



**School Committee  
Meeting Book**

**April 26, 2023  
7:00 pm**

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



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**AGENDA**

**April 26, 2023 7:00pm  
Town Hall—Selectmen's Meeting Room  
100 Maple Avenue**

**Items**

**Suggested time allotments**

I.	Public Participation	7:00-7:05
II.	Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports	
III.	Superintendent's Report	
IV.	Time Scheduled Appointments:	
	A. School Committee Member Recognition	7:05 – 7:20
	B. 2023-2027 Strategic Plan: Vote	7:20 – 7:40
V.	Curriculum	
VI.	Policy	
	A. Homework Policy Revision: Second Reading & Vote	7:40 – 7:55
VII.	Finance & Operations	
	A. Proposed Approach for Elementary Capital Planning: Report	7:55 – 8:10
	B. Support for Funding of Oak Middle School Window Replacement Project: Vote	8:10 – 8:20
VIII.	Old Business	
IX.	New Business	
	A. Evaluation of the Superintendent: Vote	8:20 – 8:45
X.	Approval of Minutes	8:45 – 8:50
XI.	Executive Session	
XII.	Adjournment	8:50

**Next regular meeting: May 10, 2023**



## **SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **ITEM NO: I      Public Participation**

MEETING DATE: **04/26/23**

#### **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: **04/26/23**

### **A. School Committee Member Recognition**

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Mr. Jason Palitsch, Vice Chairperson, served on the School Committee from 2012-2015, and again from 2017-2023. This is Mr. Palitsch's last regular meeting prior to stepping down from the Committee. This will be an opportunity to recognize Mr. Palitsch's history of service to Shrewsbury Public Schools as a member of the Committee.

#### **ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

That the Committee recognize Mr. Palitsch's history of service to Shrewsbury Public Schools as a member of the School Committee from 2012-2015, and again from 2017-2023.

#### **STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:**

School Committee members

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools



## **SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**ITEM NO: IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**  
**B. 2023-2027 Strategic Plan: Vote**

**MEETING DATE: 04/26/23**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Shrewsbury Public Schools has partnered with the consulting firm Focused Schools to facilitate the process of creating an updated strategic plan for the district for the next five years. At the meeting on March 29, representatives from Focused Schools provided an update on the work done in the district and shared a draft of the proposed 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, which was posted for public viewing; at the April 12 meeting a public hearing was held to gather feedback on the draft plan, and an online exchange was offered for stakeholders to provide feedback as well.

Dr. Sawyer will provide a summary of the feedback received and his recommendation to approve the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan as presented.

### **ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

That the Committee vote to approve the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan as presented.

### **STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:**

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools



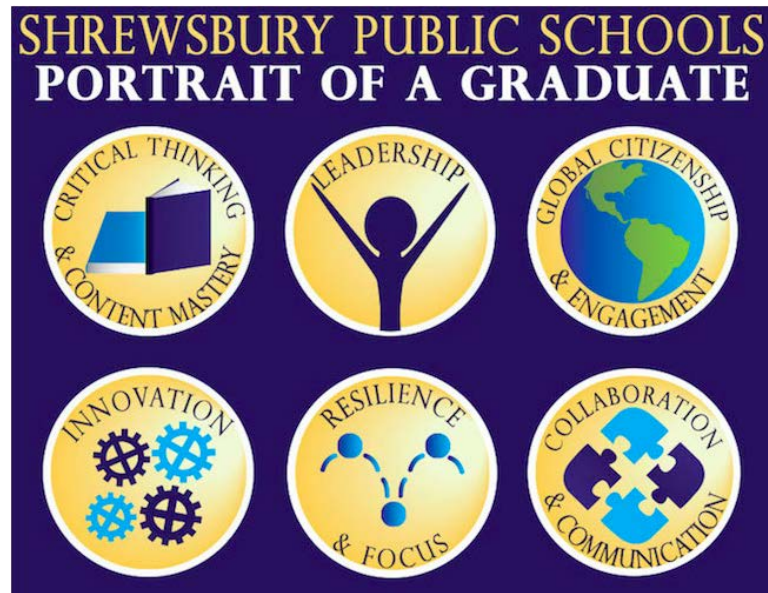
# SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DRAFT Strategic Plan (Commitments, Priorities, Action Steps)

*Developed in partnership with:  
Focused Schools, LLC  
March 2023*

## Our Mission

The Shrewsbury Public Schools, in partnership with the community, will provide students with the skills and knowledge for the 21st century, an appreciation of our democratic tradition, and the desire to continue to learn throughout life.



COMMITMENT TO  
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



COMMITMENT TO  
ENHANCED WELL-BEING OF ALL



COMMITMENT TO  
OPTIMIZATION OF RESOURCES

Respect and  
Responsibility

Collaboration and  
Communication

High Standards and  
Expectations

Equity

## Data Sources

- [Data Highlights](#)
- [Spring 2022 MCAS](#)
- [DESE DART Data](#)
- [DESE Postsecondary Outcomes](#)
- [Spring 2022 VOCAL Survey](#)
- [Fall 2022 Panorama Survey](#)
- [Focus Group Data Summary](#)
- [SPS All School Council Strategic Forum](#)
- [Community Forum](#)
- [DLT Identification of High Impact/High Priority Goals](#)
- [ThoughtExchange Highlights](#)



## COMMITMENT TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Shrewsbury Public Schools provides **all** students access to exceptional educational experiences by leveraging staff development, high-quality materials and technology, data analysis, instructional strategies, and a comprehensive system of support to meet the needs of **all** learners. Through these efforts, **all** Shrewsbury Public Schools students will demonstrate academic growth and achievement.

Strategic Priorities	Sample Action Steps
<p><b>Ensure High-Quality Teaching and Learning:</b> Provide <b>all</b> students access to high-quality learning experiences in every classroom every day by developing and committing to districtwide expectations for high-quality teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define the Shrewsbury Public Schools' elements of high-quality teaching and learning, so that educators consistently employ evidence-based practices (like universal design) that are relevant to all content areas and provide students access to excellent instruction centered on grade level standards.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Close Gaps:</b> Reduce opportunity and achievement gaps to ensure <b>all</b> students are prepared for education and career advancement by growing all learners' literacy and "real life" skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a grade PK-6 literacy initiative (including instruction, assessment, and intervention) that engages all PK-6 educators in improving student literacy.</li> <li>Identify critical skills all students need to achieve the vision of the SPS Portrait of a Graduate and create opportunities for all educators to explicitly teach these skills to all learners in grades 7-12.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Advance Career and Technical Education:</b> Strengthen <b>all</b> students' postsecondary preparedness by expanding access to career and technical education, evaluating course offerings, and exploring pathway opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand opportunities for career exploration, job shadowing, and internships.</li> <li>Create multiple career and technical pathways for high school students, including coursework sequences followed by authentic field training experiences.</li> </ul>

## DEFINING OUR COMMITMENTS + DEVELOPING OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTION STEPS

<p><b>Develop a Districtwide Data Culture:</b> Continue to systematize and fully implement a cycle of inquiry to inform decision-making to ensure <b>all</b> students have access to the support and resources needed to accelerate their growth towards goals and outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define expectations for collecting, reviewing, and acting upon multiple sources of student data at the district, school, grade/content team, and classroom level, using the principles of “professional learning communities.”</li> </ul>

## Sample Measures of Impact

Increased percentage of students who meet literacy standards in grades PK-6 across student groups

Academic growth of at least one year for those students meeting or exceeding standards, and more than one year’s growth for those students not yet meeting or exceeding standards

Increased number of students who graduate with competencies and skills that allow them to advance in their post-secondary careers

## SAMPLE Tools for Measuring Impact

- District Common Formative Assessments (e.g., Star universal screener, assessments aligned to Portrait of a Graduate skills, etc.)
- State MCAS Summative Assessment (achievement and growth measures)
- Exemplars of Student Work
- Surveys of stakeholders and business/career partners

## COMMITMENT TO ENHANCED WELL-BEING OF ALL

Shrewsbury Public Schools prioritizes the social, emotional, behavioral, mental, and physical health of **all** students and staff by creating safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environments. This is accomplished by intentionally providing learning opportunities where **all** Shrewsbury Public Schools students and staff feel valued, supported, and empowered.

Strategic Priorities	Sample Action Steps
<p><b>Ensure a Safe and Inclusive Culture:</b> Foster welcoming, safe, and inclusive learning communities where we honor and celebrate diversity, create connections and a sense of belonging for <b>all</b>, and support and engage <b>all</b> students, staff, and family members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the effectiveness of current equity initiatives through an equity audit.</li> <li>• Continue to provide access to targeted professional development focused on inclusive and culturally proficient practices.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Promote Student and Staff Wellness:</b> Expand opportunities for <b>all</b> students and staff to strengthen mental health and physical wellness in support of overall well-being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review outcomes of school start time changes in order to determine impact on sleep health and well-being.</li> <li>• Initiate a staff wellness program to address workplace stress.</li> <li>• Determine ways to enhance students' nutritional options and dining experiences.</li> </ul>

**DEFINING OUR COMMITMENTS + DEVELOPING OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTION STEPS**

<p><b>Strengthen Social and Emotional Learning Programming and Supports:</b> Proactively deliver social and emotional learning opportunities to <b>all</b> students and maintain sufficient systems and resources to respond to students' social-emotional needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a universal mental health screener.</li> <li>• Continue professional development on current leveled social-emotional learning curriculum and advisory experiences to ensure implementation with fidelity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enhance Behavioral Supports and Interventions:</b> Implement a districtwide tiered system of support and interventions to address student behavioral needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align systems with research-based best practices to reinforce positive behaviors and respond to emerging student needs.</li> <li>• Develop a district-wide strategy for documenting and analyzing student behaviors and providing appropriate support.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluate and Strengthen Safety and Security Systems and Protocols:</b> Work with public safety partners and outside experts to assess and enhance the district's approach to crisis prevention and response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage an expert consultant to conduct an assessment of the district's current safety and security measures and make recommendations for improvements.</li> </ul>

Sample Measures of Impact
Increased percentage of students reporting a sense of welcoming, belonging, and inclusivity
Reduction in discipline referral, suspension, and expulsion rates across student groups
Increased percentage of staff satisfaction regarding district supports for stress management

**SAMPLE Tools for Measuring Impact**

- Student survey data (Panorama, Regional Youth Health Survey, VOCAL)
- Student, family, and staff responses to ThoughtExchange(s) focused on culture and climate
- Workplace stress survey
- Discipline referral data
- Universal mental health screening data

## COMMITMENT TO OPTIMIZATION OF RESOURCES

Shrewsbury Public Schools maximizes student success by equitably allocating resources according to student need while maintaining a fiscally sound budget, building efficient and effective systems to align efforts, and strengthening partnerships with all stakeholders. This work guarantees that **all** students can access the programs and services offered throughout Shrewsbury Public Schools.

Strategic Priorities	Sample Action Steps
<b>Partner with the Community to Maintain a Strong Financial Foundation:</b> Continue the financial stability that was established by the 2021 Operational Override.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximize available fiscal resources to advance the district's strategic priorities, and continue to seek grants and philanthropic funding to provide opportunities for innovation and enrichment.</li> <li>Partner with the Select Board to develop a successor plan to the March 16, 2021 override statement to the residents of Shrewsbury.</li> </ul>
<b>Hire, Support, and Retain High-Quality, Diverse Staff:</b> Diversify, support, and retain our high-performing team of educators and support staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue the district's Teacher Diversification Project, including developing updated recruitment and selection processes in order to attract a more diverse pool of qualified applicants and increase the number of talented educators and support staff who are representative of student and community demographics.</li> <li>Implement intentional efforts to support and retain current staff through recognition, appreciation, and morale-building initiatives that create positive and purposeful school cultures.</li> </ul>
<b>Maximize Family and Community Partnerships:</b> Grow family and community partnerships in efforts to strengthen and expand opportunities for <b>all</b> students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a database of partnerships by category, including but not limited to interview committee volunteers, interpreter supports, family liaisons for community resources, and welcoming newcomers.</li> </ul>

**DEFINING OUR COMMITMENTS + DEVELOPING OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTION STEPS**

<p><b>Strategically and Equitably Allocate District Resources:</b> Equitably distribute financial and other resources to maximize opportunities for <b>all</b> students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract with an outside agency to study paraprofessional staffing and align district supports across all schools with best practices.</li> <li>• Investigate ways to ensure that all students have equitable access to educational enrichment opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improve Facilities to Address Overcrowding and Infrastructure Needs:</b> Address limitations of current physical spaces through expansion and/or renovation of facilities as needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek a remedy to high school overcrowding and academic space limitations, to include submitting a Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority for the potential expansion of Shrewsbury High School.</li> <li>• Commission a steering committee to review the 2023 Capital Inventory and Improvement Study (i.e., PK-12 Space Study) and make recommendations for next steps forward to support appropriate elementary and preschool space.</li> </ul>

**Sample Measures of Impact**

Increased organizational alignment for access to equitable resources

Increased diversity of new hires

Increased retention of **all** SPS personnel

Completion of process to determine feasibility of expanding and/or renovating space and facilities

**SAMPLE Tools from Measuring Impact**

- Annual budget materials
- Survey data (Professional development survey, Panorama, ThoughtExchange, etc.)

- Roster of family and community partnerships and their impact for students
- Hiring and staffing data
- Report on paraprofessional staffing
- Review of student access to enrichment opportunities
- Plans for addressing overcrowded buildings
- Actions based on Pre-K-12 space and enrollment study completed by Lamoureux Pagano Associates (LPA|A)
- Annual measurement of philanthropic giving by organizations and individuals





**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **V. Curriculum**

MEETING DATE: **04/26/23**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF & STUDENTS AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VI. Policy**

MEETING DATE: **04/26/23**

**A. Homework Policy Revision: Second Reading & Vote**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

A first reading of an updated Homework Policy (School Committee Policy #523) was presented at the School Committee meeting on April 12, 2023. The draft, which was posted for public viewing and feedback in advance of a planned vote by the Committee this evening, is enclosed.

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

That the Committee vote to approve the revised *Policy 523: Homework Policy* as presented.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:**

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

POLICY FAMILY	EDUCATION PROGRAMS	500
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**DRAFT Policy 523: Homework Policy**  
**Adopted 06/19/02 (Grades 1-8)**

**Amended xx/xx/xx**

**Guiding Principles**

Learning is a responsibility shared between school and home, and completing school-assigned work independently enables students to both practice and demonstrate their skills. The completion of assigned tasks over time strengthens a student’s ability to successfully pursue a goal. Shrewsbury’s homework policy is designed to support and empower children, educators and families as they work together to further student learning.

The school district recognizes and affirms that co-curricular activities and other commitments are important aspects of students’ lives that can significantly improve their physical and mental health and well-being. It is a shared responsibility between home and school to ensure that students have balance in their lives while pursuing educational excellence. This policy is intended to help our students achieve that. Further, the district recognizes that vacations, long weekends, and holidays are opportunities to enjoy family time and fun. In order to protect this time for students and staff, the district will implement a “no homework” calendar that specifies times when homework will not be assigned. In addition to promoting family time and recreation, “no homework” periods can provide a respite from new assignments that allows for a focus on other responsibilities or needs, such as religious observances for students with their families, performing community service, or completing college applications.

The assignment of extra academic tasks for homework shall not be used as a behavior management tool or as a form of punishment. However, students are expected to submit high quality work on time, and may be required to make up for late or missed work in addition to their regular homework assignments. Educators and families are encouraged to communicate in a timely manner when homework completion or quality is not meeting expectations in order to support the student’s improvement.

This homework policy will apply to students in grades 1 through 12. Students in preschool and kindergarten will not have formal homework assigned to them. Educators at the preschool and kindergarten level will provide parents and caregivers with suggestions regarding how to

provide support and enrichment for their child's learning at home, including reading aloud and reading together frequently with their child to foster language and literacy skills.

### *Definition*

Homework is defined as tasks that are assigned by teachers to be completed by students outside of class time, including work done using pencil and paper and/or digital tools. These tasks include, but are not limited to: skills practice; reading; viewing of video content; studying or preparation for quizzes or tests; creating written, audio, or visual content; and completion of reports or projects.

### *Purposes of Homework*

Research affirms the importance of independent reading, skills practice, and the development of learning routines for young children, and the value of regular homework assignments for older students. The purposes of homework in the Shrewsbury Schools are to practice newly taught skills, review previously mastered skills, develop independent study habits, and motivate students to pursue personal goals.

Homework is most effective when it provides students opportunities to prepare, study, or extend their learning. Homework will reflect Massachusetts and Shrewsbury Public Schools curriculum standards and related instructional practices, and where appropriate will promote an understanding of the importance of life-long learning by helping students develop independent and self-directed learning skills, executive functioning skills, and work habits.

Every learner is different, and variability among students should be expected. Homework should encourage personal reflection. Educators are empowered with the flexibility to match assignments to meet a child's individual needs.

## **Homework Policy Components**

### **1. Frequency of Homework Assignments**

All students in Grades 1-12 are expected to spend time on homework on weeknights (Monday through Thursday). Due dates assigned by teachers may vary according to the nature of the assignment; for example, assignments could be due the next day, by the end of the week, or could be part of a longer-term project.

All students in Grades 5-12 may also have homework assigned over the weekend at the discretion of the teacher. Weekend assignments are considered as one night of homework per the time guidelines below. Students in Grades 1-4 will not have weekend assignments. Long-term projects must be assigned so that there are at least two weekends, not including “no homework” dates, before a project is due.

Educators are expected to consider the overall homework load for students when assigning due dates and to collaborate with colleagues to avoid situations where students have multiple projects due or are required to study for multiple tests due in close proximity (such as near the end of grading periods or right before school vacations). Educators will provide advance notice of assignments and due dates to the extent possible in order to assist students and families with planning for homework completion. School administrators will issue specific guidance to teachers regarding the coordination of homework load with consideration for different subjects, departments, etc. at their grade span.

Administrators and educators at each grade span will provide guidance regarding how students can communicate requests for extensions of homework due dates. Reasonable accommodations will be provided through extensions for due dates with regard to absences related to student illness, family obligations, religious observances, etc. Flexibility to respond to other student-specific situations will be provided as appropriate, with the goal of promoting student academic progress in light of personal circumstances. Schools and educators will communicate what supports are available for students who need assistance with completing homework, as well as consequences for students who do not meet homework expectations.

## 2. Time Guidelines By Grade Level

The guidelines below provide for the approximate maximum amount of focused time that homework assignments should take each night. It is understood that different students will require different amounts of time based on a variety of factors. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to speak with their child’s teacher(s) if homework is routinely taking much more or much less time than called for in the guidelines.

Required reading assignments are included within the time allotments at each grade level. Because reading is crucial to academic success, voluntary reading beyond homework time guidelines is encouraged.

*Time Guidelines for Homework by Grade Level:*

- Grade 1: 15 minutes Monday-Thursday
- Grade 2: 20 minutes Monday-Thursday
- Grade 3: 30 minutes Monday-Thursday
- Grade 4: 40 minutes Monday-Thursday
- Grade 5: 50 minutes Monday-Friday
- Grades 6-8: 60-90 minutes Monday-Friday
- Grades 9-10: 20 minutes per course Monday-Friday
- Grades 11-12: 25 minutes per course Monday-Friday

At the High School level, Advanced Placement (AP) Courses follow a national curriculum that includes a final exam. In order to provide opportunities for students taking AP courses to learn, practice, and reinforce concepts and to stay on pace, homework that requires greater amounts of time than found in the guidelines above may be assigned in AP courses.

3. Accommodating Religious Observances by Students

Per School Committee Policy #291, students who miss school or cannot complete homework due to any religious observance will be provided with the opportunity to make up work without penalty. Families are encouraged to communicate with educators regarding any situation where religious observances may impact their student's attendance or homework completion.

4. "No Homework" Dates

To meet the guiding principle regarding "no homework" periods throughout the school year, the superintendent will annually present a recommended calendar of "no homework" dates for the following school year for the approval of the School Committee. The superintendent will base this recommendation on evolving educational practices and needs of the school community. Once the "no homework" calendar is approved, the district administration and school principals

will communicate the specific dates and expectations for “no homework” periods to students, families, and educators, both in advance of each school year and periodically throughout the year.

For “no homework” periods, homework shall not be assigned on the school day prior to the “no homework” date(s), and no assignments will be due and no tests or other assessments that require studying will occur on the school day following the “no homework” date(s).

## 5. Shared Responsibilities

The mission of the Shrewsbury Public Schools urges that the schools work “in partnership with the community.” Such a partnership includes not only students, teachers and families, but also coaches, advisors, and counselors. The spirit of collaboration and collective responsibility to support students is particularly important in the area of homework.

The availability of devices and software enables educators to differentiate homework efficiently. Increased access to learning tools means that all stakeholders share responsibility for maintaining good communication using both traditional and digital means.

Maintaining a strong partnership requires good communication as well as flexibility, because students in different grade spans may need different levels of support in managing their workload and/or schedules.

### Responsibilities of Students

Students are expected to check their planner, device, and/or learning management system (e.g., Schoology, Seesaw, etc.) for assignments, and to reach out to educators if they are unsure about how to access or submit assignments, complete work online, or if they need help managing their assigned workload. Students at the middle and high school levels are expected to use their device, a paper planner and/or the calendar function in the learning management system to manage due dates for major assignments, exams and projects.

On receiving homework, students are expected to work independently to complete it. This means students will, in a manner appropriate for their grade level:

- Ask for help if the assignment is not clear to them.
- Copy all assignments into their planner and/or device, carefully recording due dates and important information.

- Set a time each day to do homework.
- Check work and, if necessary, explain it to an adult.
- Maintain high quality work on homework assignments.
- Take home all necessary resources, such as electronic devices, packets, textbooks, notes and study guides to accurately complete homework.
- Bring the completed homework back to school or submit it electronically as directed when it is due.
- Be responsible for getting assignments when absent from school.
- If experiencing a challenge that is interfering with managing their workload and completing their homework in a quality manner, communicate with the teacher to seek assistance or to request an extension of a homework deadline.
- Be responsible for taking care of, and returning, any borrowed resource materials.
- Demonstrate academic integrity when completing assignments. Students are expected to use technology tools, including artificial intelligence, only in ways that are authorized by the teacher to complete assignments.

#### *Responsibilities of Parents/Caregivers*

Homework should not be done by parents and caregivers. However, support at home is critical to student success. For that reason, parents and caregivers have responsibilities, including to:

- Promote a positive attitude toward homework as part of the learning process.
- Understand and reinforce expectations for the quality of student work.
- Provide structure, space, and tools needed to help the child organize for the completion of homework.
- Be available to provide supervision, but do not do the assignment for the child.
- Have an understanding of the amount of assistance appropriate for homework assignments.
- Communicate often with the student about their homework and as necessary with teachers, giving feedback to the teacher when there is a homework concern.



- Communicate with the teacher(s) if there is an individual situation or need regarding the child's homework, in order to partner with the teacher(s) regarding a plan for quality homework completion. This includes providing information about the need for accommodations for religious observations or family obligations; seeking flexibility in order to manage their child's workload so that the student can complete their assignments in a quality way; or other specific circumstances that could affect homework. As a student becomes older and more mature, the parent/caregiver is encouraged to have their child communicate with their teacher about their situation.
- Learn strategies/techniques for helping the student with homework, through sources such as school and teacher communications, parenting workshops, community forums, and PTO presentations.
- Help your child to balance homework with other responsibilities and activities.
- In the interest of maintaining good communication, check the student's planner and/or digital learning management system dashboard regularly.

### *Responsibilities of Educators*

Educators will familiarize parents with the digital tools they use to assign and evaluate homework with the goal of ensuring that all families know how to view student assignments. Educators will use the digital learning management system as required by the district at their grade span to post due dates for major assignments, exams, and projects.

Teachers may assign homework during class time or outside of class time using the district's learning management system, within the guidelines set by their school administration regarding when homework completion can be expected based on the time of day that an assignment is posted.

As they consider options for homework, educators will:

- Communicate expectations to students for how the assignment should be completed and the learning goal(s) being addressed (e.g., practicing a new skill, preparing for an assessment, etc.)
- Consider the amount of time an assignment will require in order to align with the targets for time spent each night on homework, including special projects.
- Establish objectives and guidelines for special projects, including any expectations for

parent/caregiver participation.

- Be clear about the appropriate use of technology tools, including artificial intelligence, so that students and parents/caregivers understand what is expected regarding academic integrity.
- With as much advance notice as possible, communicate all assignments and due dates to students and post them as required, and provide time for students to record them where students use a paper planning tool.
- Model homework strategies and provide exemplars to clarify expectations as appropriate throughout the school year.
- Establish a system for recording and monitoring homework completion and quality, including reading assignments.
- Review homework and provide feedback in a timely manner. Feedback does not require grading or responding in writing to every homework assignment; educators are expected to communicate frequently enough to signal whether the quality of the homework is meeting expectations and whether there are concerns about missing assignments or late submissions, so that the student has an opportunity to improve.
- Ensure that resources and materials required for homework projects are easily obtained by the student, and work with families and school administration as needed to ensure that no student will be unable to complete an assignment due to lack of financial resources.
- Provide ways for parents and caregivers to communicate with teachers about homework, using translation tools where appropriate.
- Notify parents/caregivers when poor homework quality or missing assignments are cause for concern, using translation tools where appropriate.
- Assign long term projects so that the completion time includes more than one weekend (not including “no homework” dates), and is not limited to a school vacation period.
- Discuss homework practices with colleagues and align them with these policy guidelines; while it is not expected that homework assignments are the same in different classes, the volume and types of homework assigned to students in the same grade level or course should be consistent across different teachers and teacher teams.
- Work with students to provide flexibility in order to promote quality completion of assignments while responding to student needs. This may include extending deadlines

where warranted and using strategies to accommodate individual situations.

- Follow the guidelines in the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) and meet all legal requirements of a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan that may be related to homework.

Student voice is important. For this reason, educators are strongly encouraged to periodically consider student feedback regarding the homework they assign and to include options where students have opportunities for self-direction where appropriate.

Having choice develops motivation and purpose. Where appropriate, give students responsibility for setting and monitoring progress toward personal learning goals and provide choice of topics, methods, tools, etc. to demonstrate understanding and empower students.

### *Responsibilities of Leadership*

District and school leaders, including the superintendent and assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, directors, and curriculum coordinators/instructional coaches are responsible for supporting the implementation of this policy; monitoring how effectively students, educators, and families are in meeting their roles and responsibilities listed above; and ensuring that district practices are aligned with this policy and implemented with fidelity.

Leaders will:

- Communicate the following information annually to students, families, and staff and provide reminders at appropriate times throughout the school year: the guidance and expectations found in this homework policy; the “no homework” calendar; and the information in School Committee Policy 291 regarding accommodations to make up work when students miss school for a religious observance.
- Ensure that homework is consistent with the educational goals of the Shrewsbury Public Schools.
- Facilitate communication between general education, English language education, special education, and subject specialist teachers concerning homework.
- Support educators in the implementation of the homework guidelines in this policy and best educational practices regarding homework.
- Consider the impact of homework on students' overall educational program in the context of evolving research on best practices.

- Support the need for balance among the many learning activities in the life of a student.
- Facilitate the communication process between the school and home and help maintain the home/school partnership regarding homework.

This policy will be reviewed within five years of its effective date.



## **SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

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

MEETING DATE: **04/26/23**

### **A. Proposed Approach for Elementary Capital Planning: Report**

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Earlier this year, after the School Committee reviewed the PreK-12 Capital Inventory and Improvement Study (aka, PreK-12 Space Study) created by LPA|A, it was requested that Dr. Sawyer present to the Committee a potential process for reviewing the recommendations from LPA|A in the study regarding PreK-Grade 4 capital needs and making recommendations regarding the future direction for early childhood and elementary level capital investment.

The report will be provided under separate cover.

#### **ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

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

#### **STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:**

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools



## **SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

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

MEETING DATE: **04/26/23**

### **B. Support for Funding of Oak Middle School Window Replacement Project: Vote**

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

At the May 2022 Annual Town Meeting, Warrant Article 18 was approved to fund the Oak Middle School Window Replacement Project project. At that time the total project cost was estimated to be \$950,00, but subsequent cost estimates have been completed and it is now estimated to be \$3,899,876 including construction, design, and construction management fees, due to inflation in the construction industry. Shrewsbury was fortunate to get this project approved in 2022 as 52.26% will be funded by the Massachusetts School Building Authority. A new warrant article, Article 31, is on the 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant to allocate the additional funding needed to complete this project. It is recommended that the School Committee vote to support Article 31 to signal support for the project to town meeting representatives and the community as a whole.

A memorandum from Mr. Collins is enclosed.

#### **ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

That the School Committee vote to support Article 31 on the 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant to allocate the funding necessary to complete the Oak Middle School window replacement project.

#### **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

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24 April 2023

To: School Committee

Subj: RECOMMENDATION TO VOTE SUPPORT FOR WARRANT ARTICLE 31: 2023 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

## **Background**

In May 2021 a Statement of Interest was submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] Accelerated Repair Program to replace the windows at Oak Middle School. At the time of application, the windows were 41 years old in and need of replacement. The MSBA selected this project to move forward in their project and grant funding pipeline.

At the May 2022 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article 18 was approved to fund the project knowing that 52.26% of eligible project costs would be funded by the MSBA. At that time the total project cost was estimated to be \$950,000.

Since that time, an owner's project manager and architect were assigned to the project by the MSBA, per the protocol for the Accelerated Repair Program. Subsequent cost estimates have been completed and the total project cost is estimated to be \$3,899,876, including construction, design, and construction management fees. The cost escalation is due to inflation in the construction industry. In fact, it is because of this inflationary factor that the MSBA did not accept applications for the 2023 cycle for the Accelerated Repair Program, as they need to allocate all of their funding to the so-called Core Program for new schools and additions/renovations. Shrewsbury was fortunate to get this project approved in 2022 as 52.26% will be funded, and many other applicants did not get accepted into this program before it was placed on hiatus by the MSBA.

## **Action Recommended**

A new warrant article, Article 31, is on the 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant to allocate the additional funding needed to complete this project.

It is recommended that the School Committee vote to support Article 31 now as a signal to the town meeting representatives and community as a whole that you support this project.

This warrant article was developed between the Town Manager's Office and Department of Public Works, Public Buildings Division, as they have responsibility for maintaining school buildings and managing all school construction related projects.

If this article is approved, we expect the project would be completed during the Summer of 2024.

**Recommended Vote**

We recommend the following vote:

*I move that the School Committee vote to support Article 31 on the 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant to allocate the funding necessary to complete the Oak Middle School window replacement project.*





**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VIII. Old Business**

MEETING DATE: **04/26/23**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



## **SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **IX. New Business**

MEETING DATE: **04/26/23**

### **A. Evaluation of the Superintendent: Vote**

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Superintendent's performance evaluation provides feedback on Dr. Sawyer's performance from May 2022 through the present. Ms. Heffernan, as Committee Chair during that time, has written a composite evaluation based on information provided by Dr. Sawyer as well as input from the other members, which she will summarize at the meeting. School Committee members are also encouraged to add commentary and feedback as they see fit. The composite evaluation will be provided under separate cover.

#### **ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

That the Committee provide a summary and comments regarding the evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools and that the Committee vote to approve the formal evaluation document created by the Chair.

#### **AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:**

Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, School Committee Chair  
School Committee Members



## **SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

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

MEETING DATE: **04/26/23**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The minutes from the School Committee Workshop held on April 5, 2023, and the School Committee Meeting held on April 12, 2023, will be provided under separate cover.

### **ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

That the Committee accept the minutes from the School Committee Workshop held on April 5, 2023, and the School Committee Meeting held on April 12, 2023.

### **STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:**

Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Chairperson

Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **XI. Executive Session**

MEETING DATE: **04/26/23**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

ITEM NO: **XII. Adjournment**