

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, February 8, 2017

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Dr. Dale Magee, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary; Mr. John Samia; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

Ms. Erin Canzano, School Committee Member, and Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, were not present for the meeting.

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

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:02 pm.

I. Public Participation

Shrewsbury resident Ben Tartaglia addressed the Committee and asked if Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) are obligated to offer Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) by state law, then asked if SPS is obligated to offer Half Day Kindergarten (HDK). Dr. Sawyer advised that SPS is not mandated to offer FDK, but must provide HDK to all students. Dr. Sawyer also noted that FDK is educationally better for students, is academically similar to what first grade was in the past, is in-demand by parents, has an associated tuition fee for any student that is not mandated to receive FDK services. He also added that students who are mandated per their special education plans to have FDK must be in a learning environment with typically developing peers.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer reported that he attended a ceremony honoring Little Colonials Preschool student Bryce Babigian, who received the *Young Hero Award* from the State Fire Marshal's Office. Bryce was recognized for utilizing skills he learned in a Shrewsbury Fire Department education program to protect his family when they had a home fire in December 2016. Dr. Sawyer congratulated the Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Speech and Debate Team on their recent

success at the New England District Tournament, which was hosted at Sherwood Middle School. Several members of the team qualified to attend the National Speech & Debate Association National Tournament in Birmingham, Alabama in June. Shrewsbury also earned the school Speech Sweepstakes for this year's tournament results, the District Trophy which represents cumulative competition at the district tournament over several years, and the Leading Chapter Award signifying the strength of student participation in the program. Dr. Sawyer noted he attended a program at the Beal Early Childhood Center (BECC) called *Beal Reads 20*, which encourages families to spend twenty minutes each night reading together, and finally he advised that, due to a coming storm, schools would be closed on Thursday, February 9, 2017.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Donation for Emergency Response Equipment & Training: Vote

Noelle Freeman, Director of Nursing, advised the Committee that an anonymous donor reached out to SPS regarding needs for emergency equipment in the district. This outreach resulted in a generous donation that would be utilized to purchase three automated external defibrillators, tourniquets, and staff CPR and first aid training that has historically had to be paid for by SPS staff. Dr. Sawyer thanked Ms. Freeman for working to develop a plan that appealed to the donor, thanked the anonymous individual for their very generous donation, and recommended that the Committee vote to accept the donation.

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee to voted unanimously to accept a donation of \$10,000 from an anonymous donor to be used for emergency response equipment, emergency response equipment maintenance, emergency supplies, and training.

B. Special Education Program & Budget: Annual Report

Ms. Meg Belsito, Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, began by thanking the district Administration and Leadership teams, Special Education staff, and the special education parent community, for assisting her transition to her new role as Director.

Ms. Belsito's report included information on the department's mission, vision, initiatives and student enrollment. She provided a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) disability category breakdown, information on 504 Accommodation Plans and Individual Education Plans (IEP), discussed services by placement, and noted the myriad of services available in SPS. Ms. Belsito provided Out of District (OOD) Projections for Fiscal Years 2017-2020, noted the Total Net Tuition-OOD Operating Program Budget shows an expected net increase of \$829,124, and discussed expenses associated with Contracted Services and Extended School Year education. Recommendations for consideration in the report included three positions with no new Full Time Equivalent (FTE) required, and several positions that would require new FTEs. Ms. Belsito concluded by noting that it was evident through their 2016 Coordinated Program Review that SPS has exemplary systems in place for educating all students.

The Committee asked clarifying questions about costs relative to the Extended School Year and Summer Services Program, and Mr. Collins advised that there was high variability due to specific student information not being available when estimates are derived, and that best estimates are based on past trends. Dr. Sawyer added that he was pleased with the level of detailed planning Ms. Belsito and her team were utilizing to prepare for the approaching summer program, which straddles the FY 17 and FY 18 fiscal years. When asked about long term trends, Ms. Belsito noted an uptick in move-ins to Educational Learning Centers (ELC), advised that the numbers for preschool and elementary students requiring services was not low, and added that 26 students at Parker Road Preschool might qualify for ELC programs. In response to questioning about OOD tuitions, Ms. Belsito advised that current costs were less than last year's, but noted that five schools recently restructured their rates from 5 to 22%, which would result in additional expenses of over \$100,000 for SPS. She added that the district is notified of increases in OOD tuition, but has no control over the increases, and Dr. Sawyer noted that this is a structural issue at the state level. Ms. Belsito also provided additional detail on the positions recommended for consideration.

Dr. Sawyer thanked Ms. Belsito and her team for their work. He noted that since starting in the position, Ms. Belsito has worked with SPS staff and community families to make the strong special education programs and services at SPS even better.

V. Curriculum

A. SHS Program of Studies 2017-2018: Vote

Ms. Fryc noted that Todd Bazydlo, Shrewsbury High School Principal, gave a presentation of proposed changes to the Program of Studies at the January 25, 2017, School Committee meeting. There was no public feedback, and no questions or comments from the Committee.

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the proposed changes to the Shrewsbury High School 2017-2018 Program of Studies.

VI. Policy

A. School Year Calendar for 2017-2018: Discussion

Dr. Sawyer advised that the draft calendar being presented was very similar to the current 2016-2017 school calendar, and was based on recommendations and feedback from last year's Calendar Committee. He noted one significant change was the shift of the traditional parent conference day, typically held on the Tuesday election day in November, to the Thursday prior to observing Veterans Day on Friday, November 10. Dr. Sawyer noted that there is no election scheduled for this November, and that that Veterans Day, which occurs on a Saturday, was being

observed on the Friday prior to the holiday. This change would result in students having four consecutive days off.

Dr. Sawyer noted the draft would be posted on the website for public viewing, and requested that the Committee vote on the calendar at their March 1, 2017, meeting.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Fiscal 2018 Budget Development Status Update

Mr. Collins advised the Committee that Town Manager Dan Morgado's Budget Recommendation made on January 27, 2017, of \$61,600,000 represented a 1.97% increase over the current year, and fell \$2,483,917 short of the Superintendent's Initial Budget Recommendation of \$64,083,917 for FY 2018. He noted that while this is a large gap, Mr. Morgado takes a conservative approach to budgeting, and that historically revenue estimates tend to get better over time.

Mr. Collins presented a timeline of events going forward, and noted that the Superintendent's Budget Reduction Plan would be presented to the Committee at their March 15, 2017 meeting. Mr. Samia noted that as per request, the Superintendent's Initial Budget Recommendation met School Committee guidelines. Mr. Collins added that school department budgeting is different from other environments in that a spending plan must be derived in advance of knowing how much revenue will be available. Dr Sawyer added that the gap between the two initial Budget Recommendations was procedural versus philosophical, noting that while he is initially tasked with presenting a carry-forward budget, things must balance at the end of Town Manager's process, and he thanked Mr. Morgado for his ongoing support of SPS. Dr. Sawyer added that there will be a required public hearing on the Superintendent's Initial Budget Recommendation at the School Committee meeting on March 1, 2017.

B. Fiscal Projection Subcommittee: Report

Mr. Samia began by acknowledging the work of Dr. B. Dale Magee, School Committee Vice Chairperson, his colleague on the Fiscal Projection Subcommittee, who gave a presentation on demystifying the budget process at the School Committee meeting on January 1, 2017. Mr. Samia's 5-Year Fiscal Projection presentation described the goals of the Subcommittee, provided a recap of the budget information presented by Dr. Magee, illustrated the School Department's Appropriated Budget history from FY 2008- FY 2017, noting that with per pupil spending in the bottom 20% of districts, SPS is very efficient at providing students with a quality education.

Mr. Samia described his approach to developing a high-level 5-year projection, and detailed the assumptions that were incorporated around mandates, grants, state funding, appropriated school revenue increases, and school expenses. Mr. Samia advised that his FY 2018- FY 2022 projection indicates that SPS will face widening structural deficits over the next five years. Noting that with personnel comprising approximately 80% of the budget, headcount reductions

would be required to close the gap, and this would result in increased class sizes and a compromised education program. Mr. Samia advised that State and Federal revenues should not be expected to close the gap, and closed his presentation with the Essential Question that Dr. Sawyer posed at his January 25, 2017 Budget Recommendation presentation to the School Committee:

What will our community do to solve the structural funding dilemma that jeopardizes the future quality of public education in Shrewsbury?

Ms. Fryc thanked Mr. Samia and Dr. Magee for their work on the the Subcommittee, and for developing this information as a “tool for discussion.” Committee members went on to note that while SPS has recently seen a decrease in students leaving for charter schools, charter school enrollment is one of many unknown factors for future years; going forward, all inflationary pressure will be on the town budget; and 3% year over year increases in expenses to the district are reasonable and predictable.

Dr. Sawyer thanked Mr. Samia and Dr. Magee for their work, noted that the budget presents a predictable challenge, and advised that the Fiscal Projections Subcommittee had defined the problem well and presented it in an understandable way. He noted the next step would be to answer the question “What are we going to do about it?” Dr. Sawyer also discussed the “opportunity costs” that result from staff time being spent on determining ways to cut the budget, instead of being utilized to find ways to improve the program, and added that a high level of education would be increasingly critical in future years to ensure that individuals can support themselves and their families financially. Dr. Sawyer thanked the Subcommittee again for their work, and noted that the information presented would be particularly beneficial to the (as yet undetermined) incoming Shrewsbury Town Manager.

C. Fees & Tuitions for FY 2018: Report & Recommendations

Mr. Collins advised that information on Fees and Tuition was being presented early in the FY18 budget development process as per a request from the Committee. He noted that the memo and spreadsheet showed, by program, FY18 budgeted total revenue assuming no increase and also the impact of a 2% and 3% rate increase. Mr. Collins added that the report did not include recommendations for potential rate increases for the Extended School Care Program and Food Service Program, which would be addressed later in the process.

Dr. Magee noted that while the Committee preferred to not have fees at all, he felt that small increases in fees each year might be born with less strain than larger increases that are spaced farther apart. Ms. Fryc noted that this information would be revisited and open for discussion at the Public Hearing on March 1, 2017, and that Mr. Collins’ report would be available to the public on the SPS website in advance of the meeting.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Samia, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting on January 25, 2017.

XI. Executive Session

Ms. Fryc requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purposes of collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit B, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body, as well as a student residency request, and at the conclusion of Executive Session to return to open session for the purpose of adjourning only. On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, on a roll call vote: Mr. Samia, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes, the Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:45 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Samia, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Special Education Annual Report
2. Special Education Annual Report Slide Presentation
3. School Year Calendar 2017-18 Draft
4. FY 2018 Budget Update Slide Presentation
5. FY 2018 Fee Projection Spreadsheet
6. FY 2018 Fee Memo
7. Fiscal Projection Subcommittee Slide Presentation
8. Emergency Response Equipment Donation Memo