

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

Present: Mr. Jon Wensky, Chairperson; Ms. Sandy Fryc, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Secretary; Dr. B. Dale Magee; 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 attendance by the public, but was broadcast live on SELCO Channels 29 & 329 and streamed live on the Shrewsbury Media Connection website.

A complete audio/visual recording of this meeting is available on the Shrewsbury Public Schools website.

The meeting was convened by Mr. Wensky at 7:01 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer reported that a community exchange was available to the public for sharing their views regarding potential changes to the Shrewsbury High School (SHS) mascot, provided a brief history of work done by the Mascot Ad Hoc Study Group tasked with studying the issue, and noted the planned timeline for work going forward on the issue, where the study group will present to the School Committee at its meeting on June 9, the School Committee will hear public comment at its meeting of June 16, and the School Committee may determine any action it may wish to take at its meeting on June 23.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Update on School District's Response to the Pandemic: Report

Dr. Sawyer provided an update on the return to full in-person learning in schools; presented data on surveillance testing and COVID-19 case counts in the past four weeks in the district; noted a target date of June 5 for a vaccine clinic to be hosted by Shrewsbury Public Schools; and summarized recently updated COVID-19 guidance from the state. Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Collins provided additional information in response to clarifying questions from the Committee regarding routine student testing and its associated costs going forward.

B. Speech & Debate State & National Champions: Recognition

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, Shrewsbury High School and Mr. Marc Rischitelli, Head Coach of the Speech & Debate Team (both attended remotely) introduced the following students (all attended remotely), who were recognized as State or National Champions:

Dheekshitha Sriram - 2021 Massachusetts State Champion in Big Questions Debate; Rithika Prasad - 2021 Massachusetts State Champion, Extemporaneous Speaking; Shalini Biju - 2021 Massachusetts State Champion, Original Oratory, and 2021 Massachusetts State Champion, Informative Speaking; and Reeya Kansra - 2021 National Tournament of Champions 1st place, Humorous Interpretation.

The Committee and Dr. Sawyer congratulated the students, who provided information about their topics and the pieces they performed, and described the aspects of the Speech and Debate program that were meaningful to them.

C. SHS Senior Scholars: Recognition

Dr. Sawyer recognized the top eleven academically ranked students in the Class of 2021 (historically ten have been honored, but there was a tie in student grade point averages this year). Dr. Sawyer introduced the students (all attended remotely) in alphabetical order. He read a brief biographical sketch of each student, who then had an opportunity to present brief remarks on their educational experience. The eleven students recognized were: Ridha Alam, Nivedhya Cheruvari, Frances Crosby, Aashirwad Deochakke, Alyssa Guo, Aryan Kale, David Lee, Collin Lovelace, Nicole Podlipec, Divya Raghunathan, and Saanvi Sood. Mr. Bazydlo offered congratulations and comments as their Principal, and the Committee and Dr. Sawyer congratulated the students on their accomplishments.

D. SHS Student Advisory Committee: Report

Mr. Bazydlo thanked the Student Advisory Committee members for their work throughout the year representing students at SHS. The members (all attended remotely) introduced themselves - Aabia Hasan (Chairperson), Maxfield Evers, David Lee, Nikitha Ram, and Anushka Mukhopadhyay - and reported on the return to full in-person learning at SHS, student activities, and events for seniors. Dr. Sawyer and the Committee expressed appreciation to the students for their feedback, and asked senior students - Aabia Hasan, Maxfield Evers, and David Lee - about their future plans (David Lee presented information on his future plans during the prior agenda item).

V. Curriculum

A. Update on SPS Efforts re: Equity & Anti-Racism: Report

In the report, Ms. Clouter discussed the plan for this work; presented a timeline of information on a number of key steps relative to the district's Strategic Goal: *Learning Environments Where Everyone's Success Matters*; and described how data informs the approach being taken to address student academic achievement. Ms. Malone reported that data is also being used to drive changes and improvements in district staffing, noting that some existing approaches would be bolstered (e.g. expanding/utilizing the already diverse pool of day to day substitute teachers) and some new approaches would be taken (e.g. utilizing the IMDiversity website to post open positions in the district). Regarding development of the plan going forward, Ms. Clouter discussed how data from multiple surveys will be collected and utilized; addressed ongoing learning relative to Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion, and Equity; and noted the importance of working with multiple community entities to ensure success.

Committee members shared their perspectives in turn, and asked clarifying questions on a variety of topics including student interventions, educator licensure, MCAS data examination, and the potential for student teaching opportunities to create a hiring track for educators of color.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Massachusetts School Building Authority Accelerated Repair Statements of Interest:

Votes

Mr. Collins briefly described the annual process by which the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Accelerated Repair Program accepts Statements of Interest (SOI) from districts for school repair funding. He detailed the two projects being presented for the Committee's consideration for submission to the program: replacement of windows at Oak Middle School and replacement of the Floral Street School roof. Mr. Collins noted the Board of Selectmen had already voted to support submission of the applications, and described the timeline going forward if the School Committee also voted to support submission. Dr. Sawyer recommended that the Committee vote to approve submission of the SOIs.

Mr. Wensky moved that having convened in an open meeting on May 26, 2021 prior to the SOI submission closing date, the School Committee of the Town of Shrewsbury, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, votes to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated May 21, 2021 for the Oak Middle School located at 45 Oak Street Shrewsbury, MA 01545 which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future replacement of aluminum frame awning style windows, and aluminum framed storefront windows throughout the building that are beyond their end of useful life at 41 years old; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City/Town/Regional School District to filing an

application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Mr. Wensky moved that having convened in an open meeting on May 26, 2021 prior to the SOI submission closing date, the School Committee of the Town of Shrewsbury, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, votes to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated May 20, 2021 for the Floral Street School located at 57 Floral Street Shrewsbury, MA 01545 which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future replacement of 58,147 square feet of asphalt shingle roofing system, and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City/Town/Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. On motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

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 May 12, 2021 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

Mr. Wensky requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session:

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

B. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares” (“Purpose 3”) - the Shrewsbury Education Association Units A and/or B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, and/or the Cafeteria Workers Association; and

C. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(2) “to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel” (“Purpose 2”) - non-represented administrators. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Fryc, on a roll call vote: Mr.

Palitsch, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; and Mr. Wensky, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 9:37 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; and Mr. Wensky, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. 2021 SHS Senior Scholars Report
2. Student Advisory Committee Agenda
3. Equity & Inclusion Update Report
4. Equity & Inclusion Update Slide Presentation
5. Accelerated Repair Program Statement of Interest Process Overview
6. Oak Middle School Statement of Interest
7. Floral Street School Statement of Interest
8. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above