

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, April 26, 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; Ms. Barb Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources; 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 7:01 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer reported visiting schools the previous day with Shrewsbury Education Foundation President Kimberly Olsen to deliver the 2023 John P. Collins Awards for Excellence to winners in the following categories: Professional Educator, Paraprofessional, Support Staff, Leadership, and Unsung Hero; congratulated recipients of the 2023 Shrewsbury Education Foundation grants; and expressed appreciation to Shrewsbury Education Foundation for their support of Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS).

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. School Committee Member Recognition

After Ms. Heffernan provided a historical overview of Mr. Palitsch's work as a member of the School Committee, Shrewsbury Select Board Vice Chair Ms. Beth Casavant and Member Mr. John Samia recognized Mr. Palitsch with brief remarks and expressed appreciation for his service on the Committee. School Committee members and Dr. Sawyer shared their personal reflections on Mr. Palitsch's work on behalf of SPS students, schools, and the broader community, before presenting a gift of appreciation from the Committee. Ms. Clouter, on behalf of the Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) Central Office Leadership Team (COLT), also recognized Mr. Palitsch with a gift of appreciation for his service. Mr. Palitsch shared remarks and anecdotes from his time on the Committee working on behalf of the district and Shrewsbury community; expressed appreciation to the School Committee and all SPS stakeholders; highlighted successes in the district during his tenure; and noted growth opportunities for the future.

B. 2023-2027 Strategic Plan: Vote

After providing a historical timeline of the planning process and noting low participation at a Public Hearing and in recent stakeholder (parent/caregivers, staff, community members) surveys, Dr. Sawyer reported that the feedback received supported the three proposed Commitments (Educational Excellence, Enhanced Well-Being of All, Optimization of Resources), added that all feedback was reviewed and valued, and noted next steps in the process if the plan was approved. Dr. Sawyer recommended, based on the feedback received from stakeholders and the robust planning process utilized, that the Committee vote to approve the new Strategic Plan as presented.

Committee members shared their perspectives in turn and all expressed support for the draft plan. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Boucher, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan as presented.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

A. Homework Policy Revision: Second Reading & Vote

Ms. Heffernan and Dr. Sawyer reported that no feedback had been received from the community on the draft Homework Policy posted for public viewing since its first reading at the meeting on April 12, 2023, and Dr. Sawyer recommended that the Committee vote to approve the proposed draft.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Boucher, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the revised *Policy 523: Homework Policy* as presented.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Proposed Approach for Elementary Capital Planning: Report

After summarizing issues identified in the recently presented PreK-12 Space Study of the district (created by LPA|A), Dr. Sawyer outlined his recommendation for a process going forward to address preschool and elementary capital investment. Citing the district's recent School Start Times study as a model, Dr. Sawyer noted key questions the capital planning project would address; suggested formation of a study committee and made recommendations for its composition (including representatives from various stakeholder groups; similar to the Sleep Health Advisory Committee); and suggested a timeline for the process that would begin in Summer 2023 and conclude in March 2024.

All Committee members expressed support for the proposed approach.

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

In his report Mr. Collins stressed the need for new windows at Oak Middle School (which were 41 years old at the time of application submission and are now 43 years old); noted cost inflation in the construction industry since the project was approved (May 2022 Annual Town Meeting) was responsible for a higher current total project cost; advised that the higher cost still represented a good opportunity for the Town of Shrewsbury since the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) would fund 52.26% of the project cost; and recommended that the Committee vote to show their support for the Town Meeting warrant article that would allocate funding for the project. Mr. Collins later noted window installation was planned for Summer 2024 and advised the project would be managed by Mr. Keith Baldinger, Assistant Director of Public Works, Shrewsbury Department of Public Works. In response to a question from Ms. Heffernan, Mr. Collins advised that per MSBA regulations, the Town of Shrewsbury must vote to approve funding for the total estimated project cost up front, including the portion MSBA would fund. Dr. Sawyer recommended that the Committee vote to support the Town Meeting article to allocate funding for the project.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Boucher, the Committee voted unanimously 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.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

A. Evaluation of the Superintendent: Vote

Ms. Heffernan summarized feedback from the School Committee on Dr. Sawyer's May 2022-April 2023 Superintendent Evaluation. Ms. Heffernan shared ratings and comments on the five Goals (Student Learning, Student Health & Well-Being, District Strategy, Professional Practice, Progress towards District Goals) and four Standards (Instructional Leadership, Management & Operations, Family & Community Engagement, Professional Culture) evaluated, and noted the Overall Summative Rating for the Superintendent's Performance was *Exemplary*. All members of the Committee then had an opportunity to share their individual perspectives on Dr. Sawyer's strong performance.

Dr. Sawyer gave remarks and expressed appreciation to the School Committee, Shrewsbury families, SPS administrators and staff, and his family, for their support of his work.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Boucher, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the formal evaluation document created by the Chair.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Workshop held on April 5, 2023, and the School Committee Meeting held on April 12, 2023, were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

None.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Boucher, the committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

2023-2027 Strategic Plan Draft

Survey Feedback on Draft Strategic Plan

Draft School Committee Policy #523 Homework Policy

PreK-4 Capital Planning Process Recommendation Memo

Oak Middle School Window Replacement Project Funding Memo

Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools

Set(s) of minutes as referenced above