

Shrewsbury School Committee's Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools – June 23, 2021

Goal or Evaluation Standard	Rating	Comments
Student Learning Goal To provide leadership to help the school district navigate the pandemic by developing a safe school environment for our students and staff that prioritizes everyone's well-being and enables high levels of learning for all.	Exceeded	Comment: While Dr. Sawyer's self-rating of this goal was "Significant Progress," the School Committee rated him as Exceeded. Dr. Sawyer and his team executed an extraordinary feat in creating a new model delivering educational services to all students during the COVID pandemic. His outstanding leadership and managerial expertise, combined with a reassuring and calm approach, and high-levels of transparent communication with staff and families, provided the direction our district needed to navigate a safe-school environment for students and staff during an unprecedented time. Dr. Sawyer, along with the District Leadership team, created a comprehensive educational plan that supported student learning to best fit their needs during the pandemic. Dr. Sawyer noted in his self-evaluation, some students struggled and their needs were not met; however, the Committee is confident that Dr. Sawyer and staff worked extremely hard and performed better than circumstances might have suggested. We are highly confident that our district will be able to mitigate the losses these students experienced this year.
Professional Practice Goal To build staff capacity (and my own capacity) through professional development to advance equity and anti-racism	Significant progress	Comment: Dr. Sawyer developed an initial action plan in June of 2020 to enhance the district's equity and inclusion efforts. The initial, and important step that he took, was to contract with the Assabet Valley Collaborative to conduct an "equity audit" for the school district. The feedback received from this audit provided important initial data to advance the work around diversity, equity, and anti-racism within the school community. The execution of this plan was visible throughout the year through Professional Development activities for staff, workshops, coursework, and presentations from keynote speakers. More work needs to be done here, though the district has continued to keep equity and anti-racism as priorities amidst a pandemic, which largely crowded out other initiatives.

Progress toward District Goals	Exceeded	<p>Comment: Despite the extraordinary work required of Dr. of Dr. Sawyer due to the pandemic, other district goals still needed to be managed. This was a game changing year as it also included three major district impacting initiatives: the new Beal School project, redistricting the elementary schools and the Fiscal Year '22 budget. The new Beal School project required ongoing meetings with the building committee as well as regular decision making as it neared completion for opening in fall of 2021. This project was complicated by the Fiscal Year '22 budget issues. Dr. Sawyer's strong working relationship with Town Manager, Kevin Mizikar and collaboration with the Committee and Board of Selectmen to discuss the School Department budget concerns led to the successful passing of the recent override that provided funding to open the new Beal School as planned, removed the need to layoff staff, and provide, free full-day kindergarten for all. The successful override also created a stabilization fund that will finally begin to deal with the town's longstanding structural deficit issue, providing the School Department with budget certainty for at least the next four years. This forward thinking and partnership with town leadership makes Dr. Sawyer a tremendous asset to the school district. Dr. Sawyer also worked with the Elementary School Redistricting Committee. This detailed and sensitive work, which was also time intensive, needed to be carefully done as it required some children to transfer from their existing elementary school as we planned to open the new Beal Elementary School. In addition to the significant work created by the pandemic, Dr. Sawyer continued to successfully manage the ongoing work of the district in a professional manner. The completion of these major district initiatives represents outstanding leadership on the part of Dr. Sawyer and despite the significant challenges posed by the pandemic, he advanced many district goals this year.</p>
Standard I: Instructional Leadership		
I-A. Curriculum: Ensures that all instructional staff design effective and rigorous standards-based units of instruction consisting of well-structured lessons with measurable outcomes.	Exemplary	
I-B. Instruction: Ensures that practices in all settings reflect high expectations regarding content and quality of effort and work, engage all students, and are personalized to accommodate diverse learning styles, needs, interests, and levels of readiness.	Exemplary	
I-C. Assessment: Ensures that all principals and administrators facilitate practices that propel personnel to use a variety of formal and informal methods and assessments to measure student learning, growth, and understanding and make necessary adjustments to their practice when students are not learning.	Proficient	
I-D. Evaluation: Ensures effective and timely supervision and evaluation of all staff in alignment with state regulations and contract provisions.	Proficient	

I-E. Data-Informed Decision Making: Uses multiple sources of evidence related to student learning—including state, district, and school assessment results and growth data—to inform school and district goals and improve organizational performance, educator effectiveness, and student learning.	Exemplary	
Overall Rating for Standard I: Instructional Leadership	Proficient	The pandemic created a situation where the district was less able to fully meet the educational demands of all students; however, Dr. Sawyer fostered an environment that encouraged and supported staff to go above and beyond in attempting to connect with students to continue to learn despite unprecedented challenges. Regardless of the circumstances, Dr. Sawyer was able to maintain high standards of learning across the district through the planning and preparation, and delivery of hybrid and remote learning. He remains proficient in this area and clearly had to balance the best interests of instructional leadership with the safety and well-being of staff and students.
Standard II: Management & Operations		
II-A. Environment: Develops and executes effective plans, procedures, routines, and operational systems to address a full range of safety, health, emotional, and social needs.	Exemplary	
II-B. Human Resources Management and Development: Implements a cohesive approach to recruiting, hiring, induction, development, and career growth that promotes high-quality and effective practice.	Exemplary	
II-C. Scheduling and Management Information Systems: Uses systems to ensure optimal use of data and time for teaching, learning, and collaboration, minimizing disruptions and distractions for school-level staff.	Exemplary	
II-D. Law, Ethics, and Policies: Understands and complies with state and federal laws and mandates, school committee policies, collective bargaining agreements, and ethical guidelines.	Exemplary	
II-E. Fiscal Systems: Develops a budget that supports the district's vision, mission, and goals; allocates and manages expenditures consistent with district- and school-level goals and available resources.	Exemplary	

Overall Rating for Standard II: Management & Operations	Exemplary	Dr. Sawyer's management of the Shrewsbury Public Schools went above and beyond since March of 2020. As one parent responded to the recent evaluation, "Tough decisions define a leader." Often he was put in a difficult position, but made decisions that were well informed and data driven and always with the best interest of staff and students in mind. The logistical management of the district this past year was never-ending and an astounding array of new challenges needed to be managed. Never before has a year tested the district's operations management to such a degree. This category was designed to evaluate management functions in a steady state, routine environment. This year was vastly different. Policies had to be adapted, or invented to meet needs in a rapidly changing environment in which passions of staff, students, and parents were running high. Feelings regarding what should be done sometimes conflicted and there was pressure to act in a timely manner. Dr. Sawyer's management style was calm, informed and focused. Dr. Sawyer and his team should be highly commended for the herculean effort that required them to work many late nights and weekends in order to run the SPS this past year.
Standard III: Family & Community Engagement		
III-A. Engagement: Actively ensures that all families are welcome members of the classroom and school community and can contribute to the effectiveness of the classroom, school, district, and community.	Exemplary	
III-B. Sharing Responsibility: Continuously collaborates with families and community stakeholders to support student learning and development at home, school, and in the community.	Exemplary	
III-C. Communication: Engages in effective communication with families, community stakeholders, and the media about key district issues, including student achievement, district needs, and best practices in education.	Exemplary	
III-D. Family Concerns: Addresses family and community concerns in an equitable, effective, and efficient manner.	Exemplary	
Overall Rating for Standard III: Family & Community Engagement	Exemplary	This year required nimble, quick, and accurate communication and engagement with families and the community. Dr. Sawyer's communication to the SPS community, and the entire Shrewsbury community, has been outstanding. He took what may have been regarded as a risk in opting to share substantially more information with the public than what may have been required of him; however, this decision fostered greater trust between the district and the public. Despite the ever changing landscape due to COVID, Dr. Sawyer's calm demeanor and consistent messaging to staff and families provided much needed, real time information and assurance. The volume and various methods of transparent communication from Dr. Sawyer over the past year was noted frequently by staff and parents in the recent survey evaluation results. Comments included that his consistent communication fostered trust in the decisions being made by the district.

Standard IV: Professional Culture		
IV-A. Commitment to High Standards: Fosters a shared commitment to high standards of service, teaching, and learning with high expectations for achievement for all.	Exemplary	
IV-B. Cultural Proficiency: Ensures that policies and practices enable staff members and students to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment in which students' backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges are respected.	Proficient	
IV-C. Communication: Demonstrates strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills.	Exemplary	
IV-D. Continuous Learning: Develops and nurtures a culture in which staff members are reflective about their practice and use student data, current research, best practices, and theory to continuously adapt practice and achieve improved results. Models these behaviors in his or her own practice.	Proficient	
IV-E. Shared Vision: Successfully and continuously engages all stakeholders in the creation of a shared educational vision in which every student is prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and become a responsible citizen and global contributor.	Exemplary	
IV-F. Managing Conflict: Employs strategies for responding to disagreement and dissent, constructively resolving conflict and building consensus throughout a district or school community.	Exemplary	
Overall Rating for Standard IV: Professional Culture	Exemplary	Despite the most challenging year anyone can remember for our district, Shrewsbury Public Schools remains a high achieving district. Dr. Sawyer leads by example. He is dedicated to his staff and throughout this past year he has provided them with the motivation and strength to educate students during the most trying of circumstances. He balanced the complex needs of students, staff, and the district, while remaining level-headed and calm. The overwhelming majority of staff sentiments and comments from the recent evaluation survey stated that Dr. Sawyer led with tremendous professionalism, exercised sound judgment, and kept the interest of staff and students his first priority. He consistently displays empathy and is someone who genuinely cares for the well-being and perspectives of all within the school community. Despite the stress of the past year, Dr. Sawyer was incredibly patient and used a great deal of common sense when making very difficult decisions. He was extremely thoughtful about asking others' opinions, but was willing to make the tough decisions and own the outcome. Dr. Sawyer's commitment to high standards and continuous learning was never more evident than during the past year, when the district was challenged by how to provide all students, regardless of ability, with the best possible educational services.

<p>Overall Summative Rating for the Superintendent's Performance (Please consider the preponderance of the ratings above to provide an overall rating, as well as any comments on the superintendent's overall performance over the past year).</p>	<p>Exemplary</p>	<p>Dr. Sawyer's work, since he became Superintendent of SPS, laid the groundwork for the district's successful response to the pandemic. The district was able to quickly pivot due to the strong culture and educational environment that has been fostered by Dr. Sawyer. During the past year, Dr. Sawyer lead decisively and was outstanding in what he did and how he did it. I have worked with Dr. Sawyer for many years, in various capacities, and have always felt he was a strong and capable leader. This past year, his work and his response to the COVID pandemic, exceeded my opinion of him as an excellent public servant. This past year has demonstrated clearly the value that the Shrewsbury community received through having such a highly-skilled educational leader. Dr. Sawyer's performance is exemplary, while our district has long benefited from his leadership, the challenges created by the pandemic have shined a stark light on the need for thoughtful and strategic approaches, effective communication, and a culture of trust and openness. Throughout this crisis, it has been a comfort to this community to know that we have had stable, capable leadership for our students. As the Chair of the School Committee for the past two years, I have witnessed first hand the amount of work and commitment Dr. Sawyer has provided to the district. This included long days, nights, weekends and during his scheduled vacations, in order to complete the work required to reopen schools this fall and to continue to navigate the constant changes throughout the school year. Dr. Sawyer is invested in our town and in the success of all students. The COVID crisis reinforced the School Committee's confidence in Dr. Sawyer's ability to lead this district. His skills as a leader helped the district survive a year filled with many unknowns and challenges. The Town of Shrewsbury is fortunate to have him as its Superintendent and the School Committee's overall rating for Dr. Sawyer for the past year is Exemplary.</p>
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