

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Present: Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Chairperson; Mr. Jason Palitsch, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary; Ms. Erin Boucher; Ms. Sandra Fryc; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being; 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 was convened by Ms. Heffernan at 7:00 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer reported that the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) voted earlier in the day to approve the previously submitted Window Repair Project for Oak Middle School (OMS), and invited community members to provide feedback on a survey available online the following day on what is valued in the district and on areas for improvement that can inform the district's future Strategic Priorities.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Student Spotlight: A Celebration of Learning

Director of Visual Arts and Foundations of Art Teacher Mrs. Pamela LeBlanc began the presentation by describing the four "Foundations" courses offered to students at Shrewsbury High School (SHS), and Family Consumer Sciences and Foundations of Cooking Teacher Mrs. Shirley LeMay shared details and photos from the Thanksgiving Feast held in November 2022 to celebrate the program. SHS students Camden Chenevert, Class of 2023; Drew Conant, Class of 2023; and Emily Nelson, Class of 2025, talked about their individual experiences in the courses, and Mrs. LeBlanc showed a video clip that included more "Foundations" students sharing their personal experiences.

In response to a question from Ms. Heffernan regarding student participation, Ms. LeBlanc advised that Art and Music department enrollment in these foundations courses was growing.

B. SHS Student Advisory Committee: Report

Student Advisory Committee (SAC) members and SHS students Laura Lee, Class of 2023; Nicole Shen, Class of 2023; Aanya Gupta, Class of 2024; and Siri Ural, Class of 2024, gave the report. Chair Shalini Biju, Class of 2023, was not able to attend the meeting. The SAC members shared information on student

life (noting some students were glad about upcoming school start time changes, some were skeptical, and most were neutral), co-curricular activities, and events (including a return to holding the Soup-er Bowl competition/fundraiser in person).

In response to a question from Ms. Heffernan, the students advised that the Career Fair was held during 4th period on February 7 (an Early Release Day) and offered interactions with businesses who attended about current and future work opportunities, as well as internships, for students.

C. PreK-12 School Space Study: Report

After Dr. Sawyer provided background information on the study, Mr. Collins, Assistant Director of Public Works Mr. Keith Baldinger, and Mr. Sean Brennan, Associate Principal, LPA/A, gave the report. Mr. Brennan provided information on the scope of the study and the methodology utilized - comparing projected enrollments with building design capacities. He detailed projected enrollments versus design capacities by school and by grade; described the building assessments done at schools; shared a spreadsheet noting the feasibility of different response options to the study by school; summarized the resultant priorities (including addressing overcrowding at SHS, replacing Calvin Coolidge Elementary School, and expanding district-wide preschool); and described the budget development methodology utilized in the study. Following comments from Dr. Sawyer relative to overcrowding at SHS, Mr. Collins provided additional detail on the protocol around submitting a Statement of Interest to the MSBA for potential future building projects, advised the submission window is open through April, noted the potential for grant funding from MSBA for selected projects, and advised the timeline for most projects is multi-year.

Committee members shared their perspectives in turn and expressed concern regarding overcrowding and lack of space at SHS, and Ms. Heffernan requested that the topic of school space be addressed again at the Committee's next meeting (March 15, 2023).

D. Star Student Learning Assessment: Report

In her report Ms. Clouter shared the rationale for using the Star assessment universal screener and noted how it aligns with the district's Strategic Goals; described multi-tiered systems of student support; detailed how computer-adaptive testing works; and noted how the data derived can be utilized to assess student learning, track progress, inform instruction, and derive next steps.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Clouter advised that support provided to individual students in response to their assessment results varies by level and student, and that assessments are administered during the school day in prescribed screening windows and take 10-15 minutes to complete (while interim assessments take less time).

E. FY24 Curriculum & Technology Budgets: Report

Ms. Clouter presented an overview of budget drivers; shared common focus areas identified by the Professional Development Committee; used K-6 Literacy as an exemplar to illustrate ongoing relevant professional development over time and note its proposed funding for FY24; detailed Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment (CIA) budget trends over time (FY19 actual - FY24 proposed); noted the planned addition of a new Reading Specialist at the middle school level; and summarized challenges across departments. Director of Information Technology (IT) Mr. Brian L'Heureux provided an overview of the IT budget, detailed recent improvements in the IT Department, and noted additional expenses for FY24. Director of Instructional Technology & Media Services Ms. Shawna Powers described Grades K-4 digital citizenship curriculum work and digital citizenship lessons by grade level; shared information on support for families around managing student technology use at home; noted online research resources for Grades K-4 students; and provided data on robust use by students (Grades K-12) of the Sora app for online access to eBooks and audiobooks.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. L'Heureux and Ms. Powers noted that bulbs for projectors and access to computers (vs. iPads) for students represent potential future IT needs, and Mr. L'Heureux advised that 1st-level support tickets for software issues in the district are addressed in-house.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

A. School District Calendar for 2023-2024 School Year: Vote

Dr. Sawyer advised that his original recommendation regarding the draft calendar - including that school continue to remain in session on religious holidays - presented at the previous meeting remained unchanged. Ms. Fryc, Ms. Boucher, and Ms. Heffernan expressed support for Dr. Sawyer's recommendation to continue the practice of holding school on religious holidays.

On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the proposed 2023-2024 School Year Calendar as recommended by Dr. Sawyer.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. FY24 Fees & Tuition: Report & Discussion

Mr. Collins presented an overview of the decision-making process around fees/tuitions and described the two categories of fee/tuitions being reviewed; noted the assumptions relative to fees/tuitions utilized to derive the FY24 budget; shared detailed information (including historical data and/or surveys of other districts) for bus fees, SHS and Oak Middle School athletic fees, preschool tuitions, and music lessons; and advised regarding next steps for determining fees/tuitions for FY24.

Director of Extended Learning Ms. Karen Isaacson described ongoing impacts from the pandemic to the Extended School Care (ESC) program at Shrewsbury Public Schools and provided historical data on enrollment (decreasing) and family financial need (increasing). After detailing FY24 ESC budget assumptions and the resultant deficit if no changes were made, Ms. Isaacson noted a tuition increase would be necessary, presented three scenarios for consideration, and advised that the recommended option (Option B) comprised a 13% tuition increase with a 60% discount for students who qualify for Free lunch and a 40% discount for students who qualify for Reduced lunch.

In response to questions from the Committee Ms. Isaacson advised the ESC program does not accept state vouchers, and that adjusted school start times for the 2023-2024 school year were factored into staffing/salary projections for FY24.

B. Dr. Ken Hsu Memorial Trust: Vote to Accept Scholarship Donation

Mr. Collins advised that Dr. Hsu's children Christina and Lloyd reached out to SPS after his passing to set up a trust in his memory, and noted the trust agreement template utilized was crafted with the assistance of Attorney Chris Mehne and has been used in the district for many years. Ms. Heffernan and Dr. Sawyer expressed appreciation to the family for the donation.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Boucher, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a donation of \$10,000 from the Hsu family to establish The Dr. Ken Hsu Memorial Trust per the terms of the enclosed trust agreement.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Workshop held on February 8, 2023, and the School Committee Meeting held on February 15, 2023, were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

Ms. Heffernan requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of reviewing and acting on a student residency issue and to return to Open Session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening. On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Mr. Wensky, on a roll call vote: Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Boucher, yes; and Ms. Heffernan, yes; the School Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 9:59 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Ms. Boucher, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Boucher, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Heffernan, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

Celebration of Learning Slide Presentation
Student Advisory Committee Agenda
LPAAPreK-12 Space Study Slide Presentation
Star Learning Assessment Report
Star Learning Assessment Slide Presentation
FY24 Curriculum & Technology Budget Report
FY24 Curriculum & Technology Budget Slide Presentation
Draft 2023-2024 School Year Calendar Memo
Draft 2023-2024 School Calendar
FY24 Fees & Tuition Report Slide Presentation
Bus Fees Spreadsheet
Sport Fees Spreadsheet
Extended School Care Report
Extended School Care Slide Presentation
Trust Agreement - *The Dr. Ken Hsu Memorial Trust*
Set(s) of Minutes as referenced above