

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

Present: 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. Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Ms. Barb Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

Not present: Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Chairperson

A complete audio/visual recording of this meeting is available on the Shrewsbury Public Schools website.

The meeting was convened by Mr. Palitsch at 7:00pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Ms. Boucher reported attending Curriculum Nights at Oak Middle School (SMS) and Shrewsbury High School (SHS) and commended the administration and staff on a job well done.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer expressed appreciation to administration, staff, and students on successful Curriculum Nights at schools; noted families have an opportunity to share feedback with the district on the start of the school year via an online survey; reported that the Sleep Health Advisory Committee met for the first time earlier in the week and provided information about this Committee's work; and expressed appreciation to the SHS Girls Soccer team for raising awareness and fundraising at their Suicide Prevention Awareness game the previous day.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. SHS Advisory Program: Update

Dr. Lizotte began the report by providing an overview of the SHS Advisory program and illustrating how it aligns with the district's *Portrait of a Graduate*. Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, and SHS Teachers Mr. John Brocki, Mr. Patrick Collins, and Ms. Debra Herbert reported on the importance of students feeling a sense of belonging; provided a history of SHS Advisory and the Character Strong program; shared themes of feedback gathered from students and staff on the program and noted the resultant changes; described next steps and future considerations; and shared a video of SHS students discussing their experiences around feeling connected at school.

Committee members noted the importance of the program, its emphasis on student belonging, and the opportunity for students to practice "soft skills", and were advised in response to questions that initial informal feedback on the new Advisory model (which includes reduced period length and a consistent meeting schedule) was positive.

B. Summer Educational Programming: Report

Ms. Belsito reported on the Extended School Year (ESY) Program for eligible students with disabilities, noting: eligibility criteria; process and procedures; program organization, budget, enrollment, and staffing; student demographics; and shared reflections on the program (including vocational opportunities like the Daily Grind Coffee Cart program which was staffed by SHS students during the summer program). Ms. Clouter reported on the Summer Academy and Credit Recovery programs for students identified as needing support. She shared program goals, organization, and staff; described student eligibility; provided historical data on number of classes offered by grade level; detailed program enrollment, staffing, and budget; and shared family feedback on student engagement and program satisfaction. While sharing reflections, Ms. Clouter reported that just 54% of invited students utilized the program (with a small number of families who opted not to attend advising that transportation and family plans - especially vacations - were factors in their decision making) and that attendance rates decreased as students got older.

Committee members expressed concern about the low rate of summer program attendance by invited students and asked about the timing of student identification (in May) as a potential factor, and were provided with additional information in response to questions about walk-in services (e.g. Occupational Therapy only) and vocational opportunities (these are within the school community) for Special Education students. Dr. Sawyer added that this educational programming represents some of the available no-cost or low-cost opportunities for keeping students engaged in the summer.

C. Fiscal Year 2023 Personnel: Report

In her report Ms. Malone summarized FY23 personnel hiring goals; shared detailed data on Paraprofessional hiring; reported areas of need; provided data on hiring diversity; acknowledged new District Leaders; shared hire rates (by %) for applicants; and detailed searches conducted and filled to date by job category. In response to a question from Ms. Fryc about the budget impact from the need for additional paraprofessionals (24 beyond budget), Ms. Malone advised that the salary for this role is approximately \$25,000; Mr. Collins added that while this change results in an increased overall headcount, the district is still tracking under budget at present due to existing vacancies. Dr. Sawyer acknowledged the quality of recent professional hires' educational qualifications as provided in the report.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Fiscal Year 23 Federal Grants: Report & Vote to Accept Grants

Mr. Collins provided a brief summary of federal and state grants and noted the district's total available grant funding for FY23 is \$2.2M. Mr. Collins discussed the impact of previous COVID-19 funding to grant allocation totals, and illustrated grant usage by highlighting several (noting the Comprehensive School Health Services grant was a competitive grant) along with their associated uses. On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the Committee voted unanimously to accept all FY23 grant funds noted in the enclosed chart and to utilize such funds for their intended purpose.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

A. Appointment of Superintendent as Representative to Assabet Valley Collaborative Board of Directors

Dr. Sawyer advised that this vote to appoint was an annual requirement under the Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC) agreement, noted the first AVC Board of Directors meeting would be held later in the week, and advised he looked forward to working again with the group. On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the Committee voted unanimously to appoint Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools, as its representative to the Assabet Valley Collaborative Board of Directors for the 2022 - 2023 school year.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on September 14, 2022 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

Mr. Palitsch requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session:

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; and

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, 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. On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Ms. Boucher, on a roll call vote: Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Boucher, yes; and Mr. Palitsch, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:27 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Fryc, seconded by Ms. Boucher, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Boucher, yes; and Mr. Palitsch, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

SHS Advisory Program Slide Presentation

General Education Summer Programs Memo

Extended School Year Program Report

Summer Educational Programming Slide Presentation

FY23 Personnel Report Memo
FY23 Personnel Report Slide Presentation
FY23 Federal Grant Report
Set(s) of minutes as referenced above