



**School Committee
Meeting Book**

**May 13, 2020
7:00 pm**

**Town Hall -100 Maple Avenue
Selectmen's Meeting Room**



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

AGENDA

**May 13, 2020 7:00pm
Remote Meeting**

THIS MEETING IS NOT OPEN TO PHYSICAL PARTICIPATION BY THE PUBLIC. TOWN HALL IS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC. IF AN ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF REMOTE PARTICIPATION FOR THE PUBLIC BECOMES AVAILABLE WE WILL PUBLISH THAT INFORMATION SEPARATELY.

On March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an Executive Order modifying certain requirements of the Open Meeting Law, to enable public bodies to carry out their responsibilities while adhering to public health recommendations regarding social distancing.

The Executive Order relieves public bodies from the requirement in the Open Meeting Law that meetings be conducted in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, provided that the public body makes provision to ensure public access to the deliberations of the public body through adequate, alternative means. "Adequate, alternative means" may include, without limitation, providing public access through telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body in real time. A municipal public body that for reasons of economic hardship and despite best efforts is unable to provide alternative means of public access in real time may instead post on its municipal website a full and complete transcript, recording, or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as practicable afterwards.

In addition, all members of a public body may participate in a meeting remotely; the Open Meeting Law's requirement that a quorum of the body and the chair be physically present at the meeting location is suspended.

All other provisions of the Open Meeting Law, such as the requirements regarding posting notice of meetings and creating and maintaining accurate meeting minutes, as well as the limited, enumerated purposes for holding an executive session, remain in effect.

Items

Suggested time allotments

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| I. | Public Participation | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">7:00 – 7:10</div> |
| II. | Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports | |
| III. | Superintendent's Report | |
| IV. | Time Scheduled Appointments: | |
| | A. Update Regarding the School District's Response to the COVID-19 School Closure: Report | 7:10 – 7:25 |
| | B. Continuation of Partnership with Mindfulness Director Institute: Vote | 7:25 – 7:45 |
| V. | Curriculum | |
| | A. Survey Feedback on Remote Learning Program During School Closure: Report | 7:45 – 8:15 |
| VI. | Policy | |
| | A. Resolution Regarding Federal Funding for Public Education to Address Financial Impact of the Pandemic | 8:15 – 8:25 |



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

- VII. Finance & Operations
- A. Acceptance of Grant Funding for Oak Middle School Design Lab: Vote 8:25 – 8:30
 - B. Refunds or Credits for Fiscal Year 2020 Fees & Tuitions: Vote 8:30 – 8:50
 - C. Pay Continuity for Food Service Department Workers: Vote 8:50 – 9:00
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- X. Approval of Minutes 9:00 – 9:05
- XI. Executive Session 9:05 - 9:30
- A. For the purpose of negotiations with some or all of the following:
the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, the Shrewsbury Cafeteria Workers, and/or non-represented staff.
 - B. For the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes.
- XII. Adjournment 9:30

Next regular meeting: TBD



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: I. Public Participation

MEETING DATE: 5/13/20

SPECIFIC STATEMENT OR QUESTION:

Will the School Committee hear thoughts and ideas from the public regarding the operations and the programs of the school system?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Copies of the policy and procedure for Public Participation are available to the public at each School Committee meeting.

ITEM NO: II. Chairperson's Report/Members' Reports

SPECIFIC STATEMENT OR QUESTION:

Will the School Committee hear a report from the Chairperson of the School Committee and other members of the School Committee who may wish to comment on school affairs?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This agenda item provides an opportunity for the Chairperson and members of the Shrewsbury School Committee to comment on school affairs that are of interest to the community.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

School Committee Members
Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson
Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson
Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary
Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Committee Member
Mr. Jason Palitsch, Committee Member

ITEM NO: III. Superintendent's Report

SPECIFIC STATEMENT OR QUESTION:

Will the School Committee hear a report from Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This agenda item allows the Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools to comment informally on the programs and activities of the school system.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

ACTION RECOMMENDED FOR ITEMS I, II, & III:

That the School Committee accept the report and take such action as it deems in the best interest of the school system.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:** MEETING DATE: **5/13/20**
**A. Update Regarding the School District's Response to the COVID-19 School
Closure: Report**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Dr. Sawyer and other district administrators will provide an update on how the school district's response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic school closure has evolved during the past week.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee hear the report and take such action as it deems in the best interest of the school system.

MEMBERS & STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools
Other district administrators as needed



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: IV. Time Scheduled Appointments: **MEETING DATE: 5/13/20**
B. Continuation of Partnership with Mindfulness Director Institute: Vote

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Dr. Lizotte, Mr. Bazydlo, and Ms.Egan will provide an update regarding the partnership between the Mindfulness Director Initiative (MDI) and the Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) that includes information on the diverse mindfulness opportunities made available to interested parties since their last report to the Committee in mid-December, and will request that the Committee approve the continuation of this partnership during the 2020-2021 school year. A memo from Dr. Lizotte on the Mindfulness Director Initiative (MDI) and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for continuing this partnership next year are enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee vote to approve the continued partnership between the Mindfulness Director Initiative (MDI) and the Shrewsbury Public Schools for the 2020-2021 school year per the terms of the enclosed Memorandum of Agreement.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being
Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Shrewsbury High School Principal
Ms. Maura Egan, Grade 8 ELA Teacher at Oak Middle School



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Jane O. Lizotte, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Community Partnerships & Well-Being

May 11, 2020

Dear Members of the Shrewsbury School Committee,

The purpose of this memo is to provide you with an update regarding the partnership between the Mindfulness Director Initiative (MDI) and the Shrewsbury Public Schools, and a request that you approve to continue this partnership during the 2020-21 school year. The information contained herein is intended to give an overview of the 2019-20 school year. I look forward to presenting this and additional information to you and the Shrewsbury community at the upcoming School Committee meeting on Wednesday, May 13th. At that time, I will be joined by Mr. Todd Bazydlo, SHS Principal, and Ms. Maura Egan, Grade 8 ELA teacher at Oak Middle School, both of whom have been extensively involved with this innovative effort.

Background

At the School Committee meetings on 9/4/19 and 12/18/19, you listened to presentations by Mr. Todd Bazydlo, SHS Principal, Mr. Marc Waxman, Co-founder of the Mindfulness Director Initiative (MDI), Mr. James Frank, Mindfulness Director, and me. The reports outlined the programming in which we actively engaged with MDI from September through December, 2019. This important work has continued, despite the recent COVID pandemic that has forced school closure and commenced remote learning. From our last report to you in mid-December through today, interested students, staff, parents and community members have participated in diverse mindfulness opportunities, including weekly mindfulness sessions and book study groups focusing on mindfulness and racial justice.

Action Steps Completed:

Since the update provided to the School Committee in December, our partnership with MDI has productively continued in the following ways:

- Three 8-week *Introduction to Mindfulness* courses for SPS staff were facilitated by MDI's Executive Director, Marc Waxman. 30 staff from across the district participated regularly. Participants learned the basics of mindfulness meditation, with the goal of reducing stress, manage emotions, and gain greater control over thoughts and actions.
- Three 8-week *Introduction to Mindfulness* courses were attended by 25 parents. Ruth Whitall facilitated each of these sessions. Ruth received extensive teacher training at both the Center for Mindfulness (UMass Medical School) and the University of California at San Diego, Mindfulness-Based Training Institute. She has been teaching Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy since 2013. As a licensed clinical social worker, Ruth has worked with adults in mental health for over 30 years. She is the parent of two children who were educated in the Shrewsbury Public Schools.

- Members of the SHS Girls Track Team met weekly over the course of eight weeks with Marc Waxman to integrate mindfulness into their athletic, home, and school routines. The goal of the sessions aimed to support the athletes by practicing self-awareness, with the goal of finding clarity and self-connection.
- Since the changes related to the Covid-19 pandemic, virtual mindfulness supports have been offered, including:
 - An after school 7-week book study group entitled, *Mindfulness and Racial Justice*, was facilitated by Marc Waxman, with the support of Ms. Maura Egan. This course focused on the book The Inner Work of Racial Justice and was an appropriate continuation of the book studies focused on the texts *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo and How to be an Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi. Even though the course has ended, the group participating in this course has decided to continue to meet until the end of the school year to explore mindfulness more deeply.
 - Three 8-week *Introduction to Mindfulness* courses for SPS staff and parents were facilitated Marc. 20 people participated. This course was so popular with participants that it has been extended by another 4 weeks to continue until the end of the school year.
 - A 5-week *Introduction to Mindfulness* course will start on May 13 for 30 participants who have expressed recent interest in mindfulness. Marc will be joined by Jennifer Maddox in offering this class in two sections to allow for strong community building.

Students participated in Mindful Sports Performance Enhancement (MSPE). MSPE is a cutting-edge mental training program designed for athletes. Drawing on research from the sport sciences, psychology, and neurology, it provides specific guidance in building mindfulness skills essential to consistent, optimal performance. In addition to learning the connection between mindfulness and athletics, participants found mindfulness helpful at school and home.

My colleagues and I look forward to sharing an update with you on Wednesday, and seek your approval for continued programming for the 2020-21 school year, as we endeavor to engage in the next phase of planning. Below are testimonials provided by staff and students regarding mindfulness opportunities that took place between early January and mid-March.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Jane O. Lizotte

Testimonials from current *Introduction to Mindfulness* participants:

- “I have truly benefited from your Wednesday night class with fellow adults from the Shrewsbury community. With the school closure, and the challenges of teaching from home, while taking care of my two little children (ages 9 and 2), and doing all the other activities that are part of motherhood, your class has been a welcome opportunity to help me balance my life. In that moment, I feel connected, and my stress is greatly minimized. This hour is something that I appreciate deeply, and it provides me with perspective and tools to help me navigate my life. I am excited to meet tomorrow night!”
- “I joined this class on a whim and I am so glad that I did! Marc is an excellent teacher and I am grateful for the opportunity to develop my mindfulness practice.”

- “This has been an amazing class and It came at the best possible time. It has given me some resources and strategies to cope when things are unsettled now and will be helpful in the future. The participants have been welcoming and I really appreciate the judge-free zone!”
- “Thank you, Marc, for your caring and expertise in this guided meditation class. I am so grateful that it has been made available, free tuition, remotely, and at this historically needy time. The Wednesday night course has been helpful for all that I am doing personally and professionally. I am grateful to Marc and the class!”
- “I feel that the group has become cohesive and that Marc engages the group with mindfulness techniques that help navigate us during this stressful time that we are enduring. I have enjoyed it tremendously and look forward to the meetings.”
- “This is an amazing service you are providing, I hope it continues in some way that works for everyone. Marc is fantastic; he is a very real, genuine, intelligent, thoughtful individual. It's like he is made to teach this stuff, I hope it continues. Thank you.”
- “This has been a wonderful beginning to my personal practice and am open to participating in mindfulness again in the fall. Thank you!”

Student testimonials from members of the SHS Girls Track Team re: *Mindful Sports Performance Enhancement* (MSPE) sessions:

- "For me, mindfulness has really let me see a change in my racing. I get more aware about my body. For example, when racing the mile I started to anchor my mind towards my shoulders, and once I began to start mindfully running I started to relax my mind and shoulders and pick up the pace even more."
- "Mindfulness for me has definitely been a wonderful experience that has taught me so much about how to really feel and experience life as it happens. It taught me how to not live a life of repeated habit and autopilot."
- "Mindfulness has taught me ways to destress before my races. My performance has been better sometimes. It has taught me to live more in the moment. Taught me to listen to people more."
- "Learned to take time to think about things as I'm doing them and not to rush through my actions. Taking time to be in the moment helped me to relax and perform better in track. I practice the deep breathing when I'm anxious. "
- "Very rewarding! I use it not only in track but also for school - I did it before all my midterms. Has helped me stop worrying about things I don't have control over."



Mindfulness Director Initiative

Memorandum of Agreement

The Mindfulness Director Initiative at Shrewsbury High School

The Mindfulness Director Initiative (MDI) is a non-profit corporation registered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

MDI makes the transformative power of mindfulness a reality for school communities by facilitating the comprehensive integration of mindfulness into schools through the Mindfulness Director Model. We will partner with the Shrewsbury Public Schools [the District] to provide a highly qualified Mindfulness Director and then provide implementation support that leads to a thriving culture of mindfulness at Shrewsbury High School.

The Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Wellbeing is the primary contact between MDI and the District. She will provide overall supervision of this program and be the primary liaison between the District and MDI.

Commitments and Expectations of MDI

- MDI shall provide a full-time [five days per week] Director to be physically located at Shrewsbury High School for every week that school is in session. Such person shall possess an appropriate level of training in mindfulness, pertinent certifications to educate others on the topic of mindfulness, and sufficient experience to be successful in this role. All candidates proposed to work in this role at Shrewsbury High School are subject to approval by the District.

The MDI Director shall be an independent contractor to the District and not an employee but still required to pass a District-administered CORI test and also present proof of screening through the Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification System [SAFIS] with results satisfactory to the District. MDI is responsible for all MDI staff payroll, benefits, insurances, travel costs, business expense reimbursements, or other related costs for this position. No employee, agent or representative of MDI shall be entitled to receive any benefits of employment with the District, including without limitation salary, overtime, vacation pay, holiday pay, sick leave, health insurance, life insurance, pension or deferred compensation.

- The MDI Director will take direction from the Shrewsbury High School Principal to meet with and educate students, staff, and parents on the topic of mindfulness at the times practical and convenient for these groups. Meetings and mindfulness sessions will take place on a flexible schedule during the daytime, after school, and in the evening to best meet the schedules of these various constituent groups.
- The MDI Director will comply with all school rules, regulations and the expectations for conduct on the same terms as employees of Shrewsbury High School. The MDI Director shall not provide his/her personal cellphone number to students nor engage in texting, instant-messaging, nor other social media vehicles that provide private one-to-one communications with students.
- MDI and its staff will protect student information and maintain student confidentiality at all times. MDI must comply with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- MDI administration shall initiate a “status check-up” with the Shrewsbury High School Principal at least every other month to ensure a smooth implementation of the program. While on site meetings are preferred, the two parties may agree that telephone check-ins will be sufficient.

Commitments and Expectations of Shrewsbury Public Schools

The District shall support the MDI Director in a way that leads to successful outcomes for mindfulness initiatives. To coordinate classroom-based instruction, activities, or high school events, the Shrewsbury High School Principal will be the MDI Director's first contact. To effectively carry out the support functions, the principal may delegate certain tasks or responsibilities of support to his other staff members.

- Adequate space will be provided for the MDI Director to conduct classes, meetings, gatherings of students, staff, and parents.
- The District will provide the MDI Director with a telephone line and voicemail box.
- The District will provide an email address for the MDI Director to use to communicate with other staff, parents, and students and access to technology with the understanding the MDI Director is subject to the District’s Acceptable Use Policy.
- The District will partner with MDI to develop accurate and timely updates on the mindfulness initiatives to the Shrewsbury School Committee and community at large.

Funding and Estimated Value

The cost to fund a full-time MDI director is estimated at \$75,000 [salary plus benefits]. Shrewsbury Public Schools will fund \$7,500 of this amount to be paid in two equal installments [\$3,750 each]; one no later than September 30, 2020 and the second no later than March 30, 2021. MDI shall fund the remaining portion of the MDI Director and related program costs for the term of this agreement.

If the two parties agree to continue the program beyond this term, then there will be an expectation that the District begin to bear a gradually increasing amount of the costs with the goal of it being fully funded by the District in future years.

Term and Successor Agreement

The term of this partnership Agreement is July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. By April 1, 2021 both parties agree to either develop a successor agreement for continuation of the program, potentially with the same or different terms, or decide to end the program effective June 30, 2021.

Ownership Rights for Curriculum Materials, Equipment, Supplies

All curriculum materials, equipment, and supplies, provided by MDI or purchased using District funds will be sole property of the Town of Shrewsbury under the management of the School Department.

The District understands that in conjunction with MDI's work in the District, certain new curriculum programs or plans may be devised and that MDI retains the right to share these and/or other best practices with other clients.

Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement

Each party shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the other party, including affiliates and each of their respective officers, directors, shareholders, employees, representatives, agents, successors and assigns from and against all claims against one another or of third parties, and all associated losses, related to the Mindfulness Director Initiative [MDI], to the extent permitted by law.

Termination of Agreement

This Agreement may be terminated by either party provided that they give the other party ninety (90) days notice in writing.

Sole and Entire Agreement

This Memorandum of Agreement represents the entire and sole Agreement between both parties for the Mindfulness Director Initiative at Shrewsbury High School and all of its binding terms.

Miscellaneous

By entering into this Agreement, MDI certifies under the penalties of perjury, pursuant to M.G.L. c.62C, Section 49A(b), that it has complied with all laws of the Commonwealth relating to taxes, to reporting of employees and contractors, and to withholding and remitting child support.

MDI understands that the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law, Chapter 268A of the Massachusetts General Laws, applies to MDI with respect to the services/goods required to be provided under this Contract. MDI and its officers, employees, agents, subcontractors and affiliated agencies shall not participate in any activity which constitutes a violation of the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law or which creates an appearance of a violation of the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law.

By signing below, I certify that the governing board of my organization has approved this Agreement and the entirety of its terms and conditions.

Sandra Fryc, Chairperson
Shrewsbury School Committee

Marc Waxman, Co-Founder
Mindfulness Director Initiative



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: **V. Curriculum**

MEETING DATE: **5/13/20**

A. Survey Feedback on Remote Learning Program During School Closure: Report

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district is closed through the end of the academic year per mandate by Governor Baker for all schools in the state. Shrewsbury Public Schools have transitioned to a remote learning model and have created a plan to keep students connected to educators and classmates in ways that enhance their well-being and engage students in distance learning, and with a focus on providing supports to help all students learn at home. Remote Learning surveys (provided under separate cover) were conducted recently for SPS families on a school-by-school basis. Ms. Clouter has provided ongoing reports to the Committee regarding Remote Learning since school closure began, and tonight she will present information gleaned from the feedback from the Remote Learning surveys for families.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee hear the report and take such action as it deems in the best interest of the school system.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment



SPS Remote Learning

A Report on the Results of the Remote Learning Survey by Shrewsbury Families

Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
May 11, 2020

Overview

Peter Senge is a Senior Lecturer at the [Sloan School of Management](#) at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), co-founder of the Academy for Systems Change, and a local scholar of note. In his role as consultant, Senge stresses that collaboration matters more than competence, especially during times of rapid change. Further, he describes a learning organization as “a group of people who are continually enhancing their capabilities to create in the face of changing needs and conditions.” His work has never been more relevant. Indeed, his words describe well the conditions under which Shrewsbury educators are striving right now to craft and deliver remote learning plans.

In any organization, the key to continuous improvement is soliciting feedback from the people served by the system. This report is the first of two summary documents designed to assess and collect input from key stakeholder groups. The focus for this communication is the data collected from Shrewsbury families, namely the people best able to describe the impact of school closure on our students. Please refer to the reports shared with you earlier for specific details by school.

Results from this recent survey provide the district with timely information. In some ways the data confirms our approach to remote learning. The data also highlight areas where implementation was at odds with intention. Importantly, we’ll need to reflect together with our educators before making significant adjustments to our plans. It should be noted that most of our educators have already adjusted their practice to serve students better. Any action we take should follow a thoughtful and collaborative

discussion with educators, stakeholders best able to assess the impact of remote learning on families.

Survey Structure

In an email on April 30th, Dr. Sawyer sent a message to all members of the parent community in the hope of encouraging wide participation. At all grades, the survey used followed a similar structure. Primarily respondents selected from a continuum of descriptors to answer ten questions, with the option to share insights, questions and concerns in Comment boxes. In this way, the survey elicited both quantitative and qualitative data. However, survey questions differed by grade span and level. For example, the survey designed for families with students in Grades Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 4 asked questions about technology platforms. This is because it's helpful to know which platforms families are finding most useful to connect home and school for our youngest learners. As you know, in grades 5-12, technology platforms were already in use at the time of closure. However, questions on the survey designed for parents with older learners were helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of these tools when deployed remotely. For this reason an analysis of the survey results is best done by level.

Participation Rates

Online survey response rates vary in response to a number of considerations. In general, survey response rates in the 5% to 30% range are expected, with responses for school surveys being higher typically. In both the private and public sector, response rates are driven by high levels of motivation to participate and/or strong feelings in general.

Here are the response rates for the Parent Survey on Remote Learning in Shrewsbury:

School	Total Enrollment	Number of Respondents*	Response Rate
Parker Road	246	88	36%
Beal Early Childhood Center	313	89	28%
Coolidge Elementary	413	162	39%
Floral Street Elementary	719	288	40%
Paton Elementary	371	177	48%
Spring Street Elementary	350	156	45%

School	Total Enrollment	Number of Respondents*	Response Rate
Sherwood Middle	1,007	366	36%
Oak Middle	995	360	36%
Shrewsbury High School	1,907	566	30%

*Includes responses for multiple children in the same family

In reviewing the survey results, it's important to keep in mind that families of essential personnel, families suffering the effects of COVID-19 and/or families that are struggling in general during this time are least likely to have their thoughts and opinions represented in the findings. On the other hand, across the board there is ample data to consider as we prepare for the last six weeks of remote learning. This document is organized so that readers can look for general themes.

Each section will include:

- Key findings - both successes and opportunities,
- Common themes, and
- Recommended areas for further study

Parent Survey Findings from Preschool to Grade 4

Successes

One of the strengths of Shrewsbury's Remote Learning Plan at the Elementary level has to do with communication. On average, 86% of families described communication from the school as "just right." This is significant given the number of anecdotes district leaders heard about families feeling overwhelmed at the onset of the closure. The data also suggests that our educators are also communicating well with families.

Although remote learning is particularly hard for young children, most families felt that submitting assignments and receiving feedback from teachers is going well. On average, 82% of families surveyed described the process of submitting and receiving student work in positive terms. Related comments suggest that this is due to several factors, including:

- The quality of remote lessons



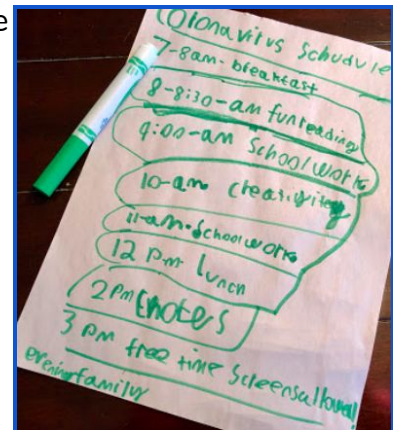
- A regularly scheduled release of lesson plans that enables families to organize ahead for the coming week,
- Consistent content across grade spans, and
- Clarity of expectations within the remote learning plans themselves.

Elementary principals, curriculum coordinators and most importantly, our content teams, should be justifiably proud of how well their collaboration is serving the district. Moreover, the plans created by these cross-school teams highlight a range of teaching content and delivery. In effect, students at this level have unique opportunities to learn from many different teachers within the current structure.

Opportunities

Despite the aforementioned positives, on average only slightly more than half of parents described remote learning plans as working ‘well’ or ‘very well’ for their child(ren). A closer look at data from other questions, together with individual comments, suggests that one reason remote learning isn’t going well is because students and families are missing in-person interactions, and that is to be expected. However, survey results also suggest we should attend to time parameters. Both the overall amount of time children spend on remote learning lessons and the amount of “live” interactions with the teacher are factors that resonate with the majority of respondents.

Specifically, on average only 53% of families surveyed chose ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’ when asked whether remote learning plans featured a sufficient amount of interaction on a weekly basis. This finding seems linked to the results depicting how connected students feel to their classroom at this time. Sadly, despite teachers’ best efforts to mitigate the distance, on average only 52% of parents selected ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly Agree’ when asked whether their child felt connected. District leaders and teachers alike feel that this data warrants a closer look at the building level.



Common Themes

Surveys are like snapshots: they capture a moment in time. With teachers empowered to make small changes, parent feedback should be seen on a continuum. Although the results indicate consistency, it’s also clear that the individual experiences students and families are having vary significantly.



Comments from parents raised concerns about the amount of time children are spending on their lessons, the amount of assistance children require to complete assignments, and the individual difficulties experienced by Shrewsbury families.

District leaders have identified these key findings for consideration:

- As mentioned previously, most parents surveyed at the Elementary level agree that remote learning plans feature the right amount of teacher interaction weekly. Between 10-15% of parents want 1-2 more interactive experiences a week, although respondents are split on whether the interaction should be “live” or taped.
- Families value teacher feedback, and one theme that emerged from the Comments section is that parents greatly value any opportunities their children have had to experience small group and/or individualized instruction.
- According to their parents, most children in Grades 1-4 are spending about two hours each day on remote learning, with smaller amounts of time reported for younger children. Comments reveal that the amount of time children need to complete their work varies however, and some parents are struggling to engage and/or motivate their child in a remote learning environment. Suggestions for the district included sharing resources with families on managing behavior at home as well as an appeal to include more project based lessons in future remote learning plans.

Parent Survey Findings from Grades 5-12

Successes

A review of the data from parents in higher grade spans reveals that like their Elementary neighbors, parents of older children are grateful for, and understanding of, the time educators invest in crafting remote learning plans. On average, 83% of parents

of children in Grades 5-12 stated that they were aware of and able to access their child's learning plans. Not surprisingly, ratings for access increase by level, with 89% of parents of Shrewsbury High School students affirming that their children can easily access their schedules and assignments.

Most parents also acknowledged the importance of teacher communication in sharing lessons. At the middle level, for example, the majority of families relied on a combination of teacher emails and checking in with the child on their iPad to see weekly assignments. Most importantly, on average, 83% of families surveyed selected 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' when asked if their child was easily able to access their remote lesson plans.



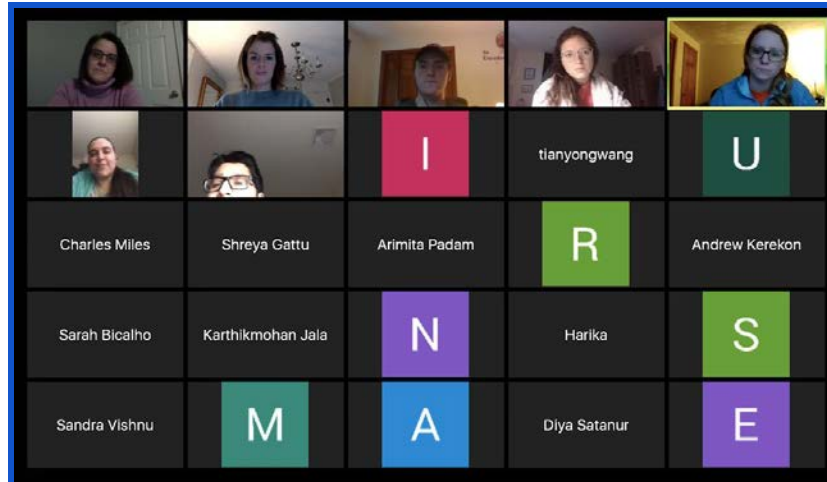
This finding suggests that older children are well able to navigate Schoology and/or the process of receiving and submitting work online. Indeed, the percentage rate for access increases from the middle to the high school level.

This graphic was created by Chinese teacher ChinHuei Yeh. This replica allows her students to practice speaking Mandarin online in a familiar setting.

Another positive revealed by the data has to do with student interactions with educators. Most respondents agreed that their child(ren)'s teachers are available to answer questions. This finding seems related to data on another question having to do with how regularly parents report their children are handing in assignments. On average, 82% of parents surveyed report that their child regularly completes and submits remote learning assignments.

Opportunities

Although survey results suggest that getting and submitting the work is not an issue, sometimes understanding the task is a challenge. Fewer respondents agreed that their children understood the expectations for remote learning assignments than were able to access their lessons, for example. On average 77% of parents surveyed at the middle level selected 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' when asked whether students understood the expectations for their assignments.



Similarly, parents questioned the effectiveness of the tools currently being used to facilitate “live” connections between students and teachers. In contrast to the high averages shared earlier, 66% of parents at the middle level found their teacher’s platform to be effective for live interactions. Given the wide availability of Schoology in Grades 5 and up, this finding suggests that parents are seeking technology tools that support “live” interactions with educators. At the same time, in the Comments section, some families expressed frustration about having to learn new technology skills to support their children from home.

As we consider various options, it’s affirming to see such a positive response to Zoom across levels, especially because this platform was new to most users at the onset of the pandemic. Our experience so far suggests that, with time and training, the platforms that we have put in place will support the needs of students and teachers. Going forward, evaluating the technology tools we are using and checking in with parents will be important.

Another surprising finding has to do with respondents' answers to the question about the amount of time in the weekly schedule for interactive “live” opportunities for child(ren) to connect with their teacher(s).



Answers on this survey item depict a continuum of hopes, with about 30% of parents feeling that the current weekly schedule is not enough, about 20% feeling it’s between not enough and just right, and about 50% feeling that it is ‘just right.’ A similar split is found when analyzing parent opinions about their child’s workload. As noted in the Common Themes section

below, about 30% of parents at the middle and high school level are seeking more assignments, and about 20% are seeking tasks with an increased level of difficulty. It is also true that most parents in each grade span feel that the load is appropriate for their child. Not surprisingly, reports of the amount of stress students are experiencing also varies within and across grades spans.

As part of the survey families of high school students were asked to rate how their child(ren) found the remote learning workload to be:

SHS	Not Stressful At All				Very Stressful
Gr 9	34%	23%	21%	13%	10%
Gr 10	36%	20%	24%	11%	8%
Gr 11	23%	18%	37%	16%	7%
Gr 12	27%	15%	31%	15%	12%
Overall	30%	19%	28%	14%	9%

Of concern is that parents are reporting high rates of stress for a significant portion of students at every grade level at the high school.

Common Themes

Parents of children in more than one grade span are in a unique position to offer feedback. Their comments highlight both “bright spots” of effective practice and areas of inconsistency across teams and/or levels. Across the board responses indicate a clear preference for streamlined, scheduled communication. In addition, numerous comments reflected a desire for adjustments to the timing of communications and the schedule for sending learning plans, and for staggering due dates for assigned work. Finally, parents with children at multiple levels used the Comments section to compare the components of Shrewsbury’s remote learning plan, noting different approaches to content delivery by grade span and/or team.

Several other common themes at the upper level are notable:

- As noted, nearly 30% of parents would like their child to experience more time online with educators. Survey comments suggest that opinions vary on what this

interaction should look like, with some parents finding posts helpful and others preferring remote meetings online.

- More than 60% of parents of children in Grades 5-12 agree that the difficulty of assignments is “just right.” However, it’s worth noting that approximately 30% of families are seeking more remote schoolwork for their children, and approximately 20% feel that their child’s work is “too easy.”
- Parents are also split regarding teacher feedback and/or support. Comments suggest that some parents are seeking more support, and that an equal number of families are feeling overwhelmed by the expectations that are already in place, especially for children with special needs.
- In the Comments section, parents reported that keeping children engaged and motivated with remote learning plans can be a challenge at the upper levels, too. Our children are missing all of the aspects of a school experience, including social interactions with classmates, sports and activities.

Summary

Overall, results for the survey suggest that our educators are doing a good job of remote teaching. Of course, the data depicts critical feedback as well. Some suggestions are spot on, and can even be seen to support the small changes educators have made in an effort to connect with more students and families. It should also be said that some comments advocate for action steps that are just not feasible or that convey unrealistic expectations.

Curiously, as we seek to use technology to empower learning from a distance, some parent statements reflect an outdated vision of teaching. Educators rarely lecture all day when school is in session, for example. For that reason merely replicating lectures online doesn’t square with what we know to be engaging learning. Finally, some statements strongly suggest that teachers should do more, and/or in rare cases, that not all educators consistently follow the established district guidelines. Many more comments express gratitude for educators that exceed expectations, including teachers that make the effort to contact students individually, specialists working to make remote



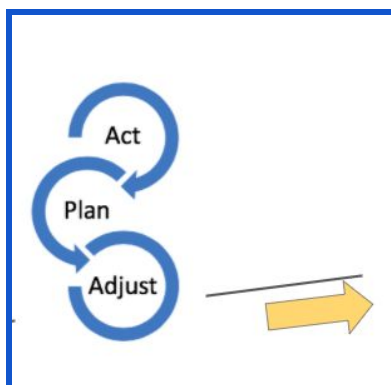
learning more accessible and service learning providers that structure meetings flexibly as needed.

A staff survey on remote learning is currently underway. Although results are still coming in, it's clear that our educators are seeking a more effective partnership with students and families, too. For example, although the vast majority of teachers feel supported, significant numbers of our educators are looking for increased student participation in the "live" interactions they schedule. Further, they echo parent comments about children that are seemingly unmotivated or unable to complete assigned work. Finally, across stakeholder groups it should be noted that some comments speak to feelings about the pandemic itself rather than the district's response to it. For example, Parker Road families state a clear preference for returning to school. Seniors and subject area teachers alike pine for the traditional celebrations May typically brings. Although we will look thoughtfully at survey results for guidance, we must rely on direction elsewhere for the things that are not in our control to change, much as we would like to address them.

Some questions worthy of further exploration include:

- How can we better support students with a range of learning needs?
- What is the right balance between synchronous ("live") learning experiences and independent asynchronous learning experiences, and what is the most effective mix for promoting learning?
- What tools best support working parents as they strive to support their children with remote learning, and how can we help children develop greater independence and focus?
- What amount of 'screen time' is appropriate for our youngest students and which alternatives will engage our students well?
- What models of professional development best support teachers in utilizing technology to further learning?
- How can we better support families with multiple children?

I look forward to discussing these findings in greater detail and hearing your thoughts on these questions in the upcoming presentation.



In closing, it's fitting to acknowledge that the crisis has presented opportunities as well as challenges. W. Edwards Deming, American engineer and statistician, developed a continuous quality improvement model

consisting of a sequence of four key stages: Plan, Do, Study, and Act. As we figure out what translates best in this new remote environment, every educator in the nation is experiencing what feels like several cycles. Much like other districts across the commonwealth, we will emerge from this stronger for having collaborated so well within and outside our school communities. No doubt there are some aspects of remote learning that we have not gotten right- yet. For example, we will have to address how to better engage with families whose first language is not English, and provide better access to learning supports for those in need. We are a learning organization, and we are poised to do that work well.



Our mission statement reads, *The Shrewsbury Public Schools, in partnership with the community, will provide students with the skills and knowledge for the 21st century, an appreciation of our democratic tradition, and the desire to continue to learn throughout life.* Our community is being tested in myriad ways by the pandemic. Remote learning is just one part of a larger story. We are fortunate to have sufficient time and talent to address any challenges we may encounter. We must also thoughtfully consider feedback from all parts of the organization in order to gain a complete perspective of how well the

partnership is working, and how much more the system can bear in these last weeks of school.

A school is a complex system in the best of times. A school system under stress looks and acts differently, and it's important to acknowledge that. While we could consider any number of recommendations suggested on the survey, we would be wise to consider our core values as we contemplate decisions. As we anticipate the end of this extraordinary year and focus on the next, time invested in thoughtful engagement with all stakeholders is time well spent.



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: **VI. Policy**

MEETING DATE: **5/13/20**

A. Resolution Regarding Federal Funding for Public Education to Address Financial Impact of the Pandemic

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The COVID-19 Pandemic is having a profound impact on the school district's finances and operations for the current academic year and for Fiscal Year 2020-2021, as has been detailed in regular updates to the Committee. Additional federal assistance to state and local governments, including public school districts, will be critical to maintain educational programming and staffing in the year ahead. Tonight, Ms. Fryc has asked that the Committee discuss and vote on whether to approve a resolution advocating for federal funding for public education to address the financial impact of the pandemic. A draft resolution created by Ms. Fryc is enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee discuss the draft resolution advocating for federal funding for public education to address the financial impact of the pandemic and, if in agreement with its contents, vote to endorse it.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chair

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

May 13, 2020

**SHREWSBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF INCREASED
FEDERAL SUPPORT AND STIMULUS FUNDING FOR PUBLIC K-12 EDUCATION**

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is a monumental and unprecedented challenge, emerging quickly and demanding an immediate overhaul of the instructional plans and strategies of school systems across the country; and

WHEREAS, the nation's public schools remain committed to delivering high-quality instruction while ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff; and

WHEREAS, to date the 872 employees of the Shrewsbury Public Schools have worked around the clock to continue to provide our 6,251 SPS students and families with access to remote learning, iPads, Wi-Fi, and other educational needs, as well as distributing meals; and

WHEREAS, the Shrewsbury Public Schools and the Town of Shrewsbury have maintained payroll for over 872 full and part-time district employees, providing stability to our community during economic uncertainty; and

WHEREAS, these challenges will persist and likely grow as COVID-19 affects our economy and destabilizes funding for public schools; and

WHEREAS, reputable economists have predicted the end of the nation's economic expansion and forecast a recession that may be deep and long-lasting; and

WHEREAS, the numbers of unemployment claims are already the highest we have seen since the Great Depression and may only grow; and

WHEREAS, public school systems are facing difficult decisions about how to allocate dwindling financial resources to sustain high-quality instruction and other essential services for students and families over the next several years; and

WHEREAS, revenue shortfalls will unequivocally result in budget cuts and personnel reductions in public school systems;

WHEREAS, these budget cuts will be happening at the same time that public school systems will be working to address the immense instructional challenge of unfinished learning that many students will face coming out of this school year; and

WHEREAS, the American Recovery and Reinvestment ACT (ARRA) of 2009 provided

\$100 billion in education funding with investments in both the education stabilization fund and various federal categorical programs for public schools, such as Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Act; and

WHEREAS, Congress followed ARRA in 2010 with \$10 billion in additional funding for the Education Jobs Fund to help school districts retain existing employees, recall former employees, and hire new ones; and

WHEREAS, by comparison the recent Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides only \$13 billion for education stabilization funding, which is less than half of one percent of the total \$2.2 trillion relief provided in the CARES Act and is far below the investment that the federal government provided in 2009 and 2010 in ARRA and the Education Jobs fund; and

WHEREAS, public education is one of the largest employers of any organization, public or private, in the nation; and

WHEREAS, published economic research has demonstrated a strong connection between a country's GDP growth and its investments in elementary and secondary education; and

WHEREAS, research has repeatedly found a strong causal relationship between levels of schooling and wages that individuals earn over a lifetime; and

WHEREAS, for public schools to thrive and for our students to realize a bright and productive future, the federal government needs to make a substantial new investment in our wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, the National School Boards Association and others have called for some \$ 200 billion in relief for the nation's public schools; and

WHEREAS, this level of funding is the minimum needed by the nation's public schools to sustain and accelerate their academic achievement trends over the past decade, including gains in reading and math achievement that outpace the national average; therefore, let it be

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson and members of the Shrewsbury School Committee join in urging the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation, including our United States Senators and House of Representative members, to advocate for and approve additional federal education funding for our nation's public schools.

On roll call, the order was approved by the following vote:

Yea:

No:

Abstain:

Signatures:

Sandra M. Fryc, Chairperson

Jon Wensky, Vice Chair

B. Dale Magee, M.D., Secretary

Lynsey Heffernan

Jason Palitsch



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: VII. Finance & Operations

MEETING DATE: 5/13/20

A. Acceptance of Grant Funding for Oak Middle School Design Lab: Vote

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Committee will be asked to vote to accept a grant this evening. Mr. Jeremy Mularella, Oak Middle School teacher, applied for and received notice of award for \$5,000 to support the Oak Middle School. The grant is offered by the NEA Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that supports public education. These grants are competitive and only about 120 grants are awarded to educators on an annual basis. A memo from Mr. Collins with detailed information is enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee vote to accept the \$5,000 NEA Foundation Grant and use such funds for their intended purpose of improving the STEM curriculum at Oak Middle School.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

11 May 2020

To: School Committee

Subj: RECOMMENDATION TO ACCEPT NEA FOUNDATION GRANT: \$5,000

Background

Mr. Jeremy Mularella, Oak Middle School teacher applied for and received notice of award for \$5,000 to support the Oak Middle School. The grant is offered by the NEA Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that supports public education.

Mr. Mularella's grant project summary reads as follows:

Mr. Mularella will use micro:bits to introduce coding, electronics, and physical computing into the STEM curriculum at Oak Middle School. Students will develop creative problem solving as they learn to code programs for the Micro:bit using Microsoft MakeCode. After learning to code programs that control different modules (inputs, sensors, and actuators), students will use the engineering design process to design, program, and race hovercrafts.

The NEA Foundation grants are competitive and only about 120 grants are awarded to educators on an annual basis.

Acceptance of the award comes with no contingencies other than the normal implementation report and fiscal recap back to the NEA Foundation at time of completion.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the School Committee vote to accept the funds using the following motion:

"I move that the Committee accept the \$5,000 NEA Foundation Grant and use such funds for their intended purpose of improving the STEM curriculum at Oak Middle School."

In closing I would also recommend that the School Committee write a note of congratulations to Mr. Mularella for his initiative and success.



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: VII. Finance & Operations

MEETING DATE: 5/13/20

B. Refunds or Credits for Fiscal Year 2020 Fees & Tuitions: Vote

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The District is dependent on tuitions and fees paid by families in order to operate various services, programs, or activities that are optional in some manner. Some families have paid fees and tuition for services and programs that would have taken place during a portion, or all, of the school closure period. At the meeting on May 6, 2020 Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Collins presented information and potential options regarding the issue of refunds on tuitions and fees for the Committee's consideration and feedback. Tonight, Dr. Sawyer is recommending that families be refunded proportionally for the fees and/or tuitions they paid, as illustrated in his enclosed memorandum.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee vote to approve the proportional refund of tuitions and fees paid for optional programming and services that were not provided due to the closing of school due to the coronavirus pandemic, as illustrated in the memorandum from the Superintendent of Schools dated May 12, 2020.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545

Tel: 508-841-8400 Fax: 508-841-8490

schools.shrewsburyma.gov



Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Margaret M. Belsito
Assistant Superintendent
Student Services

Amy B. Clouter
Assistant Superintendent
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

Patrick C. Collins
Assistant Superintendent
Finance & Operations

Jane O. Lizotte, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Community Partnerships & Well-Being

Barbara A. Malone
Executive Director
Human Resources

May 12, 2020

To: School Committee

From: Joe Sawyer

Re: Recommendations re: refund of fees & tuitions paid in FY20

Dear School Committee:

At your meeting on May 6, 2020, you heard a report on various options regarding potential reimbursement of fees and/or tuitions that were paid by families where services were then not provided or partially provided due to school closure for the pandemic.

Based on a review of our situation, and with consideration of your feedback and feedback provided to the School Committee by parents via email, I am making the following recommendations to you for each category of fee or tuition at hand.

In making these recommendations, the following question is paramount:

What is fair and equitable for families who paid the fee?

There are many legal regulations that the district must abide by that make issuing refunds more complicated and labor intensive than we would like. However, while this inconvenience may slow down our ability to provide refunds, I do not believe that it should be a factor in determining what is "fair."

With regard to what is “equitable,” I think it is important that all families who are owed a refund benefit from refunds that are issued in proportion to what they paid. Some feedback from the School Committee at last week’s meeting, and some subsequent email feedback from families, suggested giving the option to parents whether to apply for a refund. This could allow families who feel that they don’t need the refund and would like for the district to benefit to choose not to apply for a refund. While the district could certainly benefit from the generosity of those families leaving those funds on account, I have concerns about this approach regarding logistics and equity. To provide an optional system would require a new process to be set up to determine whether a family wishes to have certain fees refunded but not others, and it would require a deadline. We know that a significant number of families are having difficulties connecting with us despite our efforts to communicate, whether because of technology issues, work commitments, or otherwise being overwhelmed by the circumstances of the pandemic. I am concerned that creating a situation where families who might be most in need of a refund may not be able to respond to a requirement to apply for it, while other barriers could get in the way of receiving the funds to which they are entitled (such as technology and language barriers). Further, inevitably there will be hardship cases where the deadline is missed and families will appeal for consideration, creating additional complexity to administer such a program. For all of these reasons, I believe the most equitable solution, and one that minimizes confusion and does not create the need for multiple communications and management of various family preferences, is to process and issue checks for all refunds that are due to families.

With regard to tapping into the generosity and financial capacity that surely exists among many of our families, the district would communicate that we would welcome contributions to the Colonial Fund as a suggestion for families who may wish to utilize some portion of or their entire refund to support our schools.

My recommendations are as follows:

- 1) **Food Service:** Given that we have a successful, existing process for funds on account for cafeteria purchases with the Food Service Department, namely that money on account is carried forward to the next school year, while graduating seniors with more than \$10 on account may receive a refund or have their balance transferred to a sibling in a lower grade, **I do not recommend any change to this process, and therefore no action is necessary.**
- 2) **Transportation Fee:** Because bus service was suspended effective March 13 and schools will remain closed for the remainder of the year, transportation service was not provided for approximately one-third of the school year. As a result, I believe it is fair that families are refunded approximately one-third of the transportation fee. This year the transportation fee was \$310, one-third of which is \$103.33. **I recommend that each family receive a refund of \$100 per transportation fee paid,** which will be proportional while also allowing for costs

associated with providing the refund, including check stock, envelopes, and postage. The estimated amount to be returned to families for transportation fees is \$277,000.

- 3) **Extended School Care:** Because the Extended School Care program was closed effective March 13 and schools will not reopen, and families paid for the entire month of March, **I recommend that families receive a refund for days families had paid for in March when schools were closed when their child otherwise would have been provided with care.** Families who already receive an income-based discount for tuition would receive a prorated refund amount. The estimated amount to be returned to families for Extended School Care tuitions is \$85,000, all of which will come out of the appropriated budget as the reserve in this fund has been exhausted.
- 4) **Preschool & Full-Day Kindergarten:** For Preschool and Full-Day Kindergarten tuition, at the time of closure, families had paid seven of the nine installments for the yearly tuition. Families were not billed for their final two installments due at the start of April and May (the yearly tuition is split into nine equal payments from September through May, so there is no June payment). There is no question that the level of service for these programs changed dramatically when the district shifted from in-person school to remote learning. Even though students are being provided with remote learning and support from the closing through June 16 by educators and support staff who are compensated through these tuitions, we know that remote learning experiences are limited due to the limited independence of our youngest children in preschool and kindergarten. As a result, I believe it is fair that families receive a proportional refund for the tuition they did pay that covers the days school was closed in March. Please note that because families pay in nine installments, preschool and full-day kindergarten tuitions paid through the beginning of March had covered 77.8% of the cost of the full year, while preschool and kindergarten had been in session for 65.5% of the school year, a difference of 12.2% of the yearly tuition. **I recommend that families receive a refund representing 12% of the cost of the yearly tuition they had already paid when school closure began** (the fraction of 0.2% will cover costs associated with the refund, including postage). Families who already receive an income-based discount for tuition would receive a prorated refund amount. The estimated amount to be returned to families for preschool tuitions is \$68,000, and the estimated amount to be returned for full-day kindergarten tuitions is \$52,000.
- 5) **After School Activities Program:** For the After School Activity Program (ASAP), some programs had not yet begun and some had held some number of sessions when the closure occurred. I also understand that some ASAP programs were held remotely after school closure. **My recommendation is to refund ASAP fees proportionally according to how many sessions were**

provided, either in person or remotely. The estimated amount to be returned to families for ASAP fees is \$10,000.

In closing, it will be important to determine what refund policies will be put in place in advance of charging fees and tuitions for *next* school year, given the uncertainties related to the continuing evolution of the pandemic. The administration will bring recommendations regarding this topic to the Committee at a meeting in the near future.

I recommend that the School Committee vote to approve the following suggested motion:

That the Committee vote to approve the proportional refund of tuitions and fees paid for optional programming and services that were not provided due to the closing of school due to the coronavirus pandemic as illustrated in the memorandum from the Superintendent of Schools dated May 12, 2020.

I look forward to answering any questions you have regarding this recommendation at our meeting this evening.



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: VII. Finance & Operations

MEETING DATE: 5/13/20

C. Pay Continuity for Food Service Department Workers: Vote

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Per mandate from Governor Baker, schools in Massachusetts are closed through the end of the 2019-2020 academic year as part of the state's efforts to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The district has shifted to a work-from-home model in order to maintain operations and to provide remote learning for students as well as support for them and their families. Mr. Collins has been analyzing the district's resources relative to pay continuity on a regular basis. At the meeting on April 29, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the continued compensation of all Food Services Department employees at least through May 15. Tonight, based on Mr. Collins' ongoing analysis and his enclosed memo, Dr. Sawyer is recommending the continued compensation of all Food Services Department employees through the end of the school year.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee vote to approve the continued compensation of all Food Services Department employees during the school closure period, at their contractual rates of pay based on their typical time worked per pay period, for the remainder of their contractual work year during Fiscal Year 2020.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

11 May 2020

To: School Committee

Subj: PAY CONTINUITY FOR FOOD SERVICE WORKERS

Background

Since mandatory school closures began on March 17, 2020, the school cafeteria staff have continued to provide a "Meal Support Program" in direct support of our most needy student population. Breakfast and lunch meals are provided for distribution from Shrewsbury High School on a "drive-through" basis and we also deliver meals to individual homes for those families who do not have transportation to pick up meals from the high school.

On average, we have distributed meals to 25 cars on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and delivered to 15-18 homes twice per week. Meals are distributed for multiple days for each child in the family. We plan to continue this important program until the last week of school.

The guidance to school districts from the federal and state-level government has been to keep staff on payroll whenever possible.

The School Committee has already voted to provide pay continuity through Friday May 15th.

Fiscal Impact

Like other Massachusetts public school districts, we needed to make application for approval of a special USDA program in order to receive reimbursement for serving meals during school closure. Similar to the meal reimbursement for meals served during the school year, the special school closure reimbursement provides a cost subsidy but does not cover all of the program staff and food supply costs.

I have updated the projected year-end financial forecast using the latest data and it affirms earlier projections that Food Service Revolving Fund has adequate funding to pay all cafeteria workers through the end of the school year, if that is what the School Committee decides. As one can see, a \$305,000 annual net loss is projected which decreases the projected year-end fund balance to about 15% of annual operating revenues.

Updated 5.11.2020		
Begin Year Fund Balance	\$ 606,509	
FY20 Estimates: Assuming school closure 3/17 to end of school year		
Revenue	\$ 1,560,000	
Expenditures	\$ 1,865,000	Assumes pay continuity util end of school year
Net Loss	\$ (305,000)	
End of Year balance	\$ 301,509	
FY19 Annual Revenue	\$ 2,202,919	
FY20 Balance as Percent of Ann. Revenue	14%	

Reasons to Provide Pay Continuity

While the meal support program does not require all staff to work, it does require about 25-35% of them to work on a rotating basis. It keeps “at the ready” the remainder of the workforce to respond in the event other staff fall ill, thus maintaining assurance of meal support continuity for our students.

If some portion were to be furloughed, we would still want to recall them to employment on June 15, 2020 and pay them for June 15 and June 16, then provide the usual letter of reasonable assurance of re-employment for the fall 2020 so as to preclude eligibility for collecting unemployment over the summertime.

As noted earlier, the Food Service Revolving Fund fortunately has adequate funding to provide pay continuity to this group for the remainder of the school year, unlike the Extended School Care account which did not have sufficient funding to pay that group through the end of year. The payroll cost for all Food Service staff from May 18 through the end of the school year is approximately \$70,000.

Federal and state guidance has been to continue to provide pay continuity to K-12 educational personnel when possible in order to maintain stability of current and future staffing and operations.

Because the cafeteria workers belong to a union, furloughing a portion of these employees would require impact bargaining so as to determine which employees would remain employed and which would be furloughed. This is especially difficult in that the federal stimulus funds for those eligible for unemployment includes an additional “pandemic benefit” that would outweigh the normal wages one would receive by remaining fully employed. This dynamic would create additional complexities in the impact bargaining process and selection of staff to be furloughed and create an unintended morale problem amongst the group. Bifurcating this employee group and creating these unintended consequences is not a good idea.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VIII. Old Business**

MEETING DATE: **5/13/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **IX. New Business**

MEETING DATE: **5/13/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **X. Approval of Minutes**

MEETING DATE: **5/13/20**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on May 6, 2020 are enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee accept the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on May 6, 2020.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson

Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, May 6, 2020

Present via virtual participation: 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; Ms. Barb Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

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

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:00 pm.

I. Public Participation

Ms. Fryc advised that public participation was suspended due to the meeting being virtual, but noted viewers could email questions and comments to the School Committee.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Ms. Fryc noted several recent appreciation events: National School Principals' Day (May 1); and Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4-8), which includes National Teacher Day (May 5) and National School Nurse Day (May 6), and on behalf of the Committee expressed gratitude and appreciation to these staff members.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer reported that a successful Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) Virtual 5K was held for the community the previous weekend and thanked participants, organizers, and sponsors. Dr. Sawyer congratulated the following Shrewsbury High School (SHS) winners at the virtual State Science and Engineering Fair: Zoe Rudnick, Grade 12, Honorable Mention; Alina Shkurikhina, Grade 10, 3rd Place; and Arnav Mishra, Grade 10, 1st Place; and congratulated Aditi Dosi, Grade 9, whose project was recognized by the International Science and Engineering Fair.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Acceptance of Donation: Vote

On behalf of Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being, who was unable to attend the meeting, Dr. Sawyer presented information on a

donation of \$50,000 from a Shrewsbury family for unbudgeted and new COVID-19 related expenses; noted the family has a child in the district and preferred to remain anonymous; described how the funds would be used; and recommended that the Committee (per policy) vote to accept the donation. On behalf of the Committee, Ms. Fryc expressed appreciation for the generous donation.

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a donation of \$50,000 from an anonymous donor to be used for the purchase of educational technology resources to mitigate learning loss during school closure. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

B. Update Regarding the School District's Response to the COVID-19 School Closure

Dr. Sawyer began the report with an overview of key messages, then provided information on Dr. Lizotte's behalf for two Community Well-Being events - the recently held Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) Virtual 5K, and the SHS Fitness Challenge in support of the Class of 2020. Director of Nursing Noelle Freeman's update from the Department of School Nursing included information on mental health resources currently available to students and families, and details on Governor Baker's recently implemented order to wear face masks. In her update on remote learning, Ms. Clouter presented information on Professional Development for staff, parents, and families; noted a new Remote Learning Technology Resources page was available on the SPS website; and provided data on use of the SeeSaw technology platform. Dr. Sawyer acknowledged several recent appreciation events: School Lunch Hero Day (May 1); National School Principals' Day (May 1); and Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4-8), which includes National Teacher Day (May 5) and National School Nurse Day (May 6).

Committee members expressed appreciation for the information on mental health resources available to the community, and the increased availability of information on technology for parents. From her experience as a district parent, Ms. Heffernan noted enhanced opportunities and increasing levels of engagement for students, and found the technology team at SPS to be responsive to parent concerns.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Update on Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Finance & Operations: Report

Mr. Collins presented information on operations that are continuing through school closure, including meals for families in need, building access, student registration, financial management, and assistance with the unemployment process for furloughed employees. Dr. Sawyer presented information on possible federal assistance, and noted financial challenges for FY 2021 relative to forecasting and potential additional budget cuts.

B. Considerations Regarding Potential Credits or Refunds for FY20 Fees & Tuitions: Report & Discussion

Mr. Collins began the report with context for issues around credits and refunds for fees and tuitions, and presented a number of items for consideration: continued district cost liabilities during closure, current district refund policies, municipal finance laws and regulation, associated administrative workload, and parent expectations. He presented data on the financial impact and number of transactions associated with refunds/credits for full-day kindergarten, preschool, Extended School Care, the After School Activities Program, and busing; described the refund/credit process for Food Services; provided options for resolution for the Committee's consideration; and offered suggestions for the decision-making process.

Committee members noted complexities relative to the issue and added that the district's reliance on fees was a contributing factor, and acknowledged that many SPS families are experiencing financial hardship. Initial potential solutions suggested included refunding money for any unused services, and giving families the choice to opt-in (or not) for a refund. Ms. Fryc requested feedback from the community. Dr. Sawyer provided additional information on remote learning experiences for full-day kindergarten and preschool students, and noted he would craft a recommendation for the Committee's review at the May 13 meeting.

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 April 29, 2020 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

Ms. Fryc requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of negotiations with some or all of the following: the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, the Shrewsbury Cafeteria Workers, and/or non-represented staff, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body; and for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes, and return to Open Session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening. On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, on a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms.

Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 8:29 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch: yes; Mr. Wensky: yes; Ms. Heffernan: yes; Dr. Magee: yes; Ms. Fryc: yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Anonymous Donation Memo
2. Update on COVID-19 Response Report Slides 05-06-20
3. Update on Impact of COVID-19 on Finance & Operations Report Slides 05-06-20
4. Potential FY20 Credits/Refunds Slide Presentation
5. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **XI. Executive Session**

MEETING DATE: **5/13/20**

- A. For the purpose of negotiations with some or all of the following:
the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, the Shrewsbury Cafeteria Workers, and/or non-represented staff.**
- B. For the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Executive session is warranted for these purposes.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee enter into executive session for the purpose of negotiations with some or all of the following: the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, the Shrewsbury Cafeteria Workers, and/or non-represented staff, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body; and for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes, and return to Open Session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Barbara A. Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources

ITEM NO: **XII. Adjournment**