



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.
Superintendent

April 6, 2022

To: School Committee
From: Joe Sawyer
Re: Fiscal Year 2023 Updated Recommendation

This recommendation is made for your consideration at your budget workshop this evening.

As you know, the bottom-line, town-appropriated budget for FY23 is a 4.75% increase over the current fiscal year, which represents a \$3,596,803 increase for a total of \$79,318,971. This is in alignment with the School Committee's agreement with the Board of Selectmen.

Since my initial recommendation was filed in February, the fiscal picture for next year has evolved, as it always does as projections are sharpened based on more updated information. While the bottom line remains the same, the subtotals of funds in some of the different categories have been adjusted, as illustrated in the enclosed summary sheet. These shifts can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The amount allocated for vocational technical tuition has been reduced based on updated enrollment projections (\$124,879 reduction)
- 2) The amount of appropriated funds for out-of-district special education placements has increased based on updated placement information (\$59,879 increase)
- 3) Some special education contracted services have been shifted to the federal special education grant as a way to leverage those grant funds (\$43,308 reduction)
- 4) Funds for two elementary classroom sections at Floral Street that are not necessary due to enrollment/class size projections have been removed from the personnel budget; there are two retirements at Floral Street so this can be achieved through attrition. It is important to note that we are also closely monitoring enrollment for next year and reviewing where sections might need to be reassigned in order to balance class sizes appropriately (see accompanying class section document; \$148,382 reduction)

The net effect of these updates is that the amount of funding available for new investments has increased from \$878,310 to \$1,135,000. My recommendations for the use of these funds can be found in the table that accompanies this memo. They are mostly the same as my recommendations from February, with a heavy focus on meeting

mandates special education requirements and building capacity to address student mental health and well-being, but with the following adjustments:

- 1) The net cost of the preschool teacher and preschool paraprofessional positions to the appropriated budget is reduced, as we have now included the offset of family-paid tuition funds that will help support those positions
- 2) I have removed the recommendation for the Instructional Coach for Social Emotional Learning. There is no question that advancing our district's strategic priorities for social and emotional learning is important, and there has been progress made this year at the elementary level with elementary building-based teams and an elementary-level steering committee, working to develop curriculum and lessons aligned with social and emotional learning standards. This work will need to evolve more in the next school year in order to determine more specifically what type of personnel support might be needed. Dr. Lizotte's return to full-time work in the role of Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Well-Being will be helpful in advancing this work, as will the addition of the Director of Clinical Counseling and Mental Health Services if that position is added, as the adjustment counselors have and will continue to play an important role in this work (and this new position will supervise adjustment counselors).
- 3) I have changed the recommendation for adding middle school allied arts teachers from 2.0 to 3.0 full-time equivalent positions. This will enable us to make more significant strides in adding back allied arts programming at both Sherwood and Oak after losing positions there over the recent difficult budget cycles. Areas of focus for deploying these positions may include restoring the drama program at Oak, establishing a science/technology/engineering/math (STEM) experience at Sherwood to complement the Design Lab at Oak, and potentially moving the physical education program to a year-long experience at Sherwood as it was many years ago.

Finally, in response to questions raised regarding how to best support students who will be attending Shrewsbury High School who otherwise would have been able to attend vocational technical high school, we believe it is important to look at ways in which we can further advance our partnerships with businesses and higher education to provide opportunities for job shadowing, internships, and potentially dual-enrollment job skills programs. Building partnerships like these is a key part of Dr. Lizotte's job responsibilities, and it is good that she will be returning to the role full time this coming year so that we have capacity to seek and develop these partnerships. We will also be sure to emphasize the courses currently at SHS that provide more hands-on experiences, such as the various Project Lead the Way engineering and science courses, web programming and cybersecurity, etc. While we do not have the space or resources to replicate true vocational technical programming, I believe we can develop opportunities that connect students who would have opted for Assabet in ways beyond the traditional SHS academic experience.