

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, October 16, 2019

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson (by phone); 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 (joined meeting at 7:00 PM); 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 opened at 6:30 PM 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; Mr. Wensky, Yes (by phone); Dr. Magee: Yes; Mr. Palitsch: Yes; Ms. Heffernan: Yes; the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 6:30 PM.

The Committee returned to open session at 6:45 PM, and the meeting was recessed. Ms. Malone and Mr. Wensky (by phone) left the meeting. The meeting was reconvened at 7:00 PM by Ms. Fryc, with Ms. Clouter joining the meeting.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Ms. Fryc reported that the School Committee is forming a Redistricting Committee to examine information, review options, and make recommendations to the School Committee for the redistricting of elementary school attendance zone boundaries for grades Kindergarten through Grade 4. She described the Committee's makeup, eligibility requirements for parent representatives, expectations, and the selection process. Ms. Fryc invited interested parents to

send her a letter of interest via email indicating why they wish to serve in this important role, and noting any relevant experiences that might be helpful to the committee's work.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer noted he, Mr. Collins, Town officials, project team members, and Massachusetts State Building Authority (MSBA) representatives met earlier in the day at the Beal School site for a construction kickoff meeting, adding that the project so far was on schedule and under budget. Dr. Sawyer advised that the Performing Arts Department's Fall Concerts are happening this week and congratulated students and staff on those concerts already held, and added that he attended the first game of the Unified Basketball team earlier in the day and congratulated participants on a successful kickoff to the season.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. SHS Student Advisory Committee: Report

Shrewsbury High School (SHS) students Sophia Peng (Chairperson), Max Evers, Aabia Hasan, David Lee, and Nikitha Ram gave their first Student Advisory Committee (SAC) report of the year, which included information on the start of the school year (the first-ever Activity Fair for Grade 9 and transfer students, new classes, Student Council Fall Leadership Conference); student life (college application process, impact of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus precautions on athletic events and practices, reactions to the initial planned Advisory Period; crowding at lunch and in hallways); and SHS events (Spirit of Shrewsbury participation, dedication of new SHS Athletic Facility, September 11 Day of Service, volunteer activities).

In response to questions, they provided additional information to the Committee on the genesis of the Day of Service and student participation (40 students), the Activity Fair for freshmen (held during homeroom period), and new schedules being tested out to try to alleviate crowding at lunch.

B. Homework Feedback from Stakeholders: Report

In her report, Ms. Clouter provided an update on the district's review of homework policy that focused on data provided by the Thoughtexchange survey taken by staff, parents, and students in grades 4-12 in April 2019. Ms. Clouter described work being done by the district; noted the rationale for addressing the topic of homework now; provided a timeline of the process; described desired outcomes for the work; and discussed next steps.

Part-way through the report, Ms. Clouter introduced Rita MacLeod, Account Manager at Thoughtexchange, who addressed the Committee via a live video feed from Canada. Ms. MacLeod provided information on data collected in the exchange that included details regarding: participant groups, conversation themes, top thoughts and associated ratings, the ability to break down data by groups (participant groups, grade level, etc.), looking to highest rated themes to see what is important, and how Thoughtexchange summarized data.

The Committee discussed concerns around participation selecting for a certain demographic since (adult) respondents chose to opt in, noted differences in responses by school, expressed a

desire to see disaggregated data, and stressed the importance of utilizing research on homework to determine what is best for students. Dr. Sawyer noted that homework policy became a topic of importance based on feedback from shareholders when the district's Strategic Priorities were being developed, and advised that work around this would be used to explore best practices.

C. SHS Class of 2019 Future Plans: Report

In their annual report, Ms. Nga Huynh, Director of School Counseling, and Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, SHS, provided information on: public and private 2- and 4-year matriculations (over five years); future plans by gender; application information; matriculation geographic information; selectivity (Barron's) of matriculations; future plans, and public and private matriculations of students receiving special education services; and highlights from the student Exit Survey.

The Committee asked clarifying questions around student/parent understanding of higher education costs and debt (with parents who did not attend college or did not attend college in America comprising specific cohorts); offering educational opportunities earlier in the college search process to students and parents relative to college cost/debt; data on test blind schools; and the use of applications (Naviance platform at SHS) to access data on applications/admissions to individual schools

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Priorities & Guidelines: Draft

Ms. Fryc advised that Dr. Magee and Ms. Heffernan comprise the Finance Subcommittee. Dr. Magee noted that the draft provides high-level guidelines and describes budget goals to the community while illustrating how the district strives to be prudent with resources and looks for better ways to communicate information on the budget. Ms. Heffernan added that it provides information on the assumptions that go into formulating the budget, and incorporates recommendations from the University of Massachusetts (Edward J. Collins Center for Public Management) Central Office Organizational Study completed in Spring 2019. Mr. Collins noted that the document also provides guidance to the Superintendent and Administration regarding development of the budget, and highlighted the assumption that no new School Choice seats be added due to space constraints.

Committee members commended the document's clarity and conciseness, and Ms. Heffernan noted the potential for future communication work around presenting budget information in the context of breaking news from the Massachusetts State House. Dr. Sawyer noted the draft

document would be posted for public viewing and feedback in advance of a vote at the School Committee meeting on October 30, 2019.

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 October 2, 2019 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

Please see above.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 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. Student Advisory Committee Agenda
2. Homework Memo
3. Thoughtexchange Homework Summary Report
4. Homework Slide Presentation
5. SHS Class of 2019 Future Plans Report
6. SHS Class of 2019 Future Plans Slide Presentation
7. FY21 Budget Priorities & Guidelines Draft
8. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above