

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

Present: Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson; Ms. Erin Boucher, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan; Ms. Rachel Sharifipour; Mr. Christian Girardi, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Ms. Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being; Ms. Barb Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

Not present: Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary.

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

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:00 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer congratulated the MASS Beijing Chinese Language School (MASS BCLS) on hosting a successful Lunar New Year celebration at Shrewsbury High School that featured performances by student (Shrewsbury High School, St. John's High School, MASS BCLS), adult, and martial arts groups, and expressed appreciation to educators who participated in the Professional Development day held in the district on February 6, 2024.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. One8 Foundation Grant for SHS Engineering Program: Vote to Accept

Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Principal Mr. Todd Bazydlo provided historical information on working with Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) and reconnecting with the One8 Foundation for Project Lead The Way (PLTW). He advised that co-presenter Mr. Dave Hruskoci, Director of Science and Engineering, took the lead on writing the Engineering grant proposal that was awarded funding, and described how the funding would be used. Committee members noted the importance of outside funding to the district, and Dr. Sawyer recommended that the Committee vote to accept the grant. On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Sharifipour, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the \$40,000 Project Lead The Way (PLTW) High School Engineering Grant from the One8 Foundation for Project Lead as presented and use such funds for their intended purpose.

B. Social & Emotional Learning & Mental Health State Grant: Vote to Accept

Ms. Belsito expressed appreciation to all parties who contributed to submitting the Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health grant, and provided details on how the grant would be utilized to provide support around restorative practices and coaching for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Dr. Lizotte noted the funding would also support courses for staff on a Collaborative Problem Solving program through Massachusetts General Hospital and on the *TRAILS to Wellness* curriculum.

Additional information was provided in response to questions from the Committee on timing (training begins prior to Summer Institute, and the grant ends in June) and the approach to training (Clinical Staff, Administration, and Teachers will work together on the rollout of the collaborative problem solving program). Dr. Sawyer recommended that the Committee vote to accept the grant.

On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Sharifipour, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the Supporting Students' Social Emotional Learning, Behavioral & Mental Health, and Wellness through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Grant as presented and use such funds for their intended purpose.

C. SHS School Improvement Plan: Presentation & Vote

Mr. Bazydlo and SHS students Maryana Gomes, Grade 11, and Riddhi Gulati, Grade 12, gave the report. After providing an overview of the process to develop the School Improvement Plan, the students shared details on areas of focus relative to the district's three Strategic Plan Commitments: *Educational Excellence* (noting how SHS goals align with district goals for four different priorities); *Enhanced Well-Being of All* (noting how the SHS goal and district goal align for one priority); and *Optimization of Resources* (noting how the SHS goal and district goal align for one priority). For each of the priorities, Mr. Bazydlo detailed associated action steps and noted the staff responsible for their implementation; he also expressed appreciation to members of the SHS School Council for their contributions to development of the plan.

Additional information was provided in response to questions from the Committee on areas including *The New Teacher Project* (English and social sciences are the focus this year; mathematics was last year's focus); Panorama well-being survey frequency (fall, end-of-year, and potentially late winter/early spring); and Blackstone Valley Hub (BV Hub) student cohort size (BV Hub prefers 8-10 students per cohort).

On a motion by Ms. Boucher, seconded by Ms. Sharifipour, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the 2023-2024 School Improvement Plan for Shrewsbury High School.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Fiscal Year 2025: Superintendent's Budget Recommendation

Dr. Sawyer began the report by thanking Mr. Girardi and Financial Coordinator/Budget Analyst Ms. Kim Fitzpatrick for their work on the content and format of the Budget Book being presented; acknowledging budget limitations inherent to the 2021 Override Agreement; noting the initial Fiscal Year 2025 Superintendent's Budget Recommendation reflected a 4.5% increase over the previous year; and summarizing key factors relative to the FY25 budget. Mr. Girardi presented a high-level FY25 budget overview by category before he and Dr. Sawyer shared detailed information on: FY25 Cost of Living Allowance [COLA] increases by labor group; student enrollment and class size (at elementary and middle schools) projections; FY24 and FY25 (projected) out-of-district tuitions (Vocational/Technical and

Special Education); Circuit Breaker funding (recap FY24 and projection FY25) and guideline recommendations (FY24-FY28); emergency homeless shelter funding; FY25 transportation, Category D (materials, equipment, contract services, and other), and personnel budgets and needs; per pupil expenditure data with state and comparable district comparisons; and a timeline for the budget process going forward.

Committee members shared their detailed perspectives in turn, noting the recommendation represented a good starting point in the budget process, and commenting on topics including the changing needs of an evolving school population, uncertainties around some budget categories, and the importance of hearing feedback from the public on the proposed budget.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on January 24, 2024 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

Ms. Fryc requested 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 clerical and support staff and/or 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. On a motion by Ms. Heffernan, seconded by Ms. Boucher, on a roll call vote: Ms. Sharifipour, yes; Ms. Boucher, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 9:06 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Heffernan, seconded by Ms. Boucher, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Sharifipour, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Ms. Boucher, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

SHS School Improvement Plan

SHS School Improvement Plan Slide Presentation

FY25 Superintendent's Budget Recommendation

FY25 Superintendent's Budget Recommendation Slide Presentation

Set(s) of minutes as referenced above