



**School Committee
Meeting Book**

**March 15, 2023
7:00 pm**

**Town Hall -100 Maple Avenue
Selectmen's Meeting Room**



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

AGENDA

**March 15, 2023 7:00pm
Town Hall—Selectmen's Meeting Room
100 Maple Avenue**

Items

Suggested time allotments

- | | | |
|-------|--|--|
| I. | Public Participation | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">7:00-7:05</div> |
| II. | Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports | |
| III. | Superintendent's Report | |
| IV. | Time Scheduled Appointments: | |
| | A. Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations: Discussion & Potential Vote to Appoint | 7:05 – 7:25 |
| | B. State of the District: Report | 7:25 – 7:50 |
| V. | Curriculum | |
| VI. | Policy | |
| VII. | Finance & Operations | |
| | A. Fiscal Year 2024 Special Education Budget: Report | 7:50 – 8:20 |
| | B. Massachusetts School Building Authority Statement of Interest for Potential Addition to Shrewsbury High School: Vote | 8:20 – 8:35 |
| | C. Fiscal Year 2024 Fees & Tuitions: Vote | 8:35 – 8:50 |
| VIII. | Old Business | |
| IX. | New Business | |
| X. | Approval of Minutes | 8:50 – 8:55 |
| XI. | Executive Session | 8:55 – 9:15 |
| | 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. | |



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

- 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 Units A and/or B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, and/or the Cafeteria Workers Association
- C. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(2) “to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel” – non-union administrators. (“Purpose 2”)

XII. Adjournment

9:15

Next regular meeting: March 29, 2023



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: I Public Participation

MEETING DATE: **03/15/23**

SPECIFIC STATEMENT OR QUESTION:

Will the School Committee hear thoughts and ideas from the public regarding the operations and the programs of the school system?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Copies of the policy and procedure for Public Participation are available to the public at each School Committee meeting.

ITEM NO: II. Chairperson's Report/Members' Reports

SPECIFIC STATEMENT OR QUESTION:

Will the School Committee hear a report from the Chairperson of the School Committee and other members of the School Committee who may wish to comment on school affairs?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This agenda item provides an opportunity for the Chairperson and members of the Shrewsbury School Committee to comment on school affairs that are of interest to the community.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

School Committee Members
Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Chairperson
Mr. Jason Palitsch, Vice Chairperson
Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary
Ms. Erin Boucher, Committee Member
Ms Sandra Fryc, Committee Member

ITEM NO: III. Superintendent's Report

SPECIFIC STATEMENT OR QUESTION:

Will the School Committee hear a report from Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This agenda item allows the Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools to comment informally on the programs and activities of the school system.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

ACTION RECOMMENDED FOR ITEMS I, II, & III:

That the School Committee accept the report and take such action as it deems in the best interest of the school system.



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: **IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:** MEETING DATE: **03/15/23**
A. Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations: Discussion & Potential Vote to Appoint

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 59, an appointment of an individual to an assistant superintendent position is by the vote of the School Committee on a candidate recommended by the Superintendent. The search process for this position is in its final stage, and it is possible that Dr. Sawyer may present a recommendation to the Committee on March 15. Dr. Sawyer will provide a memorandum with his recommendation if a vote will be requested at this meeting.

ACTION RECOMMENDED if a recommendation is made:

That the School Committee vote to appoint *candidate's name here*, as recommended by the Superintendent, for the position of Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:
B. State of the District: Report

MEETING DATE: 03/15/23

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Dr. Sawyer will share his perspective regarding the current state of the Shrewsbury Public Schools. The report will be provided under separate cover in advance of the meeting.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee hear the report and take whatever steps it deems necessary in the interests of the Shrewsbury Public Schools.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **V. Curriculum**

MEETING DATE: **03/15/23**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF & STUDENTS AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VI. Policy**

MEETING DATE: **03/15/23**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: **VII. Finance & Operations**

MEETING DATE: **03/15/23**

A. Fiscal Year 2024 Special Education Budget: Report

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Annually, the leadership of the Special Education & Pupil Personnel Services provides information regarding programming for students who are eligible for special education or other student services, and review key budget information projected for the following fiscal year. Ms. Belsito and Ms. Bartlett will provide a summary of the enclosed report at the meeting and answer any questions the Committee may have. They will also provide specific information about the ongoing plans for the new RISE transition program for students requiring post-high school services up until age 22 (see enclosed informational document).

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee hear the report and take whatever steps it deems necessary in the interests of the Shrewsbury Public Schools.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Margaret M. Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

Meghan E. Bartlett, Assistant Director of Special Education & Pupil Personnel Services



**Special Education and Pupil Personnel Department
Overview & Budget Report to the Shrewsbury School Committee
March 2023**

**Margaret M. Belsito
Assistant Superintendent for Student Services**

**Meghan E. Bartlett
Assistant Director of Special Education & Pupil Personnel Services**

The mission of the Special Education and Pupil Personnel Department is to identify students who meet the federal and state criteria for a disability requiring specialized instruction and/or accommodations through an Individualized Educational Program or 504 Accommodation Plan. It is Shrewsbury's responsibility to provide services in the least restrictive environment that will empower access to our students to become active members of society based on their individual strengths and abilities. As a district, we are committed to providing an inclusive setting of dedicated multidisciplinary teams while involving parents and community members to help meet the academic and social-emotional needs of all students in a respectful and positive environment.

Our vision is to afford *all* students the opportunity to succeed through high quality, evidence-based practices, and we will do so by connecting and communicating with families, students, school teams, and the greater community. Together, we will focus on the positive attributes and recognize the individual strengths and achievements of our students while promoting their future successes.

Our Department, and district, prioritizes equity and access for all students. This ongoing work has ensured that the Shrewsbury Public Schools continue to meet high expectations with efficient and thoughtful resources and programs to meet the needs of all learners. This year we prioritized the following initiatives.

1. **Inclusive Practices/Co-Teaching:** Professional development opportunities for educators working in their years 1-3 of Co-Teaching have been deployed by our Special Education Directors by level. Professional development was designed to provide classroom and special educators with an overview of current Co-Teaching models across all grade spans from Preschool through Grade 12. We proudly recognize that the district now has over 40 teams of Co-Teachers. Our designed professional development encompassed the following topics: how to effectively use common planning, how to create specially designed instruction, research-based instructional strategies, and communication/collaboration tools.
2. **Social-Emotional, Mental and Behavioral Health Collaborations:** Social-emotional learning committees (district and building) along with current clinical department services (psychologists, school adjustment counselors, clinical coordinators, and social worker) continue to gather data around practices and procedures. A full report on Counseling and Mental Health and Nursing services will be presented at the end of March.
3. **Social-Emotional Behavioral Academy:** Our district was selected to participate in the [Social-Emotional Behavioral Academy](#) which is a three year endeavor. Over the course of next three years, our district team will be working towards integrating and aligning SEL and mental health supports with existing systems and practices guided by a Multi-Tiered System of Support framework. We will be supported by our Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Educational Development Center's technical assistance specialist, Lauren Gilman. She will guide us through the three phase process: assessing and planning; implementing and providing; and scaling and sustaining SEL and mental health systems. In year one, our focus has been on assessing our district's strengths and identifying priority areas of growth.
4. **Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC):** The SEPAC and Special Education leadership continue to have open communication. This year SEPAC has held the following events including: General Meetings, Collaborative Problem Solving, and ADHD Essentials.
5. **Paraprofessional Support:** Our special education leadership partners with building teams to assist in determining the level of additional support for Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Technicians, Child Specific Aides, and Special Education Instructional Aides to ensure our students are accessing their free and appropriate public education. This year, the district experienced a large number of students move into Shrewsbury that required additional support in the classroom to ensure students were able to access their education in a least restrictive environment.
6. **Program Evaluation:** A collaborative relationship was established with the [JED Foundation](#). The JED Foundation is a nonprofit whose mission is to protect the emotional health and provide suicide prevention of the nation's teens and young adults, giving them

the skills and supports they need to strive in a healthy manner. The JED team will offer support for senior leadership for initiatives and resources aimed at promoting and protecting mental health by reviewing our policies, procedures and processes in discipline, crisis management, and truancy/absenteeism. JED will provide ongoing, customized technical-assistance support; two virtual focus groups with district leaders and school community members; report findings from review/focus groups and recommendations; and a presentation of findings in-person to all appropriate stakeholders.

7. **Professional Development:** This school year, all special education staff members have been participating in meaningful professional development opportunities during department meetings with a focus on progress monitoring. **Data collection and progress monitoring** practices were introduced as part of DESE's [New IEP Improvement Project](#) which will be implemented during the 2023-2024 school year. In working with Special Education Directors, staff have had the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues to evaluate current progress monitoring practices and began developing systems for data collection to monitor student achievement and growth in alignment with the New IEP. **Progress monitoring** is the standardized process of evaluating student performance toward a performance target, based on rates of improvement from frequent assessment of a specific skill. **Data collection** is the process of gathering quantitative and qualitative information on specific variables with the aim of evaluating outcomes or gleaning actionable insights. Purposeful data collection requires a process to ensure the data is clear, consistent, and reliable.
8. **Paraprofessional Professional Development:** This year, we relied on the skills of some of our clinical team to provide professional development to all of our paraprofessional colleagues. After listening to our keynote speaker, Ms. Noelle Freeman, Director of School Nursing, began the day with a training on how to use Epi-Pens. Following that, all paraprofessionals participated in a rotating schedule that covered the following topics. **Self Care and Trauma Informed Care:** *Felicite Boisvert*, District Social Worker; *Jamie Millett*, Director of Counseling and Mental Health Services; **The Principles of Behavior:** *Aimee Bunn*, ELC Coordinator; *Dr. Colleen Canty*, Clinical Coordinator; *Daryl Rynning*, Clinical Coordinator; **Introduction to Crisis De-Escalation:** *Alycia Hudson*, ELC Coordinator; *Janet Murphy*, ELC Coordinator; *Rob Parry-Cruwys*, Clinical Coordinator; **& Prompting Hierarchy:** *Nicole Bradley*, Clinical Coordinator; *Colleen Callahan*, ELC Coordinator.
9. **Unified Champion Schools:** Unified Champion Schools are accomplished by implementing inclusive activities, inclusive youth leadership opportunities, and whole school engagement through Special Olympics. The inclusivity of this program is designed to be woven into the fabric of the school, enhancing current efforts and providing rich opportunities that lead to meaningful change in creating a socially

inclusive school that supports and engages all learners. Our preschool, middle schools and high school have the designation of being Unified Champion Schools. This year, all of our elementary schools have been working toward the Unified Champion Status and are on target to receive the designation at the end of this school year. Each elementary school has established Unified Clubs, and have student leadership to perpetuate the mission of our department of creating inclusive schools. As of June 2023, Shrewsbury Public Schools should be a Unified Champion School district.

- 10. Extended School Year Services (ESY):** ESY services are required and developed for students with disabilities who qualify for a continuation of services based on the nature or severity of their disability, or exhibit substantial regression, and/or require a significant recoupment period for loss skills throughout the school year. ESY eligibility and data collections help teams make data-driven decisions. This data is used in annual IEP meetings to help the team determine the level of need for extended school year services. Throughout the school year, the ESY Coordinators and the special education leadership address: staffing, program organization, student recommendations and qualification for services. The programming needs are determined based on team recommendations in order to prepare for a July 2023 start date.
- 11. Child Find:** This mandate requires all school districts to identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. This obligation to identify all children who may need special education services exists even if the school is not providing special education services to the child. Child Find expands to children who are residents of Shrewsbury, and may be enrolled in preschools and daycare. It also encompasses students who are residents and non-resident students within our local private schools.

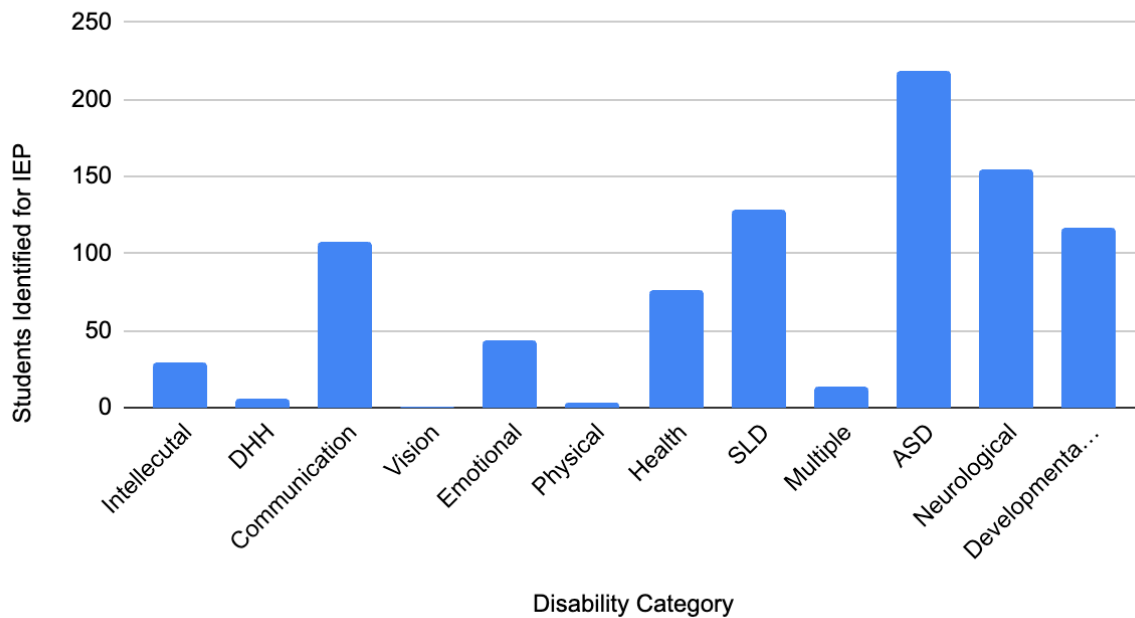
Department Overview

The following information was compiled through collaboration with Central Office and Special Education leadership teams, as well as staff input, observations, and ongoing conversations with students and families.

Student Demographics

As of February 2023, we have 893 students with active Individualized Education Programs (IEP) for ages 3-22 who are accessing special education services. The concurrent data indicated that there are 84 students with active referrals for Special Education. This number is included in the total Special Education number of 977 students. Students in referral are considered special education students until eligibility has been determined. The chart below breaks down the educational disability by eligibility of service. As it has been historically, qualification under Autism (ASD) remains our highest educational disability category.

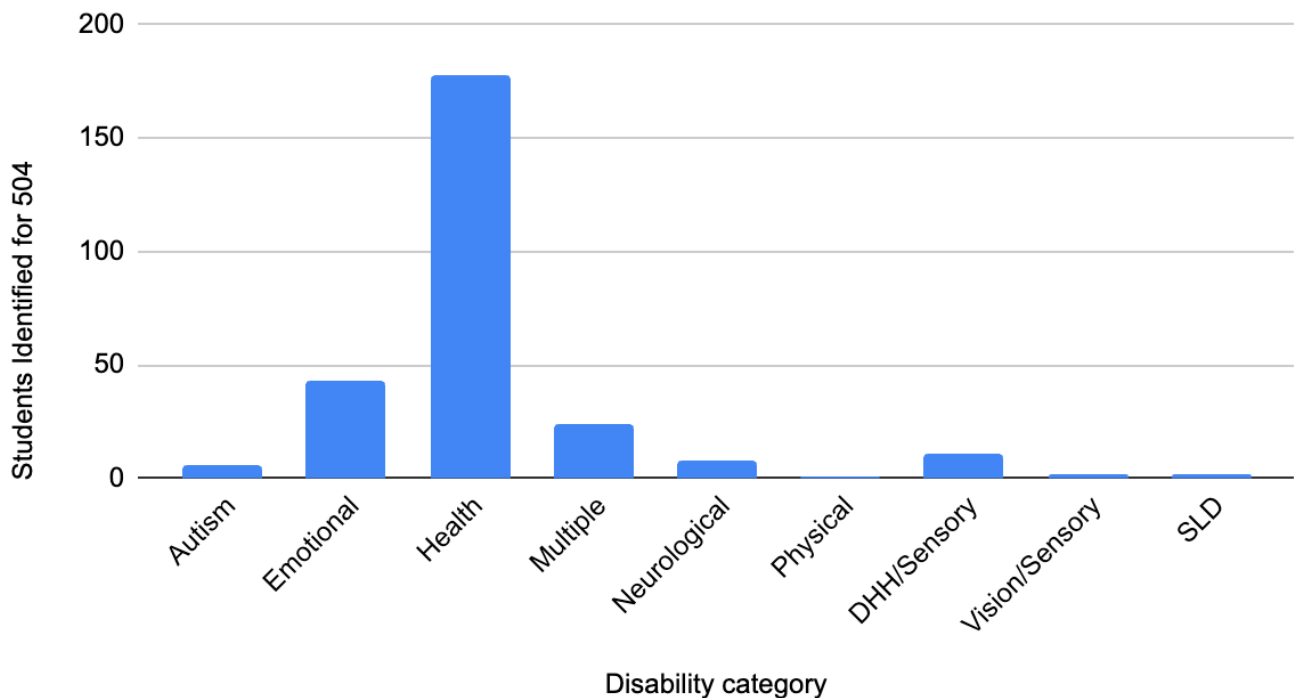
Students Identified for IEP



504 Accommodation Plans define eligibility as a diagnosed disability that is limiting one or more major life functions. To be eligible for a 504 plan, the student needs to have a record and be regarded as having such an impairment. Students that are eligible for a 504 Accommodation Plans do not require specially designed instruction, however, they do require accommodations within the classroom to access their education. An additional 336 students are receiving accommodations within the classroom setting through Section 504 Accommodation Plans. There are an additional 10 students in referral for eligibility.

The district continues to identify Health impairment as the primary disability category for 504 eligibility. Many students that have this as a category may identify as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, food allergies, Diabetes, Asthma or other health impairments. The district is also seeing an increase trend in students with emotional disabilities becoming eligible for 504 Accommodation Plans. The Student Services Department will continue to support students with a variety of disabilities within both the IEP and 504 eligibility processes.

Students Identified for 504



Analysis of Services

There continues to be an increasing trend of students qualifying for 504 Accommodation Plans based on data collected over a 4 year period. This increase is due to the larger number of referrals; students moving into district; students with both IEPs and 504s; continued Child Find activities; impact of the school closure, health pandemic, and mental health crisis.

School Year	Total Number of Enrolled Students	Students with Section 504 Accommodation Plans	Percentage of Students Receiving 504s	Students with Individualized Educational Programs	Percentage of Students with IEPs
2018-2019	6,207	206	3%	962	15.4%
2019-2020	6,251	235	3%	1,020	16.3%
2021-2022	6,008	275	4.5%	996	16.6%
2022-2023	6,076	336	5.5%	977	16.1%

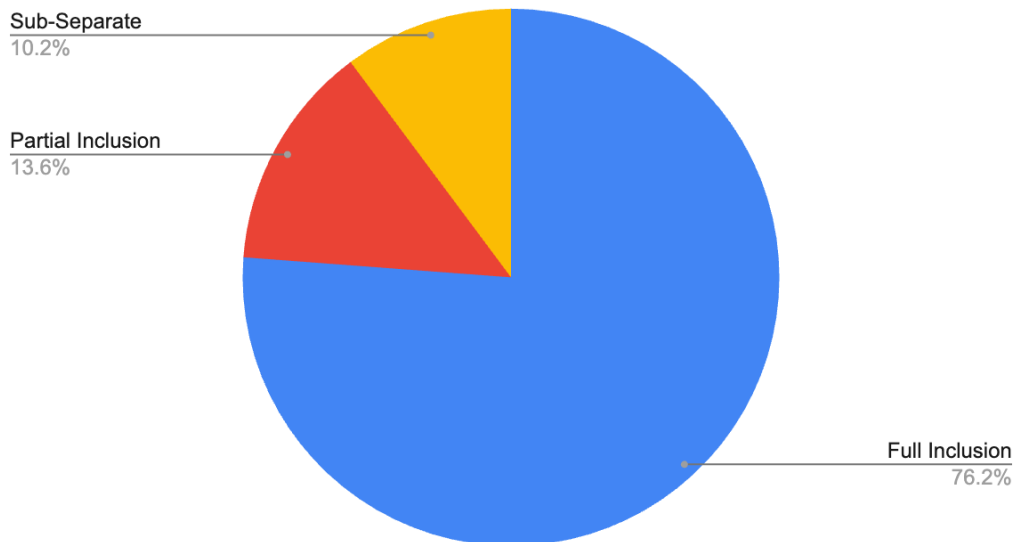
*Note: percentages include students currently in referral

Specialized Instruction Services

All of Shrewsbury's school buildings offer a myriad of services to meet each child's specific needs. These services are determined through the team process and are designed through discussion regarding placement and service delivery options. Students access Inclusion, Partial Inclusion, or Substantially Separate options based on the team process when calculating the least restrictive setting for individual students. Full Inclusion is defined as students having special education services outside the general education classroom less than 20% of the time. Partial Inclusion is defined as special education services outside the general education classroom 21-60% of the time. A Substantially Separate classroom is defined as special education services outside the general education classroom more than 60% of the time.

Our mission aligns with the graph below by designing effective education for students within the least restrictive environment. All students are general education students. As such, receiving one's education in a full inclusion program should always be the first instructional placement of a child. Seventy-six percent of our students are receiving their specially designed instruction within full inclusion programs.

Number of Students

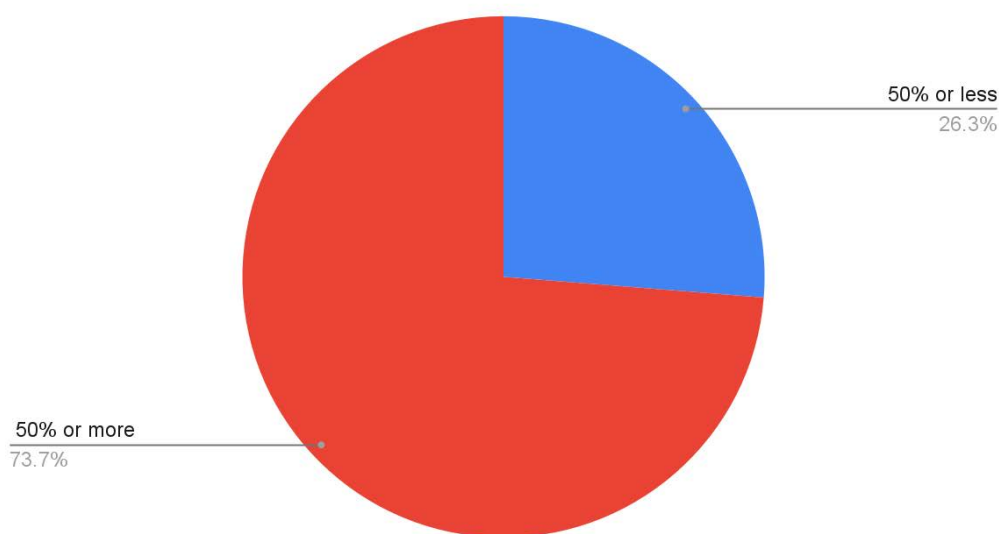


Students access their education through specialized designed instruction using the aforementioned criteria of Full Inclusion, Partial Inclusion, and Substantially Separate. Contingent on calculating the least restrictive setting, students may access instruction from general education teachers, special education teachers who carry either a license in either

moderate or severe needs, related service providers such as speech & language therapists, occupational and physical therapists, clinical staff, etc., and/or paraprofessionals.

Our youngest learners with special needs, ages 3-5, continue to have inclusive learning experiences through our integrated preschool programs and kindergarten. Their programming is broken into hours per week where they are integrated into the general education classroom. Below highlights the amount of students accessing their personal least restrictive learning environment.

Time Spent In Early Childhood Integrated Classroom



In comparing both graphs, it should be highlighted that the majority of all Shrewsbury students who receive special education services are fully included and learning for the majority of the day along with their peers. This continues to celebrate our 2018-2022 strategic priority of designing Learning Environments Where Everyone's Success Matters, while maintaining high learning expectations for all learners.

An article published by [K-12 Dive](#), written by Kara Arundel reviewed a study conducted by Indiana's University's Center on Education and Lifelong Learning related to outcomes for students in inclusive settings for high school students. The article indicated that the following,

"Reviews of outcomes on the state ISTEP assessment showed 10th graders with disabilities who spent 80% or more time in a general education classroom scored an average of 24.3 points higher in English/language arts and 18.4 points higher in math than their peers in low-inclusion settings."

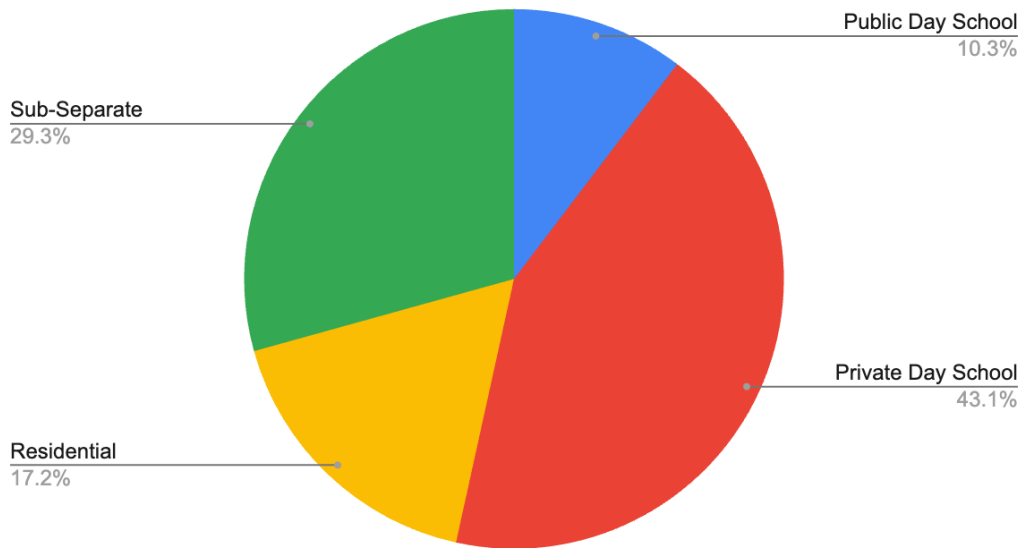
Additionally, students with disabilities in high inclusion settings were 22% more likely than students in low inclusion settings to graduate with a Core 40 diploma by passing the state assessment rather than receiving a waiver. This is evidence that students in high-inclusion settings were more prepared for successful postsecondary educational and employment opportunities, according to the study.”

Out of District Programming

As previously mentioned, the mission of the Special Education Department is to provide services in the least restrictive environment that will empower and provide access to our students to become active members of society based on their individual strengths and abilities. There remains a population of students that, due to the scope and severity of their disability, the child will require a more restrictive educational experience in order to make effective progress commensurate with their disability. When identifying programs for students to access their education, teams must consider placements that are gradually more restrictive than public schools.

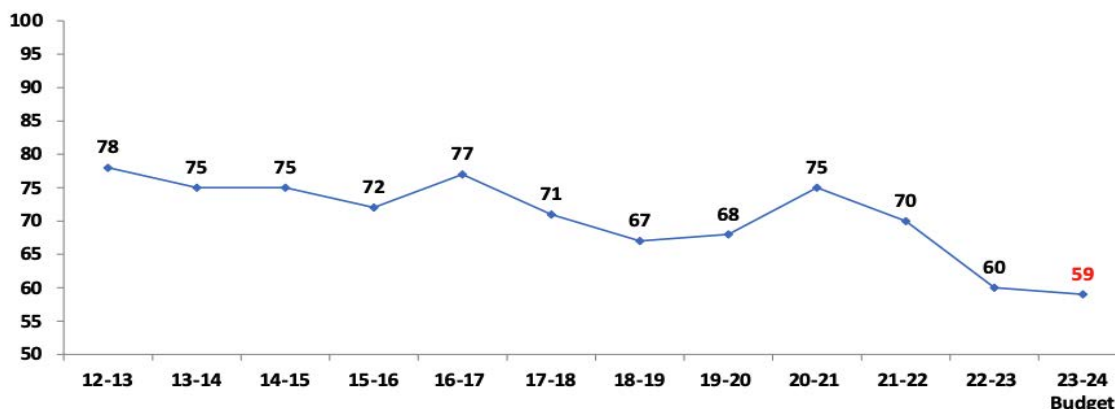
When considering out of district placements, approved programs grow in restrictive nature. Some out of district programs are still considered Substantially Separate placements. These are through collaboratives that are placed within a public school, or for students ages 18-22 accessing their entitlement services through a collaborative placement and are placed within the community setting. Students that access their education in a Public Day placement are accessing their education through a collaborative placement governed by a board of area town administrators. Private Day placements are for students who require an even more restrictive setting. These placements are [Chapter 766](#) approved placements and are sanctioned by the DESE. Residential Placements are also governed by the DESE. However, these placements are for students that due to the scope of their disability and safety needs, the child requires 24 hour 7 days a week and 365 days coverage and supervision.

Student Accessing OOD Placements



Out of district enrollment is projected to decrease in the following fiscal year. This was forecasted when Shrewsbury began designing their own 18-22 program. The students that are eligible for entitlement services historically would have been referred to a collaborative and would have been in a Substantially Separate placement. For the following fiscal year, this equates to 15-19 students remaining in our district and their local community to receive their entitlement services. In addition, there also continues to be a staffing shortage within out of district placements which impacts acceptance. Shrewsbury has 6 students who are waiting to be accepted to an out of district program that range from residential to substantially-separate based upon the needs of the students.

Enrollment Projections: Out of District Special Education Students



The Special Education Department continues to review the profile of students that require more restrictive placements. This is a multi-tiered approach that includes further examination of the student demographics that are currently being serviced in an out of district placement and identifying if their unique needs could be met within the district, and/or what supports and services would be needed to have students transition to a less restrictive setting. Shrewsbury special education staff pride themselves in being able to design in-district programming to meet the needs of our students.

Out of District Fiscal Impact

As indicated above, the out of district budget is a moving target and may shift as students are accepted into approved special education programs. Typically, the annual approved tuition increase is between 3-4% of the annual cost for most out of district placements. The district has projected a 4% increase in tuition for students in Substantially Separate and Public Day school placements.

In planning for the next fiscal budget, the district did not use the calculation of 4% increase for Chapter 766 approved programs. The [Operational Services Division](#) sets the tuition prices for M.G.L. approved private special education programs for purchase by cities and towns and Commonwealth departments. This year the Operational Services Division approved an unprecedented 14.1% increase of all Chapter 766 approved schools. For Shrewsbury this is 60% of the out of district placements which will have an impact on the projected budget, even with the decrease of students accessing this level of education. Because the number of students in out of district placements can fluctuate depending on varied circumstances, this projection could shift in either direction in the coming months.

Special Education Circuit Breaker

The state's Special Education Circuit Breaker reimbursement program began in fiscal year 2004 to provide additional funding to districts for high special education costs. Reimbursements are for the district's prior year's expenses. Each spring, the Student Services Office completes and submits claim forms to DESE listing the types and amounts of services, and tuitions provided to students that meet the threshold formula. Rates are determined by the Department and established annually. The Circuit Breaker account is essential to ensuring that municipalities and school districts are able to pay the costs associated with more costly special education placements without cutting from other general and special education areas. Below highlights the allocation of funds through the Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services budget for out of district placements and circuit breaker reimbursement.

For out of district placements, total tuition costs have increased by 11.1%. But the Net Amount in the Town-Appropriated Budget is going down by 7.6% due to using a greater amount of Circuit Breaker funding.

	FY23	FY24 Initial	Difference	Percent Difference
Total Tuitions	\$ 6,485,088	\$ 7,208,035	\$ 722,947	11.1%
Circuit Breaker Funding Use [aka "Offset"]	\$ (2,946,840)	\$ (3,938,345)	\$ (991,505)	33.6%
Net Amount in Town Appropriation Budget	\$ 3,538,248	\$ 3,269,690	\$ (268,558)	-7.6%

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Special Education Grant 240

In Shrewsbury, Federal Special Education Grant 240 primarily funds special education transportation. The 240 Grant also allocates funds for Proportionate Share. Proportionate Share is an amount of the district's IDEA funds allocated to eligible parentally-placed students who are privately educated in the district's geographic boundaries regardless of student's residence and those that are home-schooled and reside in Shrewsbury. The 240 Grant, this fiscal year, was also used to off-set the district's finding of Significant Disproportionality. These funds were used to help support the social-emotional and behavioral needs of our students.

Proportionate Share

In July 2017, DESE issued guidance regarding the IDEA funds through the 240 Grant allocation to monitor Proportionate Share. Annually, our district must calculate the proportionate share for privately placed schools in Shrewsbury and home schooled students. Each year the district must have meaningful consultation with our local private institutions at minimum 3 times a year. The allocated set funds for FY23 was a net sum of \$93,045 to support the needs for students that are eligible and maintain active IEPs. This net sum is calculated using the Department's formula which is based upon the enrollment numbers of students with active IEPs that is provided to Shrewsbury by the private schools.

In terms of expenditures, Shrewsbury has partnered with St. John's High School and their Gregory Academic Center to provide two part time tutors to address the academic and executive functioning needs of eligible students with active IEPs. Shrewsbury also consulted with Gateway School to provide additional academic and social skills support as well as curriculum materials for their students with active IEPs. Shrewsbury does have 7 private schools; however, the other schools in town do not have students with identified disabilities and therefore are not eligible for special education services. Shrewsbury is then not able to partner in expending the proportionate share funds to the other institutions.

Additionally, the United States Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs approved the proposed resolution by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for resolving concerns relating to IDEA funds that school districts were required to spend on parentally-placed private school children with disabilities and home-schooled children with disabilities. As a result, in FY23, Shrewsbury had an additional \$13,275 allocation of these resolution funds for all 7 private institutions regardless of having identified students with special needs. All private schools were notified of this funding and most are considering professional development opportunities, supplies and materials.

Significant Disproportionality

In August of 2019, the district received notification regarding Significant Disproportionality. DESE is required under federal regulations to analyze data from school districts to identify and report to the United States Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs regarding Significant Disproportionality in special education within racial and ethnic groups. This analysis is conducted pursuant to requirements under IDEA. The determination was made following a review of data reported to DESE through the Student Information Management System and the Student Safety and Discipline Reports for the prior three years. DESE determined that our calculated risk ratio for students who identify as white with emotional disabilities exceeded the threshold rate established by the state (4.0).

For FY23, the state indicated that we will need to reserve 15% of our 240 Grant for Significant Disproportionality. We were required to shift approximately \$250,000 of grant funds currently used to pay for out of district special education transportation costs to purposes related to addressing the needs of students with emotional disabilities. This year the district needed to continue to implement a Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services and designed a targeted plan to address the students in the subgroup that was significantly disproportionate from age 3 through Grade 12+ with and without disabilities. The district expended these funds to enhance our current supports and services. Specifically, using a Multi-Tiered System of Support, Shrewsbury is targeting Tier 1 social-emotional learning standards, and Tiers 2 and 3 direct targeted instruction. These resources have been utilized by providing professional development

for teachers and other school staff to enable them to deliver scientifically based academic instruction and social- emotional behavioral interventions, including scientifically based literacy instruction, and, if appropriate, instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional software, providing educational and behavioral evaluations, services and supports.

Through the prioritization of the district to support the mental and behavioral health needs for all students, Shrewsbury was no longer found to have over-identified students identified as white with emotional impairments. For this upcoming fiscal year we do not need to set aside the 15% of the 240 Grant. We anticipate to have carryover funds from FY 23 that will be used for FY 24 to continue to support this critical work. The state will continue to issue an annual report regarding Significant Disproportionality. We will continue to monitor for the overidentification of any group of students based on race and ethnicity as it impacts the disproportionality relating to placement, disability type, and discipline.

**Fiscal Year 23-240 IDEA Grant Expenditures for
Disproportionality, Proportionate Share & Resolution Funds**

Budget	Source	Awarded
Stipends	Disproportionality	50,000
Contractual Services	Disproportionality	150,000
Contractual Services	Resolution Funds	10,000
Contractual Services	Proportionate Share	93,045
Supplies and Materials	Disproportionality	53,803
Supplies and Materials	Resolution Funds	3,275

Contracted Services

Student Services uses certified contract specialists to support low incidence disabilities and mandated services. These specialists are within the following domains: Psychiatry, Orientation and Mobility, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Vision Specialists, Behavior, Speech and Language, Teacher of the Deaf, Home Based Services, Teacher of Deaf/Blind, Audiological services, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, and Assistive Technology.

Legal Consultation: Our legal counsel supports the district with administering state and federal laws governing special education. Special education legal counsel helps to support legal decision making as district representation through appeals processes. Despite our team's best efforts to resolve family and district IEP disputes, the school system may need to proceed to mediation, pre-conference hearings and/or hearings through the Bureau of Special Education Appeals in

order to find educational programming appropriate for a student. Full legal representation may be warranted through those proceedings.

Translator/Interpreter: Students and parents receive written and verbal communication in their home language as stated in state and federal law.

Home/Hospital Tutoring: The district must provide tutorial services for students when they are absent for more than 14 consecutive school days or cumulative days due to illness. A physician's statement requesting home/hospital tutoring must be completed in order for the tutoring process to be initiated with the district.

Assessment Materials: Special education staff use standardized assessments for initial evaluations and reevaluations to determine eligibility for special education. Once a testing assessment battery is obsolete, there is a two-year window for when it must be replaced.

The table below shows the recent history and projection for contracted expenses from the Operating Budget.

Contracted Services	FY 22 Budget	FY22 Actual	FY 23 Budget	FY24 Recommended	Difference FY23 to FY 24
Legal Fees	40,000	17,180	41,000	45,000	4,000
Home/Hospital	13,000	0	5,000	5,000	0
Educational Services	82,000	70,745	82,000	82,000	0
Translations	27,500	93,390	50,000	90,000	40,000
Evaluations	17,500	14,529	17,500	17,500	0
Psychological Services	50,000	32,992	50,000	50,000	0
Summer Therapies	7,500	18,250	7,500	10,000	2,500
SPED Therapies	250,000	147,842	206,692	206,692	0

Staffing

Student Services continues to monitor the staffing needs across the district to ensure teams are providing students with the necessary support and the greatest opportunities for independence.

We have seen great success with our programs where students are accessing more of their day independently and are making continued progress across all domains of their education. Even with this focused lens, the district continues to experience staffing challenges given the number of unanticipated move-ins students, along with other students who were identified with high levels of academic, behavioral and complex medical needs.

	FY23	FY24	Difference	Notes
Special Education paraprofessionals	213.45	237.70	24.25	Six existing students had IEP changes requiring paraprofessional support. The net balance of 18 is a combination of move-ins/move-outs and referrals from preschool Early Intervention.

Mental and Behavioral Health

Student mental health is a shared responsibility and commitment for all members of the district/school community. Everyone is included in a community of care and compassion with equitable implementation of all efforts to promote and protect mental health.

Under our 2018-2022 Strategic Priority of Enhanced Well-Being for All, we had an opportunity to specifically create a common understanding of the benefits of the skills, habits, and mindsets of social-emotional behavioral learning and develop a shared, systematic approach to explicitly teach, integrate, and assess these competencies. Counseling, behavioral and mental health support are truly key to increasing our students social and emotional abilities and overall well-being.

Mental and behavioral health professionals play a vital role in identifying, supporting and intervening when students exhibit mental and behavioral health challenges in the school environment. A collaborative approach is taken to working with students presenting with mental health, social-emotional, and behavioral challenges. Thanks to the new position added this school year, our Director of Mental Health and Counseling has been leading the collaboration across the district to streamline our identification, placement and interventions across buildings.

We have teams consisting of staff who work together to identify students with needs in this area, provide recommendations, interventions, support, and closely monitor cases. At the school level this includes Psychologists, Nurses, School Adjustment Counselors, Administrators, Special Educators, and Classroom Educators.

This school year we have added an additional layer of support for students and families by having a District Social Worker. Over the course of this year she has supported families and students with unique life and living situations that require a complex level of care to ensure their basic safety needs are met.

The district staff members benefit from consultation from our Director of Mental Health and Counseling, Clinical Coordinators, Social Worker and contracted Child Psychiatrist who work together to identify students with needs in this area and provide enhanced recommendations, interventions, support, and closely monitor cases. These professionals provide clinical support which are customized to each student, including counseling, behavior management, crisis intervention, family engagement or care coordination. This year we secured two additional Clinical Coordinators to allow these staff members to be more visible within the school buildings to support acute and chronic behavioral needs.

RISE (Reaching Independence through Supported Employment) Program Update

Shrewsbury Public School's RISE program is a post-secondary program designed for students, ages 18 – 22, who qualify for additional learning opportunities following their high school experience. The goal of RISE is to provide students with the skills and experiences they need to successfully and independently navigate their local community. The focus is to increase students' overall independence with functional academic life skills, employment opportunities, and community access.

RISE focuses on ensuring students are able to be contributing members of society. A large part of this is to provide students with opportunities to be active in their local community and become familiar with their community at large. During their time at RISE, students participate in community learning experiences, volunteer and paid work opportunities, and community-based leisure activities. Students practice the skills they have learned in the classroom and apply those skills in the natural community setting. They will participate in community-based activities to learn and practice skills related to independent living, such as shopping, ordering at restaurants, community leisure activities, and travel training. Social and leisure activities are incorporated regularly into RISE programming and might include social groups, games, community leisure activities, and social meetup groups with other 18-22 programs.

Our intention for RISE is to also open a retail business in the center of Shrewsbury. This retail space will allow teachers to target pre-employment skills such as inventory, point of sales, social skills, etc. We are continuing the planning process for the RISE storefront. After surveying various community groups like the Shrewsbury Town Center Association, Shrewsbury Public Schools District Leadership, Shrewsbury High School (SHS) students, Special Education Parent Advisory Council members and the RISE Advisory Committee, our students will be selling

local merchandise set to highlight our lovely town and schools. While shopping, community members will be invited to look around and browse our unique and fun candies, drinks, and more. Our program's staffing plan will include a site-based Coordinator, two Special Educators, Job Coaches and a Retail Business Manager.

RISE and the new retail store will be located in the center of town at 557 Main Street. The district will be leasing the property from Chacharone Properties. Renovations of the site will be completed this spring. The center of town is an ideal location for this business and program. The students will have access to other local businesses or agencies such as police, fire, banking, library, the Shrewsbury Senior Center, and the post office, which will allow them to explore other vocational and work opportunities and travel training. Of note, an additional vehicle was purchased using grant funds for the students to access community internships, field trips, etc. For further RISE information, an informational document is included with this document.

Recommendations for 2023/2024 School Year

Through observations, analysis and collaborative conversations with administrators and staff, the following positions will further develop RISE program integrity and consistency. New investments for next fiscal year will be grant funded. By establishing our own program, next fiscal year, we are projecting an annual savings of over \$83,000 by creating this program "in-house" as opposed to continuing to tuition-out this student population.

Recommended New Investments through IDEA 240 Grant Funds:

RISE Program:

- 2.0 RISE Special Education Teachers
- 1.0 RISE Related Services (Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Counseling)
- 1.0 RISE Retail Store Manager
- 8.0 RISE Job Coaches/Paraprofessionals

In conclusion, and as stated in previous reports, our district, with continued support from families and stakeholders, is committed to providing a high-quality public education to every child, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, cultural background, sexual orientation and identity, exposure to trauma, disability status, housing insecurity or immigrant status. We aim to structure professional development for staff so that we enhance our shared understanding and ability to engage in inclusive and culturally proficient practices; the skills, habits, and mindsets of social and emotional learning, and the mental and behavioral health of all.



Shrewsbury Public Schools

March 2023

The purpose of this document is to provide answers to commonly asked questions related to the program and finances of the new RISE Program.

Program Requirements/Goal

Public school districts are required by law to educate students up to age 22 if their disability warrants services beyond high school. Shrewsbury Public Schools has typically sent our 18-22 year old population to the Assabet Valley Collaborative in Marlboro for these services. We pay a tuition and transportation cost for each student we send there.

Creating the in-house RISE Program will allow us to keep our students in district, in their own community, and receive a high-quality program at the same or lesser cost. It is very important to note that this is a mandated educational program that will contain a business operation as part of its programming. While this will be a “real” business, the program is not dependent on the business aspect for its funding; however, any profits will offset the overhead cost of the business. The program is projected to be a cost-effective alternative to paying to transport and enroll our 18-22 year old students in an out-of-district transition program.

The goal of creating the RISE Program is to provide students with the skills and experiences they need to successfully and independently navigate their local community. The focus is to increase students’ overall independence with functional academic life skills, employment opportunities, and community access. Best practices in transition services continue to evolve, including an increased emphasis on providing community-based opportunities for students to develop key life skills based upon their post-secondary vision and partnering with adult agencies who will support the students upon their 22nd birthday.

RISE looks to provide students with meaningful employment opportunities in their local community that focus on each student’s individual interests and strengths. Through the program students will have the opportunity to develop these skills through volunteer opportunities, internships, and paid employment. Once a student demonstrates independent employment skills through individual internships additional opportunities can be identified.

Curriculum Planning

The core curriculum with focus on these key areas:

- Functional Life Skills
- Employment
- Career Preparation
- Functional Academics
- Community Navigation and Safety
- Health and Relationships
- Cooking
- Home Maintenance
- Leisure

Similar Public School Programs in Other Districts

While all schools are required to provide services to 18-22 year olds with disabilities when warranted by the IEP, not all of them have their own retail operation. There is a growing trend to do this and listed below are just a few districts in our area who have opened a retail operation.

Westboro: Sugar Shack
 Grafton: Bread Guy Breads
 Hopkinton: Excel Program

Projected Enrollment

Given what we know about our current students and their capacities and disabilities, we are projecting the following enrollment for the next four years. Please keep in mind that students may enter the program at age 18 and stay, if appropriate, up to age 22. Students will be aging into the program, exiting the program, and remaining in the program during the course of these four years.

'23-'24= 18 students
 '24-'25= 24 students
 '25-'26= 31 students
 '26-'27= 32 students

Property Lease

The property at 557 Main Street was secured through a competitive procurement process that was extended several times due to a lack of responses but resulting in a successful outcome in September 2023. Shrewsbury Town Counsel was the lead in negotiating lease terms with the property owner.

We have entered into a five year lease that will commence upon completion of renovations. The owner has agreed to fund a \$296,420 renovation project with that cost already implicitly

factored in the proposed and agreed monthly lease payment. We expect the renovation project to be completed by April/May 2023. At the end of the fifth year, there is an option to extend the lease for an additional two years.

A copy of the property lease costs for all five years is shown below:

LEASE

THIS LEASE (this "Lease") is made as of the 15th day of December, 2022 by and between CP 557 Main Street, LLC, a Massachusetts limited liability company having a principal place of business at One West Boylston Street, Suite LL05, Worcester, Massachusetts 01605 ("Landlord"), and The Town of Shrewsbury, having a principal place of business at 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545 ("Tenant"), for the land and the building located at 557 Main Street, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545 (such building, together with the land upon which they are situated, being herein referred to as the "Premises"). The following schedule (the "Schedule") sets forth certain basic terms of this Lease:

SCHEDULE

1. Premises:The land and the building located at 557 Main Street, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. The building portion of the Premises (the "Building") contains approximately 3,636 +/- rentable square feet of floor area as shown on the plans described on Exhibit A and incorporated herein by this reference.

2. Annual Base Rent:

Operating Year 1:	\$105,444.00
Operating Year 2:	\$108,607.32
Operating Year 3:	\$111,879.72
Operating Year 4:	\$115,224.84
Operating Year 5:	\$118,679.04

3. Monthly Base Rent:

Lease Months 1-12:	\$8,787.00
Lease Months 13-24:	\$9,050.61
Lease Months 25-36:	\$9,323.31
Lease Months 37-48:	\$9,602.07
Lease Months 49-60:	\$9,889.92

Transportation Services

a) Home to School Transportation: per legal mandate, students are provided "home to school" transportation just as they did in high school. For the '23-24 school year and beyond we have contracted van services via AA Transportation to provide this service.

b) Field Trips, Life Skills, & Other Transportation: Through special education grant funds the district purchased a van for use by RISE Program staff. We have a second van on order which will be needed given the enrollment increase for FY24 and need for multiple activities to be occurring simultaneously.

The School Dept. utilizes the town refueling station located at the SELCO operations and the vehicle is insured under the town's commercial vehicle coverage.

The Asst. Manager for Finance and Operations [April Yu] has direct responsibility for monitoring van maintenance services.

Retail Store Operations

We expect store hours to be Tuesday through Saturday, 10am-4pm and closed Sunday and Monday.

The retail store manager will be responsible for all of the merchandising strategy, store operations and effectiveness. Specific product mix and space allocations will be made after the retail manager is hired and renovations completed. It will be a "general store" concept with a mix of candy, Shrewsbury-centric products, and a rotating/seasonal mix of "pop-up vendor" products. All of these decisions will be made in the context of our ability to train students with disabilities in the basics of customer service, inventory management, cashiering etc.

On a related note, we plan to make public parking available in the evenings/non operating hours and will communicate this via on site signage.

We are using the following start-up timeline based upon expected completion of the renovations. All of these dates are subject to change based on our capacity/pacing to complete.

Ongoing	-Branding/retail store website framework -Communication with student families for Summer/Fall 2023
March	-Hire teaching staff for Summer 2023 start
May 1st	-Renovations complete/Move-in -Hire job coaches/paraprofessionals for Summer 2023 start
June	-Begin educational programming from this location with current students [3] -Hire the retail store manager -Begin outfitting retail store fixtures, point-of-sale (POS) system
July	-Operate summer program from this location

- Develop specific merchandising strategy and order initial inventory
- August
 - Set-up inventory and pricing strategy
 - Staff training on store operations/POS system
 - Begin marketing store opening
- September
 - Silent store opening/operational adjustments
- Sept./October - Grand Opening

Budget & Funding Sources

A program specific budget has been provided via School Committee report on March 15, 2023. The total program costs for FY24 are budgeted at just over \$1.1M. The cost per pupil is **less than** what we would otherwise be spending to send these same students to an out of district placement.

For FY24 we have funding available from two sources to get this program going. First, we will use the American Rescue Plan Grant [one-time funding], totaling \$390,954 for start up expenses related to equipping and outfitting the educational spaces and retail operation. Secondly, we will use available funds [FY23 carry-over] from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA-240 grant] to fund the staffing and facility-related expenses. The IDEA grant is an annual, recurring grant and we plan to use this source and town-appropriated funds in future fiscal years [FY25 and beyond] to fund the recurring RISE Program costs. [These are dollars that would otherwise be budgeted in our special education tuition account to pay for these required services.]

Building Maintenance and Operations

In accordance with our lease, the owner is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the structure, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems. We are responsible for routine maintenance [clogged sink] or items broken after occupancy [holes in a drywall]. We will engage Public Bldgs support for projects within their scope and capacity and rely upon their contractors for items beyond their scope.

Security

We plan to install a video surveillance system that is on our network and will have the same real-time view and approximately 3 week storage capacity. The cameras will be installed by the School Dept. contractor.

We are purchasing a cash register/point of sale system and software. We expect to primarily have cash-free payments but will inevitably have some portion of cash receipts. Like our school student activity account operations, we will maintain an onsite drop safe and make regular bank deposits.

Insurance Coverages

The RISE Program operations located at 557 Main Street will be covered by the Town's General Liability, property contents, and business interruption insurances just like our other schools are covered. The owner maintains his own property and liability insurances as well.

Fundraising

A team consisting of The Asst. Superintendent for Student Services, the Assistant Director of Special Education, the RISE Program Coordinator, Asst. Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Wellbeing, Asst. Superintendent for Finance & Operations, and Development Coordinator has already begun to meet to discuss fundraising support of the RISE Program.

We have been approached by several institutions that wish to provide business sponsorships. We are looking at some models similar to funding opportunities created for the turf field project. We have also created an online donation link on the RISE Program website to receive individual donations.



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: **VII. Finance & Operations**

MEETING DATE: **03/15/23**

B. Massachusetts School Building Authority Statement of Interest for Potential Addition to Shrewsbury High School: Vote

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On March 1 the School Committee heard a report on a recently conducted PreK-12 Space and Enrollment Study that identified the district's highest space priority need to be at Shrewsbury High School. The final version of the full PreK-12 Space Study report is being provided under separate cover. At the meeting a recommendation will be made to submit a Statement of Interest (SOI) for Shrewsbury High School to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for consideration of a potential future project to expand Shrewsbury High School. An SOI is a no-commitment request to the MSBA to consider inviting the Town of Shrewsbury into the process to consider a potential project that would be funded in part by the MSBA. MSBA grants can cover a significant portion of project costs and lessen the tax burden on the local community. A report from Mr. Collins and additional information about the MSBA and the SOI process are enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

Request a motion that:

Having convened in an open meeting on March 15, 2023, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the School Committee of Shrewsbury Public Schools [Town of Shrewsbury, MA], in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, vote to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 2023 for Shrewsbury High School located at 64 Holden Street, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future to alleviate persistent severe overcrowding [Priority#2]; to replace and modernize the schools roof and HVAC systems which are near end of life and install new, energy-efficient systems [Priority#5]; to provide an addition to the school so that a full range of programs including technical training via Innovation Pathways Programs and/or Chapter 74 vocational/technical programs [Priority#7], and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town of Shrewsbury to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Patrick C. Collins

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

14 March 2023

To: School Committee

Subj: RECOMMENDATION TO VOTE TO SUBMIT A STATEMENT OF INTEREST
FOR SHREWSBURY HIGH SCHOOL TO THE MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL BUILDING AUTHORITY

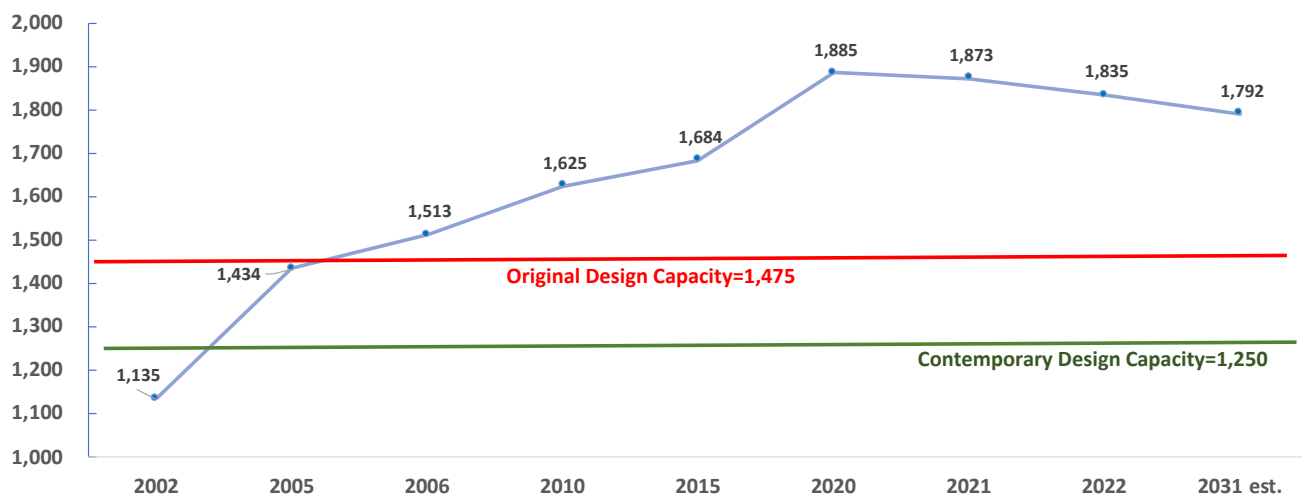
Background

Town Meeting appropriated funding as part of the Beal School Project to conduct a PreK-12 Space and Enrollment Study that would assess our current school facilities capacity and condition in the context of our ten-year projected enrollment at each grade level.

This comprehensive study was undertaken by architectural firm LPAA in the Spring 2022 and just recently completed. The final draft report is sent under separate cover. The ten-year enrollment projection report was completed by McKibben Demographics.

Highest Priority Identified

Clearly, the highest space priority identified was the need at Shrewsbury High School. The school opened in 2002 and since 2006 its enrollment has exceeded its design capacity. The ten-year enrollment forecast for the high school projects continued severe overcrowding.



Working with the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] to Secure Grant Funding

The MSBA was formed in 2008 as a result of legislation to provide some standardization, industry specialization, construction oversight, and partial funding for public schools. Most schools seek MSBA financial support in their school construction/renovation projects as their grants can cover a significant portion of the costs and lessen the tax burden on the local community.

Working with the MSBA is a highly-regulated process that typically ranges about six years long from start to finish for a new school or major renovation or addition.

Applications for funding typically far exceed the MSBA funding capacity so it can take years of repeated applications before being accepted into their pipeline.

Enclosed Materials

A myriad of support materials and a PowerPoint presentation are enclosed with this report that provide additional explanatory information about the MSBA and the Statement of Interest [SOI] process.

Required Votes and Vote Language

The MSBA legal team requires very specific vote language be used in order for each community to submit with their application. Both the School Committee and Select Board must each have majority votes in order to proceed with an application. The recommended vote language for the School Committee is printed below.

Resolved:

Having convened in an open meeting on March 15, 2023, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the School Committee of Shrewsbury Public Schools [Town of Shrewsbury, MA], in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 2023 for Shrewsbury High School located at 64 Holden Street, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future to alleviate persistent severe overcrowding [Priority#2]; to replace and modernize the schools roof and HVAC systems which are near end of life and install new, energy-efficient systems [Priority#5]; to provide an addition to the school so that a full range of programs including technical training via Innovation Pathways Programs and/or Chapter 74 vocational/technical programs [Priority#7], and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town of Shrewsbury to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Massachusetts School Building Authority

Statement of Interest Process

Patrick C. Collins

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

15 March 2023

Topics

- The Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA]
- The LPAA PreK-12 Space and Enrollment Study
- The Statement of Interest Process [SOI]
- Recommended Vote to Support an SOI Submittal for Shrewsbury High School

The Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA]

- Formed by the state legislature in 2008
- Empowered to oversee public school construction, renovation, and improvements and allocate grants to partially fund projects based upon a set of objective, need-based criteria
- Has brought standardization, cost-efficiencies, and professionalism into this industry through a set of regulations and oversight
- Partners with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on space and program needs

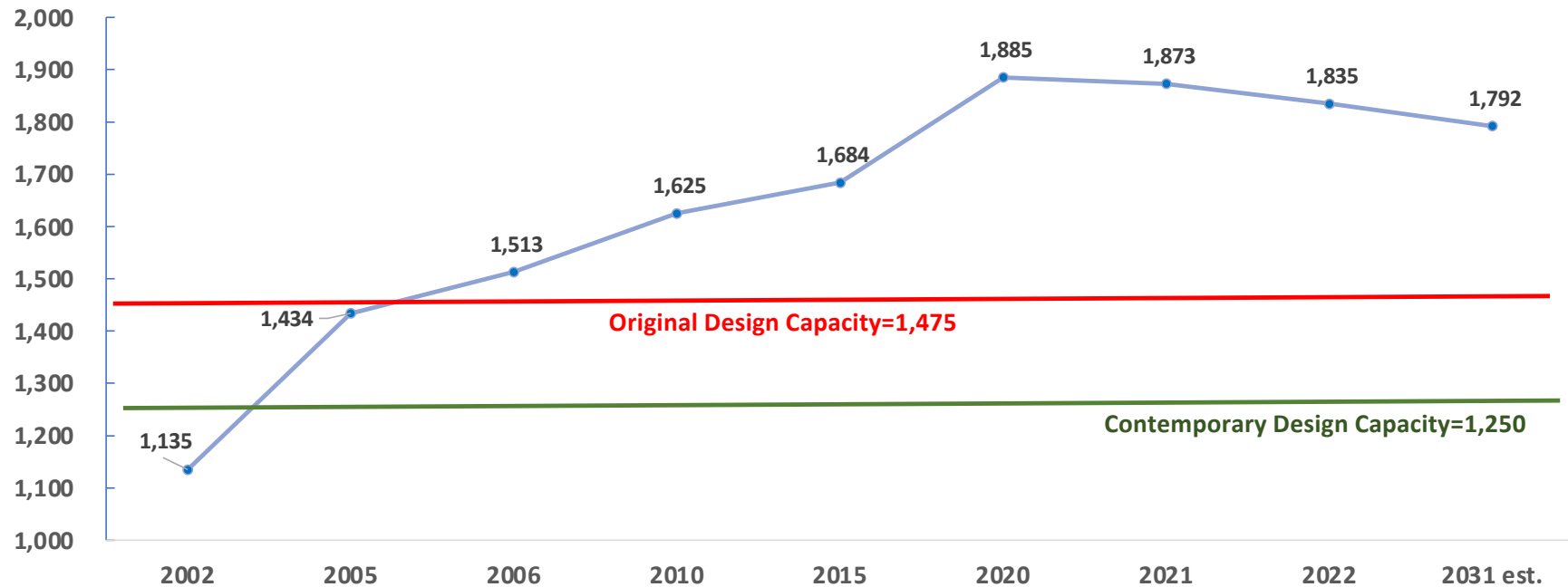
The Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA]

- Shrewsbury has worked with the MSBA on the Sherwood Middle School and Beal School projects.
- We are currently in their “Accelerated Repair Program” pipeline to replace the Oak Middle School windows.
- Grant funding is primarily based on a community’s socio-economics with the range of state financial support from 31% to 80% of eligible costs.

LPAA Enrollment and Space Study

- This in-depth study identified [Shrewsbury High School is the current highest priority](#) based on its status as significantly overcrowded based on the difference between its design capacity and enrollment.

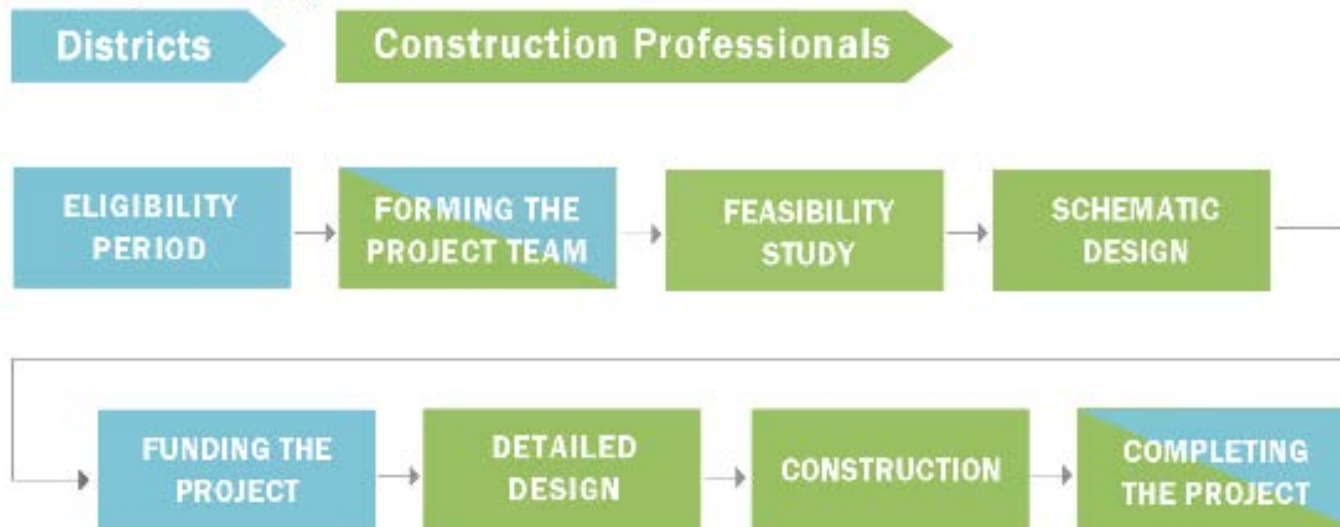
Shrewsbury High School Enrollment History



Capital Projects with MSBA Can Take **Six Years**

MSBA Building Process

Steps primarily for:



The Statement of Application Period

- The 2023 application window is January 13, 2023 to April 14, 2023.
- SOI submittals are non-binding on both the MSBA nor the Town of Shrewsbury.
- This is a “competitive” process with limited annual funding from MSBA. The schools with greatest need are selected.

What Are the Chances of Being Selected?

- In 2022 only 10 of 54 [19%] “Core Program” applicants were accepted.
- Of the 10 selected schools the schools ranged in age from 1927 to 1976
 - 1 Voc./Tech high school
 - 3 high schools
 - 2 middle schools
 - 4 elementary schools

Year	Total Number of SOIs Submitted	Number of Core Program SOIs Submitted	Number of Core Program Invitations	Number of Green Repair or Accelerated Repair Program SOIs Submitted	Number of Green Repair or Accelerated Program Repair Invitations	Number of SCILAB SOIs Submitted	Number of SCILAB Program Invitations
2008	431	425	104	6	6		
2009	237	206	41	31	31		
2010	224	202	19	22	22		
2011	371	184	18	187	149		
2012	280	198	11	69	36	13	11
2013	201	123	17	78	47		
2014	229	110	18	119	51		
2015	158	97	26	61	44		
2016	156	89	17	67	49		
2017	156	83	15	73	36		
2018	130	70	12	60	34		
2019	144	61	11	83	42		
2020	161	71	15	90	25		
2021	118	58	17	60	28		
2022	121	54	10	67	33		

2008: The MSBA launched the annual filing period.

2011: The MSBA opened the annual filing period twice, which included a dedicated opening for interest in the Green Repair Program and the annual opening.

2012: The MSBA's annual filing period captures interest in the newly created Accelerated Repair Program, the 2012 Science Laboratory Initiative and the Core Program.

What Happens if Not Selected?

- We can wait to re-apply in the 2024 application cycle.
- Some communities, after several years of unsuccessful attempts to secure MSBA grant funds, have moved ahead without MSBA financial support and bear 100% of their project cost.
- The Beal School MSBA reimbursement rate was 54.86% of eligible costs.

Recommended Vote/Rationale

- It is recommended that the School Committee vote to submit a Statement of Interest for the high school using three of their eight priorities:
- Priority #2: Severe and persistent overcrowding
- Priority#5: Replacement/modernization of the roof and HVAC systems nearing end of life and incorporating new, energy efficient systems
- Priority#7: Addition to the building to provide a full range of programs to potentially include some Chapter 74 vocational/technical programs and/or Innovation Pathways Programs

Next Steps

- If the School Committee votes affirmatively to support submitting a Statement of Interest, then the following steps would need to occur to complete the process:
 - A majority vote of the elect Board to support submitting an SOI
 - Completion of the SOI form by April 14, 2023

*Note, we likely would not learn results of our submittal until December 2023-January 2024 timeframe.

Questions?

Core Program Statement of Interest Process Overview

Introduction

The Massachusetts School Building Authority's (the "MSBA's") grant program is a non-entitlement, competitive program, and its grants are distributed by the MSBA Board of Directors based on need and urgency, as expressed by the district and validated by the MSBA. The MSBA completes an exhaustive review of available information regarding all districts that submit a Statement of Interest ("SOI") for the Core Program each year. The goals of this review include:

- To determine those schools that are the most urgent and needy relative to the pool of SOI submittals filed in that year. The MSBA considers many factors when looking at the totality of the SOIs including, but not limited to, the age of the building, the amount of space per student, the current and projected enrollment, the condition of the major systems of the school, the general environment of the building and the appropriateness of the building to the educational mission;
- To collaborate with districts on the potential project that they have identified as the priority school if they are filing more than one SOI for that given year;
- To understand if the MSBA is currently partnering with the district on another project already underway; and
- To understand the range of options each district faces when planning for district-wide educational facilities.

The following information provides an overview of the SOI process from initial opening of the SOI period, which is typically in January until the Board of Directors votes to authorize invitations to the MSBA's grant program at a subsequent winter Board meeting; this timeline may vary as needed. The MSBA reviews these dates annually and may adjust the opening and closing dates as may be needed. Each year, the SOI opening information is published on the MSBA's website in addition to each superintendent receiving email communications in advance, on the day of and throughout the filing period until the closure of the filing period.

Please note there is no filing period for the Accelerated Repair Program in 2023. Please refer to the Board of Directors memo, [which outlines the recommendation to temporarily pause the ARP and not accept new SOIs for the ARP in 2023](#). The memo is located on our website and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

The SOI Filing Period

The MSBA opens its [Statement of Interest System](#) annually for districts to file one or more SOIs for consideration in the MSBA's grant program. The SOI is the tool districts use to identify the deficiencies and/or programmatic issues that exist in their facilities. Districts should submit one SOI per school for each school that they believe requires a project. An SOI should only be filed for a facility where a district has the ability to fund a construction project in the next two years. Over the last several years, the SOI system has opened in early January. SOIs are typically due for the Core Program in early April; however, this timeline may vary as needed.

The MSBA has received approximately 100 to 125 SOIs annually. The number of invitations that the Board is able to authorize each year varies and is contingent on a number of factors. The MSBA has to operate within its annual statutory budget cap. The number of invitations varies based on the characteristics of the pool of applicants, including the number of elementary, middle or high schools that file, total square footage of the schools, and the reimbursement rates of the districts that are invited to participate in the MSBA's grant program. Thus, applying for an MSBA grant is competitive, and not every SOI submitted can be invited into the grant program.

The Funding Cap

The Commonwealth irrevocably dedicated a 1% statewide sales tax, known as the School Modernization Trust fund ("SMART Fund"), to the MSBA's capital program. The state sales tax collections inform the amount of annual funding the MSBA can commit for projects. The MSBA's legislation limits increases or decreases annually thereafter by the lesser of four and one half percent (4.5%) of the limit for the prior fiscal year or the percentage increase or decrease of the dedicated sales tax revenue amount over the prior fiscal year.

The SOI Due Diligence Process

The SOI process involves the district filing an electronic version of an SOI and accompanying votes with the MSBA by the established submission deadline. MSBA staff is readily available to address concerns, questions, and issues during the filing period. Once the filing period has closed, MSBA staff commences the due diligence process for all SOIs. This is a four-phase process, which includes:

1. Review SOI submissions for completeness;
2. Review SOI submissions and accompanying documents for content;
3. Conduct [senior study visits](#), if required; and,
4. Recommend SOIs for invitation into the [Eligibility Period](#).

During this process, the MSBA may seek to obtain additional or clarifying information from districts. As the MSBA reviews the entire cohort of SOIs received, it will determine the appropriate level of due diligence that will be required for each SOI and will notify districts of next steps accordingly.

Please note NEW SOI VOTE ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR FILING AN SOI BEGAN IN 2022 AND WILL CONTINUE IN 2023:

All required votes must be taken prior to the SOI submission filing deadline. The documentation for the completed votes is required in order to file the SOI, as noted in detail below.

1. Review SOI submissions for completeness:

Once the SOI system has closed, MSBA staff reviews each submission to check that all of the required materials have been received. The MSBA works with districts throughout the filing period to ensure that the SOI is complete.

For all SOI submissions, the district needs to provide:

- An electronic version of the SOI with the required electronic signatures; there are two separate certifications in each SOI where district officials need to sign;
- An electronic version of the Closed Schools Certification with the required electronic signatures;
- Any supporting materials required to be submitted with the SOI and/or any supplemental materials districts want to submit with the SOI; and,
- **NEW IN 2022 AND WILL CONTINUE IN 2023: SOI VOTE REQUIREMENTS:**
 - All required vote documentation must be uploaded in the SOI system in order to submit an SOI and in the prescribed format set forth within the MSBA's SOI Application System.
 - **Cities and Towns** must submit the following vote documentation:
 - Vote of the municipal governing body (i.e. City Council/Board of Aldermen/Board of Selectmen/equivalent governing body) authorizing the Superintendent of Schools to submit the SOI.
 - Vote of the School Committee authorizing the Superintendent of Schools to submit the SOI (meeting minutes are NOT required).
 - **Regional School Districts** must submit the following vote documentation:
 - Vote of the Regional School Committee authorizing the Superintendent of Schools to submit the SOI (meeting minutes are NOT required).

If applicable, districts are expected to submit materials specific to certain statutory priorities selected by the district in hard copy format via mail:

- If the district selects statutory priority 1, a hard copy of the engineering or other report detailing the nature and severity of the problem and a written professional opinion of how imminent the system failure is likely to manifest itself is required. The district must also submit photographs of the problematic building area or system to the MSBA.
- If the district selects statutory priority 3, the district must submit the full accreditation report(s) and any supporting correspondence between the district and the accrediting entity to the MSBA.

The supplemental materials noted above must be post-marked on or before the submission deadline. The district and the MSBA should discuss in advance of the filing date any extenuating circumstances or requests for exceptions to receipt of the hard copy material.

2. Review each SOI submission and accompanying documents for content:

Once an SOI is determined to be complete, MSBA staff review the information and any additional documents submitted by the district. MSBA staff then compiles the data necessary to assess which SOIs filed in that calendar year may be categorized as the most urgent and needy. Determining the most urgent and needy SOIs relies on many different data sources. MSBA staff use over 50 data points that include the SOI, the MSBA project management system, the MSBA's enrollment tool, the MSBA's [2016 School Survey](#), and information from the [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \("DESE"\)](#). There are many factors that can impact the assessment of urgency and need in an SOI, such as increasing enrollment, overcrowding, building condition, general environment, and program deficiencies. As such, it is important to assemble as much data as possible so that staff may gain as complete a picture of the submitted SOI as possible.

Due to the volume of SOIs submitted for the Core Program, the MSBA requests that each district identify a Priority SOI for consideration. This enables the district and the MSBA to focus financial and staff resources on completing a project and ensures an opportunity for a grant for as many districts as possible. Additionally, this narrows down the pool of potential projects if districts have submitted multiple schools within the district for consideration.

With its focus on the district identified SOI Priority, MSBA staff then looks at this smaller pool of submitted SOIs to assess urgency and need focusing on:

- The 2016 School Survey rating of building condition;
- The 2016 School Survey rating of general environment;
- The previous or ongoing project activity with the MSBA; and,
- Section 8 of the MSBA's [statute](#).

Consideration of these factors produces a smaller subset of the Priority SOIs that appear to be more urgent and needy than the other SOIs submitted that year. With this assessment, a group of SOIs are identified for further consideration. This further review may or may not require a senior study visit. If the MSBA is familiar with the school facility identified in the SOI or if the facility has already received a senior study visit within the previous two or three years, a senior study visit may not be needed for the SOI. The MSBA may choose to re-visit a school within this two or three-year window if the SOI contains new information since the last visit.

3. Conduct Senior Study Visits, if required:

If MSBA staff determines that a [senior study visit](#) is needed to complete the due diligence process, MSBA staff, accompanied by its technical consultant, will visit the SOI facility. The MSBA may conduct facility visits either virtually, in-person or a combination of virtual and in-person. The MSBA may request the use of alternative technology to complete the visits such as virtual meetings, drones, district-supplied recordings or other means. Dependent upon the method used, the staff study visit may be conducted in two parts, holding the meeting and the facility tour at different times and days.

The senior study visit lasts approximately two hours and is an opportunity for the MSBA to further understand the issues identified in the district's SOI. MSBA staff requests that the district have someone familiar with the facilities and systems present, as well as someone who is familiar with the curriculum as it relates to the program offered. The district is requested to provide a copy of the school's floor plans (emergency/evacuation plans are sufficient) ahead of the MSBA's visit.

The senior study visit starts with a meeting to review the SOI, the MSBA process, and to hear district concerns. The discussion is followed by a tour of the main areas of the school, as well as typical general classrooms and specialty spaces.

Dependent upon the number of senior study visits that are required, this phase can take approximately 8 to 10 weeks, with visits typically scheduled from September through November. This timeframe may vary.

4. Recommend SOIs for Invitation into Eligibility Period:

Once the content review and senior study visits have been completed, MSBA staff once again review the factors that can impact the assessment of urgency and need in an SOI (e.g., increasing enrollment, evidence of overcrowding, building condition, general environment and program deficiencies), to understand the total impact of all of the factors on the overall need expressed in the SOI. As the number of invitations that the MSBA can issue varies each year, and the number of SOIs received each year exceeds the MSBA's annual cap expenditure, MSBA staff compares the SOIs that were selected for further review to each other to determine a degree of urgency and need, ranging from minor to major, for each of the SOIs. MSBA staff then provide their findings to the [Chief Executive Officer](#), [Executive Director/Deputy Chief Executive Officer](#), and the MSBA's [Facilities Assessment Subcommittee](#); these recommendations are then presented to the MSBA [Board of Directors](#).

Senior Study Site Visits

The MSBA is performing "Senior Study" site visits at some of the district identified priority schools for which a Statement of Interest ("SOI") has been submitted. Conducting a Senior Study is part of the due diligence phase of the MSBA's newly reformed school renovation and construction grant program. During the due diligence phase, the MSBA may perform several different types of assessments depending on the school building deficiencies that the district has identified in its SOI. The MSBA assessments typically include review of the SOI and documents submitted in support of the SOI, review of historical enrollment trends, review of educational programs, and/or site visits to the school facility.

A Senior Study is a site visit to the school facility which the district has identified as its priority SOI. During the Senior Study, a team from the MSBA, which includes architects and engineers with many years of school facility and educational programming experience, will tour the school facility. The Senior Study seeks to examine both the physical condition of the school facility as well as programmatic issues that affect the delivery of the required educational program. Before touring the school facility, the MSBA team will briefly interview the superintendent, principal, facilities manager, and other school personnel to:

- Identify goals for and concerns about the school facility
- Confirm information about school building deficiencies that were stated in the SOI
- Understand how any physical condition issues adversely impact the delivery of the educational program
- Learn about the school district's routine and capital maintenance programs and practices

While touring the facility, the MSBA team will:

- Evaluate the physical condition of the facility, including major building systems (e.g., building envelope, HVAC, electrical distribution, interior finishes)
- Assess overcrowding or capacity issues
- Assess the ability of the facility to support the required educational program
- Assess design factors such as availability of natural light which make a school's environment conducive to learning
- Examine site considerations
- Evaluate the school district's maintenance of the facility

The information acquired during the Senior Study will help the MSBA to determine the next steps in the process. The MSBA's goal is to collaborate with the district to find the right-sized, most fiscally responsible and educationally appropriate solution to the facility's problems. The Senior Study is not approval of a project. It is part of the due diligence phase of the MSBA's new process.

The MSBA's new program is a non-entitlement competitive grant program, and grants are distributed by the MSBA Board of Directors based on need and urgency, as expressed by the community and validated by the MSBA. Funding for the program is capped at \$500M per year, with up to \$2.5 billion available for school construction and renovation projects over the next five years.

Statement of Interest Frequently Asked Questions: 2023

Q: What is a Statement of Interest (SOI)?

A: An SOI is a form that can be completed by cities, towns, and regional school districts ("districts") that are seeking funding from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (the "MSBA"). Submitting an SOI is the critical first step in the MSBA program for school building construction, addition/renovation, and extensive repair grants. The SOI asks the district to state what it believes are the deficiencies in a school building and how those deficiencies fit within one or more of the statutory priorities established in MGL c.70B.

Q: Who files an SOI?

A: The Superintendent of Schools files an SOI after having been authorized to do so by the city, town, or regional school district school committee and, except in the case of a regional school district, by the local governing body (e.g., City Council/Aldermen/Board of Selectmen). The Superintendent of Schools is the official responsible for submitting the SOI; however, the Superintendent may authorize another district user to assist with the SOI process.

Q: How does a District file an SOI?

A: The Superintendent needs to obtain access to the MSBA's online SOI System and then can begin preparing the SOI. There are detailed instructions in the SOI, in the SOI User Guide, and in the opening email communication, sent to Superintendents on January 13, 2023.

Q: If I am someone from the District other than the Superintendent seeking to gain access to the system, do I have to wait for my Superintendent's approval in order to gain access?

A: Yes, if you are clicking on this link [Submit a Statement of Interest - District User Access](#) for access, you will need to coordinate with your Superintendent for approval to gain access. The Superintendent will have to access the system by clicking on [Submit a Statement of Interest - Superintendent Access](#) where they can review and approve the district user request for access.

Q: How does the pre-population option work?

A: To assist districts that are filing an SOI for a school facility that was the subject of an SOI submitted in the previous year, the district can opt to recall the data that was previously submitted and pre-populate the current year's SOI with that data. The district can then edit and update the information to reflect current conditions prior to submitting the current year's SOI for consideration. The Superintendent and those assigned to complete the SOI will be able to self-select the "pre-population" option when entering the "New SOI". Further instruction is provided in the [SOI User Guide](#).

Q: How many SOIs can a District submit?

A: The MSBA does not limit the number of SOIs that the district can submit; however, an SOI should only be filed for a facility where the district has the financial ability to proceed with a construction project at the time of submission. The district is only allowed to submit one SOI per school facility and should detail all of the facility's deficiencies in that one SOI. If the district submits an SOI for more than one facility under the Core Program, it will be required to select one SOI as the "District's Priority SOI" for consideration and due diligence efforts by the MSBA. With each 2023 SOI online submission, the district will need to designate its "District Priority SOI" in the online SOI System. If the district already has an active Core Program SOI in our Capital Pipeline, then that SOI is the district's Priority for 2023 and will continue to be considered the district's Priority SOI until the time of project completion.

Q: Should the SOI propose a solution to the deficiencies cited?

A: The purpose of the SOI is for the district to identify perceived deficiencies within a school facility. The MSBA and the district would then work in partnership to identify possible solutions if/when the district is invited by the MSBA Board of Directors into the Capital Pipeline for the Core Program. After selecting Core Program project from the "Program Type" drop down menu, the district should then indicate using the Potential Project Scope drop-down menu its perceived solution; these options include: potential new school, addition/renovation, or repair project (major repair to a facility). The district then must indicate if a Potential Consolidation is being considered; if the district selects "yes" to the consolidation question listed on the first page of the SOI, the district should specify which facility(ies) the district is interested in consolidating and file an SOI for that/those facility(ies).

In the SOI section titled "District Goal for School," the district should also provide information about what the district feels is a potential solution to the issues that have

been identified in the SOI; past facility master plans can be referenced in this section and throughout the SOI to best explain perceived deficiencies and potential solutions.

Q: Does the District need to use the MSBA tool to submit student enrollment information along with its SOI?

A: No. In the past, districts were required to provide limited enrollment-related information when submitting an SOI based on enrollment factors (statutory priorities 2, 4, and 6). Due to the MSBA's redesigned Enrollment Projection System, districts are no longer required to submit enrollment information at the time of filing an SOI. However, districts will engage in enrollment discussions with the MSBA upon invitation to the Capital Pipeline for the MSBA's Core Program. Specifically, the enrollment projection collaboration now occurs when the district is invited into the Eligibility Period.

Q: If the district is interested in a consolidation with one or more facilities in the district, should this information be included in the Priority SOI?

A: Yes, if the district is submitting an SOI for the Core Program, the district should select "yes" when answering the consolidation question on page 1 of the SOI and describe the proposed consolidation and/or grade reconfiguration where prompted. The district should also submit an SOI(s) for the facility(ies) the district is interested in consolidating with the Priority SOI.

Q: Why is it necessary to have votes authorizing submission of an SOI?

A: In order to show the support of the district's local officials for the submission of an SOI, the MSBA requires current votes from the local school committee and, except in the case of a regional school district, the local governing body (e.g., City Council/Aldermen/Board of Selectmen) authorizing the Superintendent of Schools or the district user authorized by the Superintendent to submit an SOI.

The deadline for submitting an SOI for the Core Program for consideration in 2023 is Friday, April 14, 2023.

Q: Is there a required text for the votes authorizing an SOI?

A: Yes. The votes of the local governing body and the school committee must use substantially the same wording that is set forth in the [Form of Vote](#) that is detailed in the SOI. The text of the motions voted must reference the school name and the deficiencies that have been identified in the SOI. The deficiencies can be listed in the text of the vote as the numerical statutory priorities and the descriptions that were selected on the second page of the SOI by the district. For the vote of the City Council/Aldermen/Board of Selectmen, a copy of the text of the vote must be submitted on letterhead with a certification of the City/Town Clerk that the vote was duly taken and recorded. The date of the vote must be provided. For the vote of the School Committee, a copy of the text of the vote must be submitted on letterhead with the signature of the Committee Chairperson. All votes must be uploaded within the Vote Tab of the MSBA's SOI system prior to submitting an SOI for consideration.

Q: If my district is ready to take the required local votes to submit an SOI and we do not yet know the SOI date (the date the SOI will be submitted online) to use in the vote language, what should I do?

A: If the district does not know the date the SOI will be submitted online (the SOI date) but is ready to take the required local votes to submit the SOI, the district should reference the month and year in which the SOI will be submitted. The district must have [current votes](#) to submit an SOI for consideration in 2023 and should not re-submit a vote taken to submit an SOI from a previous year.

Q: Who signs off on the SOI submittal?

A: The Superintendent, the Local Chief Executive Officer, and the School Committee Chairperson will need to sign the SOI before it is submitted. The MSBA online SOI System allows the Superintendent or the district user authorized by the Superintendent to electronically send the SOI to the required signatories for their electronic signature. There are detailed instructions in the SOI "Signature" tab and in the SOI User Guide regarding this process. In some instances, the same local official may be a signatory for multiple roles. For example, a Mayor may also be a School Committee Chairperson.

Q: Who is the Local Chief Executive Officer?

A: In a City or Town with a manager form of government, the manager of the municipality is the Local Chief Executive Officer. In other cities, the Mayor is the Local Chief Executive Officer, and in other towns, the Board of Selectmen is the Local Chief Executive Officer unless, in a city or town, some other municipal office is designated as the Chief Executive office under the provisions of a local charter. The district should determine who fills this role at the local level and should consult with local counsel if necessary.

Q: Should a District seek professional assistance to complete an SOI?

A: No. Districts should not seek professional assistance to complete an SOI. The SOI affords the district the opportunity to articulate its thoughts about deficiencies that may exist in a local school facility. The MSBA expects that the SOI can be completed at no

cost to the district. Districts will **NOT** be reimbursed for any expenses that may be incurred in connection with the completion and submission of an SOI. The process of completing and submitting an SOI will require dedicated time from the district. The MSBA recommends that the district plan ahead and allocate sufficient time to answer the questions posed in the SOI, secure the appropriate signatures, and take the required local votes.

Q: What happens after the MSBA receives the SOI?

A: The information provided in the SOI will play an important role in helping the MSBA understand the needs at a particular school facility and to decide whether to move forward with the district for further assessment of a facility. Once an SOI has been submitted and reviewed, the MSBA will work with districts to validate the deficiencies identified in the SOI and, if appropriate, collaborate on potential solutions. The MSBA will notify districts of any actions necessary during the due diligence period; after all SOIs are on file and the filing period has closed.

Q: How long will the process take once in the MSBA grant process?

A: The length of time depends on several factors, including but not limited to: the extent and urgency of the problems described in the SOI; the extent and urgency of the problems relative to other SOIs that have been filed; the number of potential solutions that may need to be explored with the district; the amount of time required for the MSBA and the district to agree upon an educationally appropriate and financially sound solution; the ability of the district to fund its portion of the agreed-upon solution.

The MSBA remains committed to working as diligently as possible to review all SOI submissions and to collaborating with districts that are invited to move forward in the process through all phases of project approval, design, and construction.

Q: Does the MSBA work with Districts on a "first come, first served" basis?

A: No. Our grant program is based on comprehensive due diligence that considers the urgency and need of all SOIs, consistent with the statutory funding criteria set forth in the MSBA's statute, and not according to the time of the SOI submission. Please consult this link [Core Program SOI Overview](#) for more detailed information about the selection process.

Q: Where can I find out more about filing an SOI?

A: If you have any questions about the 2023 SOI process, please [click here](#) or call [617-720-4466](tel:617-720-4466).



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

**ITEM NO: VII. Finance & Operations
C. Fiscal Year 24 Fees & Tuitions: Vote**

MEETING DATE: 03/15/23

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

At the meeting on March 1, 2023, Mr. Collins presented information for fees related to busing, athletics, music lessons, and preschool tuition, and Director of Extended Learning Ms. Karen Isaacson provided information and a recommendation on the Extended School Care program for Fiscal Year 2024. After careful consideration of feedback from the School Committee, Dr. Sawyer will present his recommendation on FY24 fees and tuitions for a vote at the meeting. Dr. Sawyer's fee recommendation memo is enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee vote to approve the adjustments to fee and tuition rates for Fiscal Year 2024 as illustrated in the Superintendent's recommendation memo.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.
Superintendent

March 12, 2023

To: School Committee
Re: Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2024 Fees & Tuitions

At your last meeting, Mr. Collins and Ms. Isaacson presented information regarding fees and tuitions that families pay for various services, programs, or activities that are optional in some manner. At that time, I indicated I would be making my recommendations for adjustments for your March 15 meeting, and this memorandum contains these recommendations. Please refer to [the materials from your March 1 meeting](#) for additional information regarding these fees and tuitions.

We have discussed many times in the past how Shrewsbury evolved into a “high fee district” due to decisions over the past 20+ years, where fees have been instituted and raised over time to generate revenue where possible in order to offset costs and to avoid making cuts to personnel and programming that otherwise would have been necessary due to lack of financial resources, especially due to the structural deficit created by Proposition 2 ½.

Thankfully, due to the successful operational override and the agreement between the School Committee and Select Board, the prospect of budget cuts has not been an issue we have needed to contend with over the past two budget cycles, nor is it a concern for Fiscal Year 2024, so there is not pressure to maximize fee revenue the way there was when we had budget crises in the past.

Given that SPS families are already contributing to our better financial health through the increase in property taxes by way of the operational override and the debt exclusion for Beal, and given that comparisons demonstrate that our transportation and athletic fees and preschool tuitions are comparatively high, my recommendation is to keep these the same for FY24.

However, given the need to maintain our Extended School Care program as a fully self-funded program, it is clear from Ms. Isaacson’s report that a significant tuition increase is necessary to generate adequate revenue to do so. The comparative cost of this program will still be very favorable for SPS families. As such, I am recommending that the School Committee raise the tuition by 13.5% and change the discount for families who qualify for fully subsidized lunches (i.e., “free lunch”) from 80% to 60%, and change the discount for families who qualify for partially subsidized lunches (i.e., “reduced lunch”) from 60% to 40%. This is slightly higher than the 13.0% that was recommended by Ms. Isaacson and Mr. Collins in anticipation of higher health insurance costs than were

originally projected. While I am sensitive to the fact that this places greater financial pressure on families utilizing the Extended School Care program, it is still an excellent value and provides a significant discount for families with lower incomes, while generating enough revenue to offset costs.

For the music lesson program, given the need to pay more competitive market rates to instructors and maintain this program as fully self-funded, I agree with the suggested increases and recommend that the rates be changed as follows: increase the 30-minute lesson fee from \$30.49 to \$37.00 per lesson; increase 45-minute lesson fee from \$44.07 to \$55.50; and increase the 60-minute lesson fee from \$57.79 to \$74.00. As illustrated in the presentation from March 1, these increases would place the district within the same price range as others who have this type of lesson program, where we are currently below market.

In summary, given that increases to fees and tuition are not required to maintain educational staff and programming next year, my recommendation for Fiscal Year 2023 is to hold the transportation fee, athletics fees, and preschool tuition at the same level as the current fiscal year, but to increase the Extended School Care tuition and music lesson fees as detailed above in order to maintain those programs' self-sufficiency.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VIII. Old Business**

MEETING DATE: **03/15/23**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **IX. New Business**

MEETING DATE: **03/15/23**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **X. Approval of Minutes**

MEETING DATE: **03/15/23**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on March 1, 2023, are enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee accept the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on March 1, 2023.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Chairperson

Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary

**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



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: XI. Executive Session

MEETING DATE: 03/15/23

- 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**
- 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 Units A and/or B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, and/or the Cafeteria Workers Association**
- C. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(2) “to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel” – non-union administrators. (“Purpose 2”)**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Executive Session is warranted for these purposes.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

Request 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;
- 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 Units A and/or B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, and/or the Cafeteria Workers Association; and
- C. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(2) “to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel” – non-union administrators. (“Purpose 2”) where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body; and return to Open Session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Barbara A. Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources
Mr. Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **XII. Adjournment**