

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, December 16, 2020**

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan; Mr. Jason Palitsch; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Ms. Barb Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.  
Not present: Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary.

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this meeting was not open to physical attendance by the public, but was broadcast live on SELCO Channels 29 & 329 and streamed live on the Shrewsbury Media Connection website. A complete audio/visual recording of this meeting is available on the Shrewsbury Public Schools website.

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 5:33 pm.

**I. Public Participation**

None.

**II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports**

None.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer commended the Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Performing Arts Department on the Fall Play *Our Place*, which was produced with students wearing masks and practicing social distancing, and shared via video for viewing. Dr. Sawyer reported that over 130 individuals applied for the SHS Mascot ad hoc study group and that the number of total participant slots had been expanded to 32 in light of the volume and quality of the applicants and to reflect a diversity of backgrounds.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

**A. Update on Reopening of the 2020-2021 School Year: Report**

Dr. Sawyer presented a summary of key messages, the current COVID-19 case count in the district, and current state and local public health data; cited medical literature focused on in-school transmission risk; noted updated state guidance on decision-making relative to changing educational programs; discussed maintaining stability and supporting students in the current environment; and provided the rationale for implementing a traditional snow day/school cancellation the following day.

In response to questions from the Committee, Dr. Sawyer provided additional information on the district's planned response to one case of possible in-school COVID-19 transmission, and on a recent vote by the MA Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) relative to the required amount of time and learning for students in hybrid and remote educational programs.

### **B. Update on Beal School Construction Project: Report**

Mr. Collins introduced Ms. Kathryn Crockett, President, LPA/A, and Mr. Walter Hartley, Project Manager, PMA Associates, who attended the meeting remotely via video. In her update Ms. Crockett advised that the project was currently 60% complete, on target for substantial completion by May 2021, and on target for occupancy by Fall 2021; noted orders for furniture had been issued; and discussed work by SHS students and Dr. Magee on a history wall planned for the school. Ms. Crockett also provided narration for a drone flyover video of the site (filmed December 13, 2020) presented to the Committee, and answered questions regarding the community and butterfly gardens planned for the site. Committee members acknowledged that good progress was being made on the project.

### **C. Update on Elementary Redistricting Project: Report**

Mr. Collins introduced Ms. Kate Hickey, Principal in Charge, AppGeo; Ms. Priya Sankalia, Project Manager, AppGeo; and Mr. Bob Scardamalia, President, RLS Demographics, who attended the meeting remotely via video. Ms. Sankalia described the composition of the Redistricting Team; detailed the project process and workflow; addressed some of the factors addressing redistricting (e.g., development potential); presented current district student distribution by race/ethnicity, income, special education services, and English Learning; and noted next steps in the timeline. Mr. Collins addressed the project goals and objectives; the rationale for the redistricting plan; and the School Committee's guiding principles for redistricting. Mr. Scardamalia provided data on projected enrollment and demographics, detailing the use of historical enrollment data with fertility and migration analyses. Noting overall racial diversity in town, but a concentration of free/reduced lunch student enrollment in the Calvin Coolidge School district, Mr. Collins advised that the Redistricting Team aspires to even out those factors to the extent possible in the process. Ms. Fryc reiterated upcoming important dates in the project timeline.

### **V. Curriculum**

None.

### **VI. Policy**

None.

### **VII. Finance & Operations**

#### **A. Recommendation for 1:1 iPad Deployment for Grades K-4: Report**

Director of Information Technology Brian L'Heureux provided background information on 1:1 iPad access for SPS students, shared feedback from teachers on increased access, and discussed screen time considerations prior to recommending that the district continue to provide 1:1 access to iPads for grades K-4 students going forward, and detailing the associated financial implications. Committee members expressed support for the recommendation. Dr. Sawyer and Ms. Clouter noted that greater access to technology facilitated increased proficiency among younger students, and more equitable access to digital resources for all students.

### **VIII. Old Business**

None.

### **IX. New Business**

None.

## **X. Approval of Minutes**

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on December 2, 2020 were accepted as distributed.

## **XI. Executive Session**

Ms. Fryc requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session:

a) for the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) “[t]o comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements” (“Purpose 7”), Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(f), (g) – for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes, and

b) for the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares” (“Purpose 3”) - the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A. On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, on a roll call vote: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 7:31 pm.

## **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. 2020-21 School Year Reopening Update Slide Presentation
2. Elementary Redistricting Project Update Slide Presentation
3. Grades K-4 iPad Deployment Recommendation Report
4. Grades K-4 iPad Deployment Recommendation Slide Presentation
5. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above