

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Present: Dr. Dale Magee, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Sandy Fryc, Secretary; Ms. Erin Canzano; Mr. Jason Palitsch; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Ms. Barb Malone, 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.

This meeting was held in the Bent Presentation Room at Shrewsbury High School. The meeting was convened by Dr. Magee at 7:03 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer noted that he was proud of high school and middle school students who participated in the National School Walkout honoring victims of the recent shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, earlier in the day. He visited Shrewsbury High School's (SHS) event which he described as respectful, and felt it sent a strong message honoring the victims and promoting safe schools for all. Dr. Sawyer indicated that the principals at SHS, Oak, and Sherwood all did an excellent job in creating the opportunity for students to have a voice through these exercises.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Student Recognition: SHS Boys Track State & New England Champion Relay Team

Dr. Magee advised that the SHS Boys Track State & New England Champion Relay Team would be recognized at a future meeting.

B. SHS Student Advisory Committee: Report

Student Advisory Committee (SAC) student members Benjamin George (SAC Chair), Maya McCollum, Erica Hanlon, Paulina Hruskoci, and Prisha Singh, gave a report to the Committee that included information on recent SHS student accomplishments (in multiple winter athletics, performing arts, and clubs), events (student travel opportunities, the Black History Month Assembly, and the school walkout held earlier in the day), and future plans (new course options for next year, and a vegetarian food survey).

In response to questions from the Committee, the students addressed new course options (including Foundations in Physical Education and the Capstone Exhibition); provided their personal reactions to the student walkout (it was respectful, positive, and gave several options to students who wanted to participate); and gave additional detail on Work Study options.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

A. Staff Travel Policy: Vote

The first reading of a draft of new Policy 935: Staff and School Committee Travel and Reimbursement was held at the School Committee meeting on February 28, 2018, and was then posted for public viewing and comment. The Committee advised they had not received any feedback from the public. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve new Policy 935 (Staff and School Committee Travel and Reimbursement) as presented.

B. Harassment Policy Update: First Reading

Mr. Palitsch advised that the policy draft had been reviewed and discussed by him and Ms. Canzano (both are members of the Policy Subcommittee), noted that it reflected their feedback, and felt it was a thoughtful and responsible policy. Ms. Malone went on to highlight key changes in the new policy, including that it: encompasses all forms of harassment (the current policy is titled “Sexual Harassment”); addresses social media; offers stronger language around retaliation; addresses verbal and written complaints; encourages individuals to report any concerns they have; and allows for reporting to multiple points of contact.

Dr. Magee advised that the policy draft would be posted for public viewing and comment, and Dr. Sawyer noted that he would check in with various employee groups regarding the draft.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Extended School Care Program: Report & Tuition Recommendation

Ms. Karen Isaacson, Director of Extended Learning, began her report on the Extended School Care (ESC) Program by noting that demand continues to grow, with 180 people on the waiting list for this year. She went on to provide a financial perspective (all funding comes from parent

tuition, recent expenses have exceeded revenue which has led to an eroded fund balance); a FY19 projection with no tuition change (showing a loss of \$123,550.00); a FY19 projection with the proposed changes (around tuition, sibling discounts, and early release fees - showing a profit of \$1,000.00); financial aid information illustrating the sliding scale utilized by ESC; expense information (wages = 75%); information on the financial impact of early release days (which require additional staff hours and resources); rate history and a recommendation (3% increase for 2018); a local rate comparison (Shrewsbury is low, and is below the state reimbursement rate); the sibling discount and its impact to families if changed; and current enrollment/staffing ratios.

Dr. Magee advised that the Committee received feedback on the proposed changes to increase ESC fees (which were first presented at the meeting on February 28, 2018), and that the majority of responses were in favor of the increases, except for the proposed changes to the sibling student discount. The Committee noted the ESC program is an important but optional service to families that is self-funded and must cover expenses. In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Isaacson provided additional information on the sliding fee scale (ESC dropped the state voucher program to allow SPS to serve more families), noted that space limitations limit participation, and advised that the 1:10 staff/student ratio allows for adequate coverage of students enjoying multiple activities even in the event of occasional staff absences.

Mr. Collins noted that he recommended the proposed fee changes, and ongoing even, steady increases, and Dr. Sawyer added that he also supported the recommended changes.

B. Fee & Tuition Rates for Fiscal Year 2019: Vote

Dr. Magee advised that at the School Committee meeting on February 28, 2018, a number of proposed changes to fee and tuition rates were discussed: increases to busing, athletics, activities (at Oak Middle School), preschool programs, and ESC (3% increase in tuition rates, the elimination of the sibling discount, and the addition of a \$25 per student fee charged for each early release day); and a decrease to Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) to facilitate phasing-in free FDK. He again noted that most feedback they received was relevant to the ESC program. Committee members advised that while they much prefer to not implement fees, the district is fee dependent and the fees are necessary to maintain the program at SPS and to keep class sizes low, and voiced support for the recommended changes. Dr. Sawyer expressed his support, and noted his memo to the Committee with his recommendations for fee and tuition adjustments for Fiscal Year 2019 that was provided in the materials for the meeting. On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the changes to fee and tuition rates (for Fiscal Year 2019) as presented (in the Superintendent's recommendation memo).

C. Fiscal Year 2018 Update: Report

Mr. Collins advised that his update was current to February 25, 2018, and projected a year end surplus of approximately \$367,000, which represents 0.6% of the total budget. He highlighted variances in some of the 19 reportable categories included in the report, and described

assumptions about Circuit Breaker funding, which he noted can be volatile and operates on a carry-forward basis.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

A. Beal Reuse Committee Request for Feedback: Vote

Dr. Magee noted that the Committee received a letter from Mr. Maurice DePalo, member of the Board of Selectmen and Chairman of the Beal Reuse Committee, requesting feedback from the School Committee to see if the School Department has an interest in retaining possession and use of the existing Beal building at such time a new Beal School is built. Dr. Magee advised that in consultation with Dr. Sawyer, a response could be constructed advising that the plan is to provide a replacement for the existing school, and that the School Department does not intend to continue to utilize the existing building or site for educational or administrative use once its current use is no longer needed. It was stated that this is with the understanding that formal decisions regarding closure and control of the site will need to be made at a future time, and the current School Committee cannot bind a future School Committee who would be making that decision. Mr. Palitsch recommended that the School Committee write a letter to the Beal Reuse Committee along the lines of the recommendations from the Superintendent in his memo to the School Committee on reuse of the building.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the Committee voted unanimously to authorize the Chair to send a written response to the Beal Reuse Committee along the lines of the Superintendent's recommended course of action (relative to the School Committee's intention regarding the Beal building and parcel once it is no longer required for its current use).

B. Development of a Dashboard for School Department Information: Discussion

Dr. Magee began by acknowledging concerns regarding maintaining services from year to year at SPS due to cuts resulting from ongoing budget issues, and noting a need to effectively communicate the importance of maintaining level services to the community. His detailed presentation on communicating this data included information on: form and content; a suggested menu (featuring costs, services, and results); outcomes for students in multiple categories; per pupil expense; the budget gap; revenue and expenses; services; how other districts communicate (Arlington uses the ClearGov product); and presenting data in a clear, graphic way, like a dashboard.

Committee members and Dr. Sawyer thanked Dr. Magee for his work and acknowledged the importance of consistently presenting information in a way that is understandable and accessible, and that translates to the classroom. Dr. Sawyer advised that a great deal of data is already presented by the district, but not necessarily in one place. It was also noted in the discussion that

one key piece would be around the capacity to give form to the project, as the district is limited in terms of staffing and technology resources.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee meeting held on February 28, 2018, were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

Dr. Magee requested a motion to adjourn to executive session for the purposes of negotiations with the Shrewsbury Paraprofessionals Association, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body, as well as to review and approve previous executive session minutes, and to reconvene to open session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, on a roll call vote: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 8:56 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:39 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; and Ms. Canzano, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. SAC Agenda
2. Employee Travel Policy 935 Draft
3. Harassment Policy Draft
4. Existing Policy 316
5. Extended School Care Report
6. Extended School Care Slides
7. Superintendent's Recommendations on FY19 Fees Memo
8. FY18 Budget Update
9. Beal Committee Reuse Letter
10. Superintendent's Response to Letter from Beal Reuse Committee
11. Keeping Public Informed/Dashboard Slides
12. Set(s) of Minutes as Referenced Above