



A Shared Conversation About Homework *Previewing community perspectives on a new policy*

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Background

Shrewsbury's [Homework Policy](#) Project began as an outcome of the strategic planning process. Included as one of the goals under *Connected Learning for A Complex World* the intent of this project was to:

Review and adapt feedback and homework systems in order to implement effective, research-based practices that enhance learning and build stronger partnerships with students and families

Target dates were included as well:

By October 2018, create a district-wide Homework Committee that includes students, educators, and parents, whose purpose will be to review the district's practices in light of current research, communicate this information, and ultimately make recommendations for any changes to district policy at each grade span.

By June 2019, the Homework Committee will make recommendations to the School Committee regarding any potential changes to homework practices and policies.

In his initial remarks about the process, Dr. Sawyer described Shrewsbury's Strategic Plan as 'ambitious'. The comment was apt; during the 2018-2019 school year, several districtwide working groups were formed to address district goals, including the Social Emotional Learning District Steering Committee, the ExSEL group, the S3 Academy (Systemic Student Support) group. Finally, the Student Wellness Advisory Council was reconvened. Given the scope of the work and the degree of coordination necessary to advance cross-level discussions, district leaders felt that the initial timeline should be reconsidered. Further, rather than establishing a Homework Committee, the leadership

team recommended engaging existing district governance and advisory groups, such as school councils (which include parents and staff at each school, as well as students for the SHS Council), staff advisory councils, PTO/parent group leadership, student leadership groups) using established meeting structures. Accordingly, in March of 2019 we adopted a new approach to move the homework goals forward.

- In April, the district partnered with Thoughtexchange to launch an interactive survey of staff, parents and students in grades 4-12.
- Key stakeholder groups including the School Committee, the district Faculty Advisory Council, and the District Leadership Team shared initial thoughts on the process.
- In May, principals previewed the adjusted [plan](#) with School Councils, and began discussing the topic of homework.

It's time now to continue that work, first by familiarizing the community with the results of the exchange data. The purpose of my presentation will be to share key findings and to set the stage for our next steps.

The following summary report prepared by Thoughtexchange managers Megan Humphreys, Rita Macleod and Ailsa Beischer provides a helpful overview of the findings.