the AVC is the right size for beneficial discussions and sharing ideas among school superintendents. Dr. Magee asked Dr. Sawyer how much it costs the Shrewsbury district to be a member of the AVC. Dr. Sawyer said the annual membership fee is \$5,000, the vast majority of the AVC operating budget is paid for by tuitions, and this revenue-generating model maintains the collaborative.

B. Assabet Valley Collaborative Representative Vote

Ms. Fryc called for the annual vote to appoint the Superintendent as the district representative to the Assabet Valley Collaborative Board of Directors. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Dr. Sawyer as the district representative to the Assabet Valley Collaborative Board of Directors.

X. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the School Committee Meeting for September 25, 2013.

XI. Executive Session

At 8:50 PM, on a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Mr. Samia, the School Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations and to return to open session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening. On a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

XII. Information Exlosures

None

XIII. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Canzano seconded by Mr. Samia, the meeting was adjourned at 9:32 PM. On a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted
Christine Taylor, Clerk

Documents referenced:

- 1) Shrewsbury High School Future Plans Class of 2013 report and slide show
- 2) SHS NEASC Accreditation Process Update: Memorandum
- 3) Athletics Annual report and slide show
- 4) Fiscal Priorities & Guidelines for FY 2015 Budget Development report
- 5) School Committee Policy on Bullying Prevention and Intervention: Draft of Update
- 6) Shrewsbury Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan report
- 7) FY 2014 Operation Budget Status report