

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice 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; Ms. Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; 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 7:01 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Ms. Heffernan expressed appreciation to teachers for their creativity in reaching out to families in unique ways for the recent Parent Conference day. Ms. Fryc reported receiving a petition from Louisa Scott, Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Class of 2022, and other SHS students to change the SHS Colonial mascot. Noting that she and Shrewsbury Public School (SPS) staff met recently with the students, Ms. Fryc advised that Dr. Sawyer would be assembling an ad hoc mascot study group to investigate the issue and report back to the Committee with a recommendation in March 2021.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer thanked SPS families and staff for a successful Parent Conference Day; recognized the Shrewsbury Town Clerk's office and election volunteers for their work on the previous day's election; and expressed appreciation to SHS staff for conducting a mock election for students the prior week.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

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

Dr. Sawyer began the report by with a summary of key messages, reasons to be proud, and COVID mitigation strategies; discussed the Governor’s Travel Order; presented current district COVID case counts and local and state public health data; discussed medical literature focusing on in-school transmission risk; and provided information on updates to the decision-making process around determining educational program changes. Ms. Belsito presented detailed information on Covid Compensatory Services (CCS) for students and determining individualized need for CCS. Ms. Clouter presented video clips from educators at the middle and high school levels to illustrate some of the new approaches to the school orientation process for families being taken in lieu of traditional curriculum nights in light of the pandemic; addressed incorporating both traditional assessments and a new universal screening tool into the current learning plans; noted how instruction is informed by assessments and feedback from families; and described tiered levels of mental health support for students that were detailed in a Professional Development learning opportunity for staff at SHS. Committee members asked clarifying questions regarding CCS; student regression and measurement, and resource capacity for addressing it; and noted opportunities for future technology use based on ways it is being utilized in the current environment.

B. Student Enrollment & Class Sizes: Annual Report

In his annual report, Dr. Sawyer presented key enrollment data points for 2020; enrollment histories for preschool-grade 12, kindergarten, grade one, increase from kindergarten to grade one, grade one by school, all nine district schools, out-of-district placements, vocation/technical schools, and home school. He also addressed 2020 enrollment by grade level; learning preferences by school; School Committee class size guidelines; class size histories at the kindergarten, elementary and middle school levels; and current hybrid and remote class sizes at the elementary and middle school levels. Of note was the dropoff in enrollment at the preschool and kindergarten levels. Dr. Sawyer indicated that preschool enrollment is lower due to not providing an all remote option at that level and that anecdotally it is believed that some families of kindergarteners are holding off for a year due to the pandemic.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Redistricting of Elementary Attendance Zones: Update on Process

Mr. Collins presented information on redistricting project goals and objectives, and redistricting and demographic analysis workflows; summarized the recommended considerations for redistricting voted on by the School Committee; presented an updated timeline for the project (resulting from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic); and noted project progress, next steps, and the upcoming meeting schedule. Committee members noted the complexity and importance of work around redistricting.

B. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Calendar: Vote

Mr. Collins advised that the draft calendar being presented represented a traditional but compressed schedule, noting that the Town Manager planned to start the process later, but finish at the same time, resulting in compression towards the end of the calendar. Mr. Collins highlighted tentative dates/events on the schedule, noted the sequence of events and endpoints were the same as in prior years, added that information for the FY21 budget is still in play, and advised that a vote by the Committee would be primarily for the sequence of events in the calendar. Committee members noted potential date conflicts with other meetings, and Ms. Fryc advised that the vote was on a draft calendar and that dates could be adjusted going forward. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Calendar as presented.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Approval of Minutes

An incorrect date for the minutes being approved was cited so the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on October 28, 2020 will be presented again at a future meeting for approval.

XI. Executive Session

None.

XII. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. SHS Colonial Mascot Letter - October 21, 2020
2. 2020-21 School Year Reopening Update Slide Presentation
3. PreK-12 Enrollment/PreK-8 Class Size Report

4. Enrollment Slide Presentation
5. Redistricting Update Slide Presentation
6. FY22 Budget Calendar - Draft