

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, December 18, 2019**

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson; Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan; Mr. Jason Palitsch; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being; Ms. Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Ms. Barb Malone, Executive 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.

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:01 pm.

**I. Public Participation**

None.

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

Dr. Magee reported that Mr. Wensky recently completed a new episode of School Talk - *Turf Talk* - which is available for viewing on local cable channels or YouTube.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer reported that students of John Aloisi, Social Studies Teacher, Shrewsbury High School (SHS), were featured on local cable program *Ask the Manager* in an episode about the ongoing project at Edgemere Crossing in Shrewsbury.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

**A. Unit B of Shrewsbury Education Association Contract: Vote**

Ms. Malone noted that contract negotiations with the Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit B had concluded, that Unit B members voted to approve the changes on December 10, 2019, and described changes in the new contract. Mr. Wensky thanked all participants in the process; Dr. Magee added that it was a fair contract and more accurately recognizes the number of days that the Athletic Director had been working. Ms. Fryc noted that while Town Manager Kevin Mizikar was entitled to a vote, he was unable to attend the meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to ratify the contract with the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B per the terms outlined in the enclosed Memorandum of Agreement.

### **B. Mindfulness Partnership at Shrewsbury High School: Report**

Dr. Jane Lizotte; Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, Shrewsbury High School (SHS); Mr. Marc Waxman, Co-Founder, Mindfulness Director Initiative (MDI); and Mr. James Frank, Mindfulness Director, SHS, gave an update on the partnership between SHS and MDI since September 2019. Dr. Lizotte described the initial goal of the partnership and its relevance to the Strategic Goals and Priorities of Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS). Mr. Bazydlo provided an overview of activities enabled through the partnership. Mr. Waxman presented the results of a survey on the recently conducted 8-week mindfulness session that included participant (students, staff, and parents) demographics, attendance, satisfaction, interest in future participation, likelihood of recommending the program to others, and extracurriculars (students only). Mr. Frank presented information on participant expectations, program helpfulness, and overall themes of the program, and shared anecdotes from participants. Mr. Bazydlo, Mr. Waxman, and Mr. Frank addressed how the survey was administered and plans for future assessments, and provided data on student interest collected after the entire school had an opportunity to view a brief (10-15 minute) video advisory about the program.

The Committee noted the importance of: articulating the value of the program - in terms of time and budget resources - to the community; looking at a group of control participants; offering participants the opportunity to self-report other support they are receiving; increasing the sample size and the number of participants surveyed for feedback; and being able to provide data on long-lasting positive effects from participation. Presenters noted in response that more students wanted to participate than were able to because of scheduling difficulties, that not all participants chose to respond to the assessment survey, and that two groups from the Girls Track Team (approximately 20 of 100 team members) would be participating during their practice times starting after the vacation break (which would provide data on stressors relative to athletics and also provide a “control” group). Dr. Sawyer noted that the data from this innovative practice relative to the Strategic Priorities was important, and acknowledged positive interactions with the MDI team.

### **V. Curriculum**

#### **A. Social & Emotional Learning Implementation Plan: Report**

Ms. Belsito, Ms. Clouter, and Dr. Lizotte gave the report. Ms. Clouter noted the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Implementation Plan was grounded in the District’s Strategic Goals and supported by state frameworks, and described four general SEL approaches. Ms. Belsito discussed the district and building based steering committees, and presented an implementation overview and timeline. Dr. Lizotte presented information on SEL programming and approaches by level: preschool through grade 4, middle school, and high school.

In response to questions from the Committee, presenters provided additional information on free-standing explicit lessons, involving and communicating with parents, and potential barriers to full implementation. Dr. Sawyer noted the importance and cohesive nature of the work, opportunities for its measurement through the report card at the middle school level, its relevance to the District’s Strategic Priorities, and its alignment with state frameworks.

## **VI. Policy**

None.

## **VII. Finance & Operations**

### **A. Foster Child Transportation State Reimbursement Program: Discussion**

In his report, Mr. Collins provided an introduction to the program with background information; described two example situations; noted eligibility requirements; detailed recent historical costs and estimated reimbursement; noted next steps, and answered clarifying questions from the Committee. Dr. Sawyer noted that the Committee might be asked to conduct a vote of affirmation at a future meeting if the program will appear as a warrant article at the next Annual Town Meeting.

### **B. Preschool Tuition Rates and Program Offerings**

Mr. Collins and Ms. Lisa Robinson, Principal, Parker Road Preschool, gave the report, with Mr. Collins noting it was being presented earlier than in previous years so that the Committee would be able to vote on recommended changes in early January 2020. Ms. Robinson gave an overview of the preschool program that included student demographics, program locations, and current session information. Mr. Collins provided detailed information on enrollment history; noting lower recent enrollment numbers, Ms. Robinson described recommended changes for FY21 that were informed in part by parent demand for more four and five day/week programs. Mr. Collins presented tuition comparisons for preschool programs in DART (District Analysis and Review Tools) and neighbor districts, and recommended a 3% tuition increase for FY21. Ms. Robinson provided information on late fees and financial assistance available to families.

In response to questions from the Committee, the presenters provided additional information on the rationale for a 3% tuition increase (labor costs are increasing and the district has found that regular, incremental fee increases are more palatable to families than infrequent, large increases) and the methodology utilized for determining financial assistance. Dr. Sawyer noted that he supports the changes, and that documents from the meeting would be posted for public viewing and comment in advance of a vote by the Committee on January 8, 2020.

## **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 4, 2019 were accepted as distributed.

## **XI. Executive Session**

None.

## **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. SEA Unit B Contract Memo
2. SEA Unit B Salary Table
3. SEA Unit B MOA
4. Mindfulness Partnership Memo
5. Mindfulness Partnership Slide Presentation
6. SEL Implementation Plan Report
7. SEL Implementation Plan Slide Presentation
8. Foster Child Transportation Reimbursement MOU
9. Foster Child Transportation Report Slide Presentation
10. Preschool Tuition/Programs Report Slide Presentation
11. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above