



**School Committee
Meeting Book**

**August 18, 2021
7:00 pm**

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



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

AGENDA

**August 18, 2021 7:00pm
Town Hall—Selectmen’s Meeting Room
100 Maple Avenue**

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. Input from Medical Experts on Current COVID-19 Situation	7:10 – 7:35
B. COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols for the 2021-2022 School Year: Report, Discussion, & Vote	7:35 – 8:15
V. Curriculum	
VI. Policy	
VII. Finance & Operations	
VIII. Old Business	
IX. New Business	
X. Approval of Minutes	8:15 – 8:20
XI. Executive Session	8:20 – 8:45
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	



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

Association, and/or the Cafeteria Workers Association.

XII. Adjournment

8:45

Next regular meeting: September 8, 2021



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: I Public Participation

MEETING DATE: 8/18/21

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
Mr. Jon Wensky, Chairperson
Ms Sandra Fryc, Vice Chairperson
Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Secretary
Dr. B. Dale Magee, 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: **8/18/21**
A. Input from Medical Experts on Current COVID-19 Situation

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Dr. Ciaranello will present information to the Committee on the current COVID-19 situation from the perspective of a medical expert, and she will answer questions from the Committee. Dr. Ciaranello will join via Zoom.

A recommendation memo from Michael P. Hirsh, MD, Worcester Division of Public Health Medical Director and Chief Pandemic Information Officer, is also enclosed for your review. Dr. Hirsh was invited to attend but was unable to do so due to another commitment.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

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

STAFF & GUESTS AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Andrea Ciaranello, MD, MPH, Infectious Disease Physician at Massachusetts General Hospital;
Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School
Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools



CITY OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Health & Human Services
Division of Public Health



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Matilde Castiel, MD
Health & Human Services
Commissioner

Karyn E. Clark
Public Health
Director

August 18, 2021

A message to the Shrewsbury Public School Committee:

Please excuse my absence from this meeting but I am attending a wedding on Cape Cod. The issues of how to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 Delta Variant spread upon the reopening of our schools for the fall semester are critically important to me and the Worcester Division of Public Health (WDPH) where I serve as Medical Director and Chief Pandemic Information Officer.

Let me describe what we know.

The Delta Variant is the prevalent mutation of the original COVID-19 virus that we battled for over 16 months since January 2020. But since May, Delta has risen in incidence to now comprise >90% of the isolates seen in the Commonwealth. It is 2X more transmissible than last year's version, and similar in transmissibility to Chicken pox, the 2nd most transmissible childhood virus behind measles. Delta preys on the unvaccinated; that is why the states with the lowest vaccination levels are having the worst epidemics. It builds up such high levels of virus in the nostrils that even vaccinated people can get breakthrough infections, though these are still relatively uncommon (10K case out of 4.4 mil vaccinated people). If you are vaccinated and get one of these breakthrough infections, we have learned 2 critical things:

- 1) 92% of the time you will have a mild case and not need hospitalization.
- 2) A person can be asymptomatic and spread the virus even if you are vaccinated.

This change in knowledge led to the change in recommendation on indoor masking. Since we know how effective the 3W's (Wear your mask, Wash your hands, Watch your distance) were in curtailing the spread of COVID-19 last year, the WDPH feels emphatically that since the children under age 12 are unvaccinated and many children age 12 and up remain unvaccinated, anything less than a mask for all indoors policy will expose the children to tremendous risk for acquiring the virus.

Unlike spring 2020 or holiday season 2020-21, the Delta variant is not just causing mild cold-like symptoms in children. The situation in Florida, where vaccine rates are low and case numbers are almost 20K/day, about 25% of all the cases nationally shows us how the Pediatric hospitals are being flooded with Delta variant pediatric COVID-19 cases, many requiring ICU care.



We therefore made the recommendation to the Worcester Public School Committee that indoor masks for all students, employees and teachers be the first line of defense against the spread of Delta. The School Committee voted to adopt this recommendation. Since DESE has not given a virtual option this year, it is imperative to keep the incidence of outbreaks at a minimum.

One last comment. Vaccines in arms in the end are the way out of this current surge. We are so fortunate that the vaccines are effective against the Delta variant. But the longer the unvaccinated in the community provide a ready population for the Delta to propagate, the more likely that a new and more deadly, possible vaccine-resistant variant will come along. That is why we must talk to our unvaccinated family members, neighbors and friends and appeal to everyone to get the vaccination.

Obviously, we need to await FDA approval for the children 11 years old and under, but the 12 year olds and up kids should all be vaccinated. The vaccine has proven to be safe and effective. In cohorts where the % of vaccinated people are >80% first responders and long-term care facility dwellers, the incident of infection has been very low. Virtually no one getting hospitalized for COVID-19 is vaccinated. We hear FDA formal approval for the vaccine is imminent, and approval for kids under 12 will follow in early November. There will be a big campaign to vaccinate our school age kids the moment that approval becomes real.

So, in conclusion, we realize that people are weary of this pandemic. We realize that anti-vaccination and anti-mask folks are angered by mandates. We also know that amongst the vaccinated there is a resentment building about the unvaccinated being the substrate upon which Delta variant is wreaking havoc and causing more restrictions on everyone. Let us channel all this negative energy into the efforts to make school live, in-person and meaningful for the great majority of the student body.

Respectfully,

Michael P. Hirsh, MD
Medical Director, City of Worcester
Pediatric Trauma Surgeon, UMass Memorial Healthcare



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: IV. Time Scheduled Appointments: MEETING DATE: **8/18/21**
**B. COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols for the 2021-2022 School Year: Report,
Discussion, & Vote**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Dr. Sawyer will present recommendations for 2021-2022 school year operational COVID-19 protocols relative to areas including in-person learning, masking, physical distancing, school ventilation, and other operational considerations. Ms. Freeman will provide information regarding updated state requirements for quarantining and close contacts.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee vote to endorse the protocols for the opening of the 2021-2022 School Year as presented. The document Shrewsbury Public Schools COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols 2021-2022 School Year will be provided under separate cover.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Noelle Freeman, Director of School Nursing



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **V. Curriculum**

MEETING DATE: **8/18/21**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF & STUDENTS AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VI. Policy**

MEETING DATE: **8/18/21**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VII. Finance & Operations**

MEETING DATE: **8/18/21**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VIII. Old Business**

MEETING DATE: **8/18/21**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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ITEM NO: **IX. New Business**

MEETING DATE: **8/18/21**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

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

MEETING DATE: **8/18/21**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on June 23, 2021 are enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee accept the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on June 23, 2021.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Mr. Jon Wensky, Chairperson

Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Secretary

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

Present: Mr. Jon Wensky, Chairperson; Ms. Sandy Fryc, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Secretary; Dr. B. Dale Magee; Mr. Jason Palitsch; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

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

The meeting was convened by Mr. Wensky at 7:02 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer thanked the Staples store in Shrewsbury for donating postcards containing information on summer learning programs that were provided to students in grades Kindergarten through 6. Later in the meeting he added that Staples would be selling school supply boxes that will be donated to local students in need in the fall. Dr. Sawyer reported that the dedication ceremony for the new Major Howard W. Beal School will be held during school hours on September 24, and that a date for a public ceremony would be determined later.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

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

Dr. Sawyer reported that there were no new COVID-19 cases reported in the district in the last two weeks of school, and that the Data Dashboard showing total cases for the year had been updated to reflect 446 cumulative in-person cases and 9 cumulative cases traced to potential exposure in school.

B. Shrewsbury High School Mascot: Discussion & Potential Vote

Dr. Sawyer began the discussion by detailing his recommendation on a pathway forward regarding the Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Colonials mascot. Dr. Sawyer provided a historical overview of the process, and then addressed context, concerns, and the influence of the majority/minority relative to different aspects of the debate. After describing the questions and thinking that informed his decision-making process, Dr. Sawyer recommended keeping the

“Colonials” name and updating the presentation of the mascot in terms of iconography and education.

Mr. Wensky noted that the School Committee had received a tremendous amount of feedback regarding the issue, including 227 emails, and expressed concern regarding baseless and false commentary and assumptions being expressed on social media regarding the Committee’s decision-making process on the issue.

Mr. Palitsch advised that he supports celebrating Shrewsbury’s Revolutionary War-era historical ties, favors keeping the mascot iconography as it is, but recommends updating the nickname to something like “Patriots” or “Revolutionaries,” and explained the rationale for his decision making.

Ms. Heffernan advised that she felt valid concerns regarding inclusivity were raised relative to the SHS mascot. Ms. Heffernan noted consulting the Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) Mission & Core Values, and advised she felt continued use of the current mascot would place the district on the wrong side of this issue. Ms. Heffernan felt something that better represents the community and Core Values could be found, and recommended the district move away from the Colonials mascot.

Ms. Fryc advised that she is not in favor of changing the “Colonials” name, but recommends that the district undertake a more holistic educational approach to learning about history so that the community can be better informed, and noted the need for ongoing learning opportunities. Regarding iconography, Ms. Fryc added she felt individuals don’t identify with a picture or caricature.

Dr. Magee expressed support for maintaining the current mascot iconography and name, and suggested moving the decision-making process and re-evaluation of the mascot back to Shrewsbury High School.

Mr. Wensky felt it was important to ascertain what the current community of students at SHS thinks about the issue, advised he did not think changing the current mascot would make the SHS community better, and felt there was value in the positive momentum generated around educational opportunities relative to the issue. Regarding iconography, Mr. Wensky noted that Colonial imagery was also utilized on street signs in the community. He felt there was still much to learn prior to making any changes.

In response to questions from the Committee, Dr. Sawyer noted that historically SHS had made updates to the iconography of the mascot and that School Committee action was not required for them to be able to continue to do so in the future.

Dr. Magee made a motion that the Committee not take action on the proposal to change the mascot and the name of the Shrewsbury High School team; Ms. Fryc seconded the motion, and the motion passed 3:2. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch, No; Dr. Magee, Yes; Ms. Heffernan, No; Ms. Fryc, Yes; and Mr. Wensky, Yes.

Ms. Heffernan made a motion that the Committee charge District Administration, Dr. Sawyer and members of his team to develop more robust educational programming relative to the history of *Colonials* and our community and the history of our Native Nations; Dr. Magee seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch, Yes; Dr. Magee, Yes; Ms. Heffernan, Yes; Ms. Fryc, Yes; and Mr. Wensky, Yes.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Adjustment to Food Service Substitute Pay Rate: Vote

Dr. Sawyer summarized a memo from Mr. Collins, noting that while the state minimum wage law does not apply to municipalities and school districts, a recommendation was being made to match that rate (\$14.25/hour) for substitute cafeteria aides. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to increase the cafeteria aide substitute rate to \$14.25 per hour.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

A. Evaluation of the Superintendent: Vote

As the School Committee Chair from June 2020 - May 2021, Ms. Fryc wrote Dr. Sawyer's current composite performance evaluation and presented the summary at the meeting. Ms. Fryc provided comments and ratings for the three Goals (Student Learning Goal, Professional Practice Goal, Progress toward District Goals) and four Evaluation Standards (Instructional Leadership, Management & Operations, Family & Community Engagement, Professional Culture) that compose the survey, and advised that the Overall Summative Rating for Dr. Sawyer's performance was "Exemplary." School Committee members, in turn, expressed appreciation and offered accolades to Dr. Sawyer for his strong and effective leadership during a particularly challenging year. On a motion by Ms. Heffernan, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools as presented.

B. Updates to Superintendent's Contract: Vote

Noting Dr. Sawyer had recommended having his compensation be frozen for the current fiscal year, Mr. Wensky summarized updates being requested by Dr. Sawyer to his current contract relative to compensation (that it be increased in a manner consistent with the approach recently taken for non-represented employees who also had their compensation frozen this year), term length, and having the new federal and state Juneteenth holiday be added as a paid holiday. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to authorize the Chair to execute an updated employment agreement between the School Committee and Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer as Superintendent of Schools for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2026, and to include a 4.0% salary increase to \$206,176, the addition of Juneteenth Independence Day as a paid holiday, and an agreement to conduct a market study of the superintendent's compensation during Fiscal Year 2022 in order to determine if any further compensation adjustments may be in order, with all other contract terms remaining unchanged.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on June 16, 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 secretaries/clerical/IT staff and/or administrators, including the Superintendent of Schools, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body; and return to Open Session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, 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 9:01 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 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. Superintendent’s Recommendation for a Pathway Forward - SHS Colonials Mascot
2. Food Service Substitute Pay Rate Memo
3. Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools

4. Parent/Community Survey Feedback for the Superintendent
5. Staff Survey Feedback for the Superintendent
6. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **XI. Executive Session**

MEETING DATE: **8/18/21**

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.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Executive session is warranted for these purposes.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee enter into 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; and

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, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body; 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



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **XII. Adjournment**