

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, August 18, 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; Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being; Ms. Barb Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources; 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 7:01 pm.

I. Public Participation

Physician and Shrewsbury resident Dr. Nandana Kansra addressed the Committee. Dr. Kansra requested that a universal masking policy be implemented for students, staff, and visitors to Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) at the start of the school year, and recommended additional mitigation strategies relative to the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer congratulated SPS educators and staff on the successful execution of the Extended School Year, Summer Academy, and English Learner programs during the summer; reported that the new Beal School Project was progressing on time for the start of the school year; provided an update on hiring and class sizes in the district; and expressed appreciation to the Public Buildings Division for their assistance with cleaning and moving items around schools in the district.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Input from Medical Experts on Current COVID-19 Situation

Dr. Andrea Ciaranello, MD, MPH, Infectious Disease Physician at Massachusetts General Hospital, attended the meeting remotely and presented information on COVID-19 and schools. Dr. Ciaranello summarized lessons learned from 2020-2021 relative to children and COVID-19 acquisition/transmission, community incidence, and in-person learning; discussed the COVID-19 Delta variant; summarized guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; and provided detailed information on masking, including how computer modeling can inform guidance on masking.

Dr. Magee detailed the protocols being utilized during the School Committee meeting relative to masking (not wearing masks) and distance (seated 6' apart) and Mr. Palitsch suggested noting during the next agenda item that students in school (unlike attendees at the meeting) will not be distanced 6' apart from

each other. Dr. Ciaranello provided additional information in response to questions on COVID-19 longevity and mask risks (noting masks are safe and effective).

Michael P. Hirsh, MD, Worcester Division of Public Health Medical Director and Chief Pandemic Information Officer, who was invited but unable to attend the meeting, provided a recommendation memo to the Committee which was included in the meeting materials.

B. COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols for the 2021-2022 School Year: Report, Discussion, & Vote

Noting the primary goal of providing full-time in-person instruction for students, Dr. Sawyer detailed key mitigation protocols recommended for the start of the school year relative to masking; physical distancing; COVID-19 surveillance testing (voluntary); hand hygiene; cleaning; events, visitors, and volunteers; and music and athletics. Ms. Noelle Freeman, Director of School Nursing, attended the meeting remotely and addressed protocols relative to quarantine and close contacts, and Mr. Collins discussed protocols around ventilation and HVAC systems in buildings.

Committee members shared their perspectives in turn and all expressed support for the recommendations. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to endorse the protocols for the opening of the 2021-2022 School Year as presented.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

None.

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 June 23, 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; 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 and 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. Fryc, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Mr. Wensky, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 8:33 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:09pm. 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. COVID-19 and Schools Slide Presentation
2. COVID-19 Recommendation Memo - Michael P. Hirsh, MD
3. Shrewsbury Public Schools COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols 2021-2022 School Year
4. COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols 2021-2022 School Year Slide Presentation
5. Set(s) of Minutes as referenced above