

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, October 28, 2020

Present via virtual participation: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson; Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan; Mr. Jason Palitsch; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this meeting was not open to physical attendance by the public, but was broadcast live on SELCO Channels 30 & 330 and streamed live on the Shrewsbury Media Connection website.

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

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:00 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Ms. Fryc reported she attended Beal Building Committee and Redistricting Committee meetings the prior evening, and that the Beal project remains on plan and under budget.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer reported that the Redistricting Committee met the prior evening; congratulated Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Athletic Trainer Walter Hildebrand on being named the District E Athletic Trainer of the Year; advised a Community Walk and Vigil for Mental Health would be held virtually at the weekend; and noted that with snow in the short-term forecast, the district has the option to decide locally to have remote learning days in lieu of snow days when weather is inclement.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Update on Reopening of the 2020-2021 School Year: Report

Dr. Sawyer began the update with a summary of key messages, reasons to be proud, and COVID-19 mitigation strategies; and provided information on COVID cases in the district (stressing that there remains no evidence of transmission in schools), current local and state public health data, medical literature on in-school transmission risk, and updates to decision-making relative to making changes to the educational program. Director of Nursing Noelle Freeman presented information on the Phase I Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Point of

Care COVID-19 testing program available for use by interested K-12 schools, and noted items for consideration by Shrewsbury Public Schools to determine if the program would be beneficial to the district.

B. Recent Medical Science on COVID-19 & Schools: Report & Discussion

Dr. Sawyer introduced Andrea Ciaranello, MD, MPH, Infectious Disease Physician at Massachusetts General Hospital and Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Ciaranello's report on K-grade 12 schools and COVID-19 included information on key considerations relative to students, educators, and equity; mitigation strategies; data collected so far in Fall 2020 from K- grade 12 schools domestically and internationally; Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) Policy Lab findings; variance in community rate thresholds for remote learning; types of testing for symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals; and screening of asymptomatic students and staff.

Committee members asked clarifying questions on Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Department of Public Health (DPH) COVID-19 data reporting relative to public and private schools, and to remote learning; information flow between schools, DESE, and DPH; the relationship between community transmission and educational program choice; testing and potential participation in the BinaxNOW study; and low in-school transmission relative to students attending school in person (where Dr. Ciaranello indicated she is comfortable with updated state guidance to continue in-person school even when a community is rated "red" by the Department of Public Health, as long as mitigation strategies remain in place and contact tracing is done).

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 October 21, 2020 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

Ms. Fryc 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 Unit A; Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B; the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association; and/or the Shrewsbury Cafeteria Workers.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, on a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 8:15 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Heffernan, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Fryc, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; and Mr. Wensky, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. 2020-21 School Year Reopening Update Slide Presentation
2. Medical Science on Schools and COVID-19 Slide Presentation
3. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above