

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, October 2, 2019

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan; Mr. Jason Palitsch; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

Not present: Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson

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

The meeting opened at 6:31pm and Ms. Fryc immediately requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury Education Association – Unit B, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body, and for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, on a roll call vote: Ms. Fryc: Yes; Dr. Magee: Yes; Mr. Palitsch: Yes; Ms. Heffernan: Yes; the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 6:32 pm.

The Committee returned to open session at 7:00 PM, and the meeting was recessed. The meeting was reconvened at 7:03 PM by Ms. Fryc.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Ms. Fryc thanked the children of Ms. Heffernan for carrying the School Committee banner in the recently held Spirit of Shrewsbury parade.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer noted two upcoming community events that address vaping and addiction: a forum on vaping at Mill Pond School in Westborough, and an event by Dr. Ruth Potee, who will speak about developing tween/teen brain development and substance use at Shrewsbury High School (SHS). Noting it was National Custodial Workers Day, Dr. Sawyer acknowledged the excellent work done by custodial staff at Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS).

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Superintendent's Awards: Student Recognition

Ms. Fryc advised that this agenda item would be addressed later in the meeting.

V. Curriculum

A. Civics Education: Report

Ms. Clouter; Ms. Jennifer DiFrancesca, Director of Social Sciences, Shrewsbury High School; and Mr. Robert Dunn, Middle Level Curriculum Coordinator, Social Studies; presented information on alignment of district practices with changes in the Civics Education standards by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). They began with a video of grade 9 students discussing a question - *What does it mean to be a citizen?*, then asked Committee members to engage in exercises to illustrate some of the new standards of practice frameworks around skills and content. They went on to address how Project Based Learning (PBL) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) are relevant to the framework, adjustments to content, and next steps at SPS that include developing continuous themes and throughlines that will span Kindergarten through grade 12 for students.

The Committee and Dr. Sawyer offered praise for the changes and acknowledged the importance of civics education, noting the district provides students with ample opportunities to exercise their voice, and that SPS' mission includes providing students with *an appreciation of our democratic tradition*.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Guiding Principles for Redistricting Process: Recommendation, Discussion, & Potential Vote

Ms. Fryc noted this discussion was a follow up to a previous meeting that addressed the topic of redistricting. (At that meeting, the Committee voted to establish an ad hoc committee on redistricting, noting the ad hoc committee would be provided with guiding principles by the School Committee.) In their presentation, Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Collins presented seven recommended guiding principles and noted the rationale for each, adding that they were not ranked, would be implemented holistically, and would inform decision making on proposed redistricting options. Committee members expressed support for the guiding principles, adding that they represent a thoughtful and calming approach to a complex problem; noted the process of redistricting would be inherently disruptive to a certain extent; and stressed the importance of gathering data around demographics and population growth to utilize during the process.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to adopt the Recommended Guiding Principles as presented.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Superintendent's Awards: Student Recognition

This agenda item was rescheduled from an earlier position on the agenda. Noting this was the second year that he would present New England School Development Council Awards for Academic Growth and Student Leadership in Learning to deserving high school seniors, Dr. Sawyer advised that he chose students Sophia Millan and Thomas (TJ) Morgera based on recommendations from Ms. Maureen Monopoli, the SHS assistant principal who is the grade administrator for the Class of 2020, and Mr. Todd Bazydlo, principal of SHS. Dr. Sawyer highlighted the students' academic and co-curricular achievements, then invited them to present brief remarks. Next, Dr. Sawyer introduced recipients of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents awards for academic performance (there are three this year due to the size of the class). The students: Stefanie Del Rosario, Hannah Huang, and Lanna Wang (in alphabetical order) had the highest grade point averages in the class at the end of their junior year of school, and their achievements were summarized by Dr. Sawyer. The students were invited to give remarks. After being congratulated by Dr. Sawyer and the Committee, all of the award winners were invited up to receive certificates and be recognized by the Committee.

B. Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Calendar: Recommendation & Potential Vote

In his report, Mr. Collins summarized the FY21 budget calendar, highlighting important dates, and included information from the budget calendar produced by the Town Manager's office for informational purposes. Mr. Collins addressed questions from the Committee relative to the new ClearGov platform/tool, noting some training had already been provided, and that it was expected that files would be uploaded at/about the time of the Superintendent's Budget launch which would give users the ability to drill down charts and graphs from the data and easily compare it to that of other communities.

Dr. Magee encouraged training for School Committee members on ClearGov at a future Budget Workshop; Ms. Heffernan requested that some dates included on the draft budget calendar be checked for accuracy and changed if necessary.

On a motion by Ms. Heffernan, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Calendar.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

A. Effective Communication With Constituents: Discussion

Dr. Sawyer initiated the discussion by summarizing the findings of a national survey on district-level communications and detailing the ways the district currently communicates with parents and interested parties (including the Shrewsbury School Journal and Superintendent's Updates). He went on to present a draft of an eight question communications survey from SPS. Committee members asked clarifying questions around existing methods of communication with stakeholders (email addresses are available for approximately 99% of parents), how often surveys like this are done (this would be the first with a district-level focus on communication vehicles), and when a survey would be sent (very near future). They noted: some communication methods are very good, and some are dated; the importance of assessing and quantifying how stakeholders want to receive information; the draft survey presented was good; and the

importance of asking open-ended questions to determine what topics stakeholders are interested in.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on September 18, 2019, and the School Committee Workshop held on September 23, 2019 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

Please see above.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Civics Education Report
2. Civics Education Slide Presentation
3. Redistricting Guiding Principles Recommendation Memo
4. Redistricting Guiding Principles Slide Presentation
5. FY21 Draft Budget Calendar
6. Town Manager's FY21 Budget Calendar
7. District Communications Survey Memo
8. District Communications Draft Survey
9. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above