



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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April 1, 2020

To: School Committee

From: Joe Sawyer

Re: Proposed policy for naming acting superintendent for short-term leaves

Dear School Committee:

The School Committee does not currently have an explicit policy regarding which administrator would assume the responsibilities of Superintendent of Schools should the Superintendent be unable to fulfill the duties of the office for a limited period of time. This has been handled informally in the past for periods of time when the Superintendent has been on vacation, and even in those cases the Superintendent could be available if an emergency situation arose.

Given the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, I recommend that the School Committee adopt the following policy in order to establish which school administrators would become Acting Superintendent should the Superintendent, or a successor Acting Superintendent, become unable to work. Because time is of the essence, and because I believe that this policy can be enacted responsibly without the benefit of potential public feedback, I also recommend that the School Committee waive the customary second reading and vote to put this policy into effect at your April 1 meeting.

The suggested policy is as follows:

Proposed Policy #243: Establishment of an Acting Superintendent

When the Superintendent of Schools is unable or unavailable to fulfill his or her duties due to illness, family illness, bereavement, vacation, or other short-term absence, an Acting Superintendent of Schools shall be named according to the following guidelines:

- 1) The naming of an Acting Superintendent will not be necessary if an anticipated, short-term absence of the Superintendent will last three or fewer work days, with the understanding that Assistant Superintendents will support school district operations as necessary during those days.
- 2) For anticipated short-term absences greater than three work days and no more than ten work days, where the Superintendent will be unavailable or unable to fulfill his or her duties, the Superintendent shall name a qualified, district-level administrator to serve as Acting Superintendent during his or her absence. In such cases, the Superintendent will notify the School Committee, district-level administrators, and principals once the determination is made. Regardless of the Superintendent's action in such cases, the School Committee may choose to convene and vote to appoint a qualified individual of its choice as the Acting Superintendent.
- 3) If an anticipated absence of the Superintendent is expected to last for more than ten work days, or for any unanticipated absence that is likely to last beyond three work days, the School Committee will convene as soon as possible, in an emergency session if necessary, in order to appoint a qualified individual to serve as Acting Superintendent.
- 4) The Acting Superintendent is to use the authority of the Office of the Superintendent in order to act in the case of an emergency, or in the case of an urgent issue that requires action and cannot wait for the return of the Superintendent of Schools. The Acting Superintendent would also be responsible for ensuring the effective and efficient day-to-day operations of the school district during the Superintendent's short-term absence. The Acting Superintendent shall not take action on issues that can reasonably be postponed or delayed until the return of the Superintendent.

- 5) If it becomes apparent that the Superintendent's absence will extend beyond a point in time where the School Committee determines that it is necessary to vest a replacement with the full authority of the role of Superintendent, the School Committee may choose to convene and vote to appoint an Interim Superintendent, who would assume the full responsibilities of the role of Superintendent until such time as the Superintendent returns to work or the Interim Superintendent position otherwise becomes unnecessary.

This policy will be reviewed within five years of its enactment.