



# Shrewsbury Public Schools

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Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

August 26, 2020

To: School Committee  
From: Joe Sawyer  
Re: Update re: Recommendation to Allow Children of SPS Staff to Attend More Frequently in the Hybrid Model

On August 19, I proposed that the School Committee authorize me to allow the children of SPS staff who attend district schools in kindergarten through grade 6 to be provided with the opportunity to attend school more frequently in the hybrid model, in order to assist us with a significant staffing problem related to childcare that is threatening our workforce stability.

Based on the Committee's request, we gathered more information regarding how many children of staff might be accommodated in this scenario. Based on a survey of SPS staff, there were 47 students identified.

At the same time we were gathering this data, our administrators were working on balancing out the student assignments for all of the cohorts and assessing which of our students should be assigned to Cohort A because of their high needs. The guidance from DESE on students who should be prioritized for more in-person education is pasted at the bottom of this memorandum.

At this time, the number of additional students with disabilities being identified as benefiting from more frequent school attendance constitutes at least 70 students *in addition to* those already assigned to Cohort A, and there will be even more students identified based on the criteria from DESE listed below as we continue additional evaluation of student needs. Given the number of Cohort A seats available based on current enrollment, and allowing some seats to remain open to accommodate the state's mandate that families be allowed to change their program (i.e., some may return from the all remote program), there will not be sufficient space to accommodate the children of SPS staff to assist with maintaining workforce stability, nor do I see this becoming an option, at least during the initial phase of the school year. As such, I am no longer asking the School Committee to take any action on this matter.

While I know that some disagree with the idea of providing this accommodation to facilitate our staffing based on perceptions of fairness, I stand by the intent of my original proposal as a matter of pragmatism, as many students will be affected if we have staffing instability due to childcare leaves. Like any organization, I think it behooves us to try to

find ways to support the childcare needs of our employees, which are significant due to the pandemic, and we will continue to seek other opportunities for our staff to access if possible.

From [DESE](#)

**Students with complex and significant needs include:**

- Students already identified as “high needs” through the IEP process on the IEP form entitled “[Primary Disability/Level of Need-PL3](#).” ***Such students must meet at least two of these criteria:***
- Services provided outside of the general education classroom;
  - Service providers are special education teachers and related service providers;
  - Special education services constitute more than 75% of the student’s school day;
- Students who cannot engage in remote learning due to their disability-related needs;
- Students who primarily use aided and augmentative communication;
- Students who are homeless
- Students in foster care or congregate care; and/or
- Students dually identified as English Learners.