

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, November 13, 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 was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:02 PM.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Mr. Palitsch reported that the Shrewsbury Coalition for Addiction Prevention and Education (SCAPE) will present Dr. Ruth Potee, nationally renowned speaker and expert, on November 21, to discuss brain development and teen risk-taking, including alcohol, vaping and substance use. Ms. Fryc congratulated Mr. Palitsch on being awarded an All-State School Committee Award at the annual conference of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees this month.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer thanked parents of students in Preschool through Grade 8 who attended Parent/Teacher conferences, and acknowledged a successful professional development day for staff in Grades 9-12 and some special subject departments earlier this week. Dr. Sawyer reported that the Colonial Fund was presenting a district-wide homework discussion with speaker Cathy Vatterott on November 14 at Shrewsbury High School.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Student Recognition: SHS Girls' & Boys' Crew State Champions

Mr. Jason Costa, Director of Athletics at Shrewsbury High School (SHS), and student team captains Gavin Crouch, William Yankee, Natalie Siwek, and Kaitlin Urbanik, discussed the Boys' and Girls' Crew Teams' successful seasons, which culminated at the 2019 Massachusetts Public School Rowing Association (MPSRA) Fall Championships on October 27, with the Boys' and Girls' teams winning state championships as follows: Overall Team: The Richard W.

Stavros Award; Girls' 8+s: The Russ Krause Award; Boys' 8+s: The Pamela Krause Award; and Boys' Varsity 8+. They described the program's long history and culture, noted their rigorous training program, acknowledged the coaching staff, described the harsh weather conditions at the MPSRA Fall Championships, and expressed appreciation to the Friends of Shrewsbury Crew for their support. Many team members were present in the audience. The captains were invited up to be recognized by the Committee and presented with certificates.

V. Curriculum

A. SHS Testing Results: Annual Report

In their annual report, Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, and Ms. Nga Huynh, Director of School Counseling, SHS, presented: information on College Board Test administration and score reporting changes; data on SAT (including Subject Tests) and ACT scores; detailed data on Advanced Placement (AP) course participation and exam scores; information on SHS's School Profile for colleges; and strategies for maintaining and improving already strong scores at SHS.

Mr. Bazydlo and Ms. Huynh provided additional information to the Committee on the rationale for when students can start taking AP courses (typically Grade 11 - per College Board recommendation); the potential for stratifying data by criteria including socio-economic status and comparable districts; weekday versus weekend testing; and financial support available for test fees (which are increasing). The Committee and Dr. Sawyer noted that, overall, strong scores on these tests show great learning at SHS.

B. District State Testing Results: Annual Report

Ms. Clouter began her report by describing Next-Generation (Next Gen) MCAS exams (versus Legacy) and defining achievement and growth scores. She went on to provide detailed information by subject on: Science and Technology/Engineering (Grades 5 and 8 Next Gen, and SHS Legacy, test results); English Language Arts (Grades 3-8 and SHS Next Gen results; growth by grade and broken out for high needs subgroup by grade level); and Mathematics (Grades 3-8 and 10 Next Gen results; growth by grade and broken out for high needs subgroup by grade level). Ms. Clouter also described how staff can utilize data provided by the results to inform next steps for the district.

The Committee and Dr. Sawyer noted that the overall strong results paint a positive picture for Shrewsbury Public Schools around student success and the quality of teaching. The Committee asked clarifying questions relative to: a dip in Grade 7 scores across disciplines, how well tests measure student intelligence, stress for students taking the exams, and the potential to look at correlations between test scores given by different agencies.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Student Activity Accounts: Update

Mr. Collins began his report by defining Student Activity Accounts, and went on to provide an update on implementation of recommendations that resulted from a required external audit conducted in 2018 that focused on secondary schools. Those recommendations informed the creation and implementation of corrective action items, and Mr. Collins recently conducted interviews to assess the status of the corrective items. Mr. Collins highlighted some of these actions (including the purchase of additional drop safes for safekeeping cash, and consolidation of dormant accounts at the high school level) and noted he will continue monitoring progress annually until the next audit.

B. Fiscal Year 2020 Budget: Update

Mr. Collins advised that his high-level, one-page FY20 summary report presented information on 19 budget categories as of October 31, 2019. He detailed several categories that exhibited slight variances, noted the overall budget was in solid shape, and predicted a modest year-end surplus based on current and future spending trends.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

A. Assabet Valley Collaborative: Report

Dr. Sawyer advised that this was the first of four (required) updates from Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC) to member districts. The report included information on a New Collaborative Law that incorporated thoughtful reforms and noted the potential for future services for adults over the age of 22. Dr. Sawyer noted that member districts benefit from the pooling of resources and collective purchasing power of AVC in areas including transportation of out-of-district students.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee meeting held on October 30, 2019 were accepted as distributed.

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 9:02 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. SHS Girls' and Boys' Crew Teams and Coaching Rosters
2. SHS Testing Results Report
3. SHS Testing Results Slide Presentation
4. District State Testing Report
5. District State Testing Slide Presentation
6. Student Activity Account Report
7. FY20 Budget Update
8. Assabet Valley Collaborative Report
9. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above