

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, September 22, 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. Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; 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**

None.

**II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports**

None.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer reported that recently released MCAS scores were lower overall across the state, and that Shrewsbury scores reflected that trend, but to a lesser extent. He added that for younger students, math scores were more impacted than English Language Arts scores, and noted a detailed report would be presented at a future meeting. Dr. Sawyer advised that the district would continue to celebrate the opening of the new Maj. Howard W. Beal School with a Dedication Ceremony and an Open House planned for later in the week.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

**A. District Response to the Pandemic: Report**

Dr. Sawyer noted the district's primary goal of providing full-time in-person instruction for students and described the approach being taken to support this goal, and provided current state, local, and district-specific data relative to the COVID-19 pandemic. Director of School Nursing Noelle Freeman described the Test and Stay protocol being utilized in the district and provided associated data collected so far, outlined the response to an elementary positive test as an exemplar, and discussed routine COVID-19 safety testing in the district.

Committee members asked clarifying questions about symptomatic students, situating the testing site for the long term, transportation for students utilizing the Test and Stay program, and municipal COVID-19 data.

**V. Curriculum**

**A. Summer Programming: Report**

Ms. Clouter noted that Summer Academy, Credit Recovery, and Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT) programs comprised the 2021 General Education Summer Programs offered in the district. She reported eligibility criteria for students, noted challenges relative to participation and staffing, supplied associated data, and cited program successes.

Committee members asked clarifying questions about gathering feedback from parents on the program; potentially coordinating with other entities to create a full-day hybrid experience; expanding eligibility; successful strategies for reluctant students; the relationship between language skills and student success in other academic areas; and the high school Credit Recovery program.

## **VI. Policy**

None.

## **VII. Finance & Operations**

### **A. American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund:**

#### **Recommendations**

Dr. Sawyer provided a brief overview of a third round of federal funding - the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER), ESSER-3 - for the district, and noted that feedback from multiple stakeholders informed the recommendations being presented for use of the funds in areas including student mental health and well-being, academics, and summer/after school programming. Dr. Sawyer then provided detailed information on proposed use of funding for the next two years for staffing, programming, and transportation. In response to a question from Ms. Fryc, Ms. Belsito provided additional information on licensing requirements for school adjustment counselors, and noted overall capacity issues in the current environment relative to the provision of mental health services.

Committee members expressed support for the recommendations; suggested also exploring virtual technology opportunities; and proposed - as a longer term objective - revisiting extant school start times, homework policy, and standardized testing relative to stress levels and students' social-emotional health .

### **B. Fiscal Year 22 Federal Grant Acceptance: Vote**

Mr. Collins presented information on Fiscal Year 2022 grants, noting the primary criteria for allocation amounts are district enrollment and demographics. He noted processes and requirements relative to utilizing the funds, provided recent historical data on funds received, and noted the impact of federal funding resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Collins provided additional information on Title I funds (which increased at the federal level) and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds (which are multi-year funds).

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to accept all FY22 grant funds noted in the enclosed chart and use such funds for their intended purpose.

## **VIII. Old Business**

None.

## **IX. New Business**

### **A. Vote to Declare Former Beal Early Childhood Center Building as No Longer Necessary for School Purposes**

Dr. Sawyer provided a brief history of processes and votes relative to the release of the former Beal Early Childhood Center for school purposes, and advised that the proposed vote would not have an impact on COVID-19 testing currently being conducted at the site.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to declare the property located at 1-7 Maple Avenue, known as the Beal School, originally acquired by the Town of Shrewsbury for school purposes by deed of William E. Rice, dated April 5, 1920 and recorded at the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Book 2208, Page 524, and by an Order of Taking dated March 27, 1922 and recorded at said Registry of Deeds in Book 2264, Page 135, is no longer necessary for school purposes, and to instruct the Secretary to provide notice of this declaration to the Board of Selectmen.

### **X. Approval of Minutes**

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on September 8, 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 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. 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 8:50 pm.

### **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:56 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. Pandemic Response Slide Presentation
2. Summer Programming Report

3. Summer Programming Slide Presentation
4. ESSER-3 Federal Grant Funds Use Recommendation Memo
5. ESSER-3 Federal Grant Funds Use Spreadsheet
6. Survey Data - Federal Grant Funds Use
7. FY22 Federal Grant Report
8. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above