

**School Committee  
Meeting Book**

**February 28, 2024  
7:00 pm**

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



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**AGENDA**

**February 28, 2024 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. Staff Wellness Initiatives: Report	7:05 – 7:25
V. Curriculum	
VI. Policy	
A. School District Calendar for 2024 -2025 School Year: Discussion	7:25 – 7:40
VII. Finance & Operations	
A. Fiscal Year 2025 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment Budget: Report	7:40 – 8:05
B. Fiscal Year 2025 Information Technology Budget: Report	8:05 – 8:30
VIII. Old Business	
IX. New Business	
X. Approval of Minutes	8:30 – 8:35
XI. Executive Session	8:35 – 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.	
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	



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
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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”)

XII. Adjournment

**Next regular meeting: March 13, 2024**



## SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

### ITEM NO: I Public Participation

MEETING DATE: 02/28/24

#### 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. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson  
Ms. Erin Boucher, Vice Chairperson  
Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary  
Ms. Lynsey Heffernan, Committee Member  
Ms. Rachel Sharifipour, 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:**  
**A. Staff Wellness Initiatives: Report**

MEETING DATE: **02/28/24**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The district's strategic plan includes a "commitment to the enhanced well-being of all," a strategic priority of "promoting student and staff wellness" through "expanding opportunities for students and staff to strengthen mental health and physical wellness in support of overall well-being," and a strategic goal for this school year to "initiate a staff wellness program and provide professional development and other opportunities to address workplace stress."

Dr. Lizotte will present information regarding the district's staff wellness initiatives to date, including the work completed by the district's Staff Wellness Team, opportunities for professional development and support, and feedback from a recent staff wellness survey.

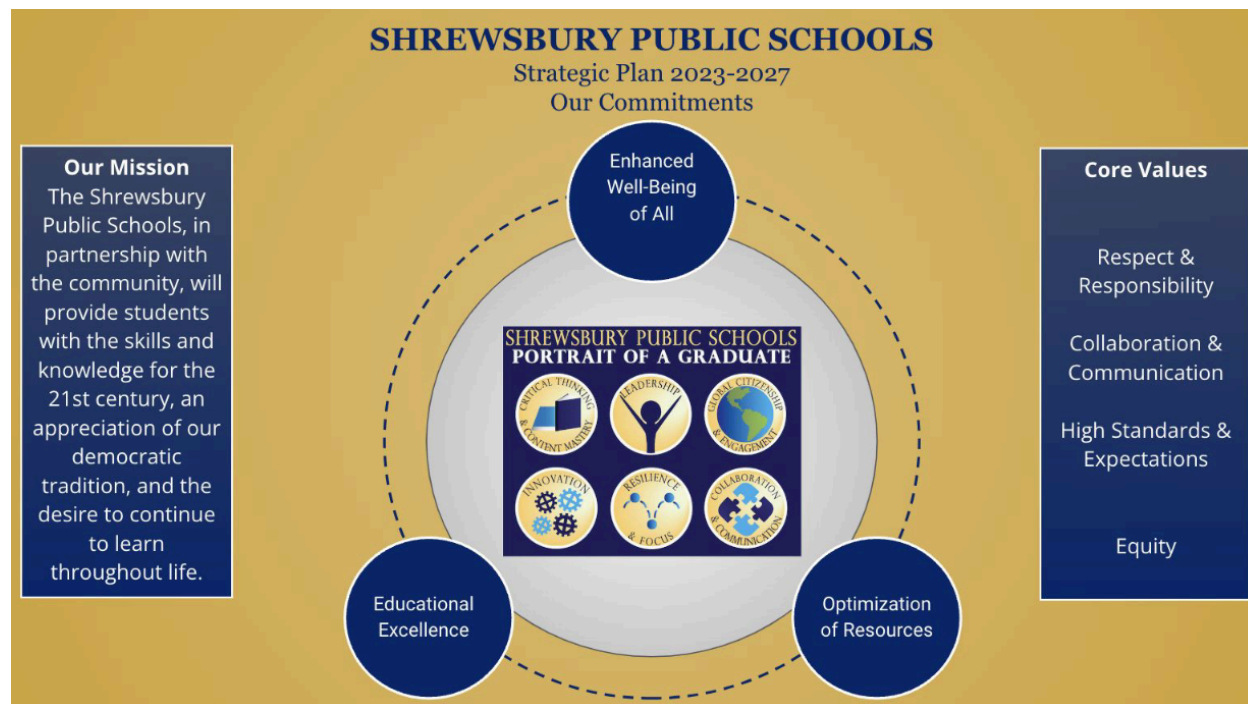
**ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

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. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being

# SPS Staff Well-Being Programming Update



"Education is a human endeavor, and learning is built on relationships.

Creating a culture of care in our schools is a necessary endeavor in the best of times and an imperative when times are tough."

(Sean Slade & Alyssa Gallagher)



# Shrewsbury Public Schools

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Jane O. Lizotte, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being

To: Shrewsbury School Committee

From: Dr. Jane O. Lizotte

Date: February 28, 2024

Subject: SPS Staff Well-Being Programming Update

Dear Members of the School Committee,

This communication provides an update regarding staff well-being in the Shrewsbury Public Schools. *Enhanced Well-Being of All* is one of SPS's three commitments identified as essential to our district's Strategic Plan. This commitment includes an intentional effort to ensure that student and staff well-being are front and center in all that we do, as the work involved is foundational to our health and involves stakeholders including students, staff, families, community partners, and health experts. In June, 2022, the RAND Corporation and National Education Association published [Restoring Teacher and Principal Well-Being Is an Essential Step for Rebuilding Schools, Findings from the State of the American Teacher and State of the American Principal Surveys](#). Results from the study revealed the following:

- 73% of teachers and 85% of principals reported experiencing frequent job-related stress vs. 35% of the general population of working adults.
- 28% of teachers and 28% of principals reported symptoms of depression vs. 17% of other working adults.
- 24% of teachers and 19% of principals said they were not coping well with job-related stress vs. 12% of other working adults.

- 1 in 3 Hispanic or Latinx teachers experienced symptoms of depression compared with about 1 in 4 non-Hispanic or -Latinx teachers.

One of Shrewsbury Public Schools’ strategic priorities includes, ***Promote Student and Staff Wellness: Expand opportunities for students and staff to strengthen mental health and physical wellness in support of overall well-being.***

Well-being differs from wellness, as communicated by [Gallup](#) and the [Harvard Business Review](#). Well-being encompasses the comprehensive dimensions of a well-lived life, including these elements shared via Gallup's global research:

- **Career wellbeing:** You like what you do every day.
- **Social wellbeing:** You have meaningful friendships in your life.
- **Financial wellbeing:** You manage your money well.
- **Physical wellbeing:** You have energy to get things done.
- **Community wellbeing:** You like where you live.

Staff wellness and overall well-being are integral to our personal and professional lives in our roles as partners, spouses, parents, siblings, caregivers, educators, service providers, health care workers, and support staff. We know that when we feel “well” in and out of the workplace, we are healthier, happier, and more effective in all that we do. The quote at the beginning of this report is found in [EdWeek’s ‘A Culture of Care’: How Schools Can Alleviate Educator Stress This Year](#). The article focuses on the needs of those in our schools and states, “When schools are driven by the needs of their people, not just the curriculum or school improvement plan, employee happiness increases, and student engagement and learning skyrockets...Building a culture of caring does not happen overnight. It requires ongoing effort and action for the shift to create real change, yet it is also something that you can start to affect tomorrow.” Recommended action steps, as those relate to a systemic and sustainable culture of care, and articulated in the article, mirror those communicated by SPS staff in recent weeks, and highlight what many of our staff believe to be most impactful to their well-being:

- Acknowledge individuals. Throughout the year, highlight individuals and share about who they are both personally and professionally.

- Demonstrate care. Engage your team in non task-oriented discussions. Ask how they are doing during these times. Be genuine.
- Show your human side of leadership. Ask questions, admit vulnerability, listen actively. Check on how your team is doing and ask them what would reduce stress.
- Learn to adapt your leadership style. Different individuals respond to different leadership styles and being able to adjust your style can have a big impact on your team and your school culture.
- Provide training and professional development. Invest in and expand the skills and mindsets of everyone in your school.
- The old saying goes: “Put your money where your mouth is.” If you make a tangible investment in building a culture of care, your staff will know that you are serious about it. This can range from scheduling more time for collaboration, to hiring support staff, through to professional learning. Your budget is a moral document.

– Slade & Gallagher 2021 in [EdWeek](#)

Similarly, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional Learning (CASEL) highlights an increased number of studies and interventions that focus on the well-being of educators, in addition to a growing number of programs that aim to reduce emotional exhaustion and feelings of depersonalization, increase professional efficacy and satisfaction, and build specific skills to support relationship-building and cope with the social and emotional demands of teaching. Each of these elements are also associated with improvement in students’ achievement and well-being. At the school and district level, we are currently looking at our organizational structures (such as by allocating time and establishing practices for collaborative work, building connections, and managing workload), at individuals (such as through well-being programs and opportunities, behavioral skill-building strategies), or a combination of both. Meta-analyses of recent CASEL studies indicate that interventions such as these are promising, demonstrating reduced stress and anxiety, increased well-being and self-efficacy, and improved emotional regulation among teachers. Below are an example of CASEL studies and meta-analyses:

- [A Systematic Review of Evidence-Based Well-Being Initiatives for Schoolteachers and Early Childhood Educators](#) (Berger et al., 2022)
- [A Meta-Analysis of the Impact of Social and Emotional Learning Interventions on Teachers' Burnout Symptoms](#) (Oliveira et al., 2021)
- [Meta-Analysis of Mindfulness Training on Teacher Well-Being](#) (Zarate, Maggin, & Passmore 2019)

There is no question that SPS staff respect one another and value the time and opportunities they have working together to learn, practice, assess, and strengthen their professional practice. Recent staff well-being survey data, in addition to conversations with staff in school and district meetings, and individual interactions with staff, indicate a strong desire to collaborate and learn alongside one another. The respect that staff have for one another is admirable and indicative of the strong school cultures in which every staff member plays an integral role.

### **SPS Staff Wellness Survey: January 2024**

During a time where educators, staff, and administrators are facing unprecedented levels of stress, it is crucial to understand that prioritizing the wellness and mental health of these adults is foundational to ensuring healthy school cultures where students and staff can flourish. Gathering staff input is imperative to this process. [Here is the most recent staff wellness survey data](#) (password is 01545) obtained through Survey Monkey in January 2024. The survey data was shared with all staff and reviewed by the SPS Staff Wellbeing and Shrewsbury Leadership Teams to inform next steps, as those relate to both the development of a SPS Staff Wellness Program and professional development offerings. There is no question that [stress](#) is the greatest challenge, and providing staff with strategies that focus on stress management is imperative. I had the opportunity to interact with the Staff Wellness Leadership Team, Social Emotional Learning Leadership Team, Social Emotional Behavioral Leadership Team, and the Professional Development Committee over the past two weeks to discuss implications of the survey. The conversations were both enlightening and productive.

Below are screenshots of some of the data captured in the most recent survey:

Q1

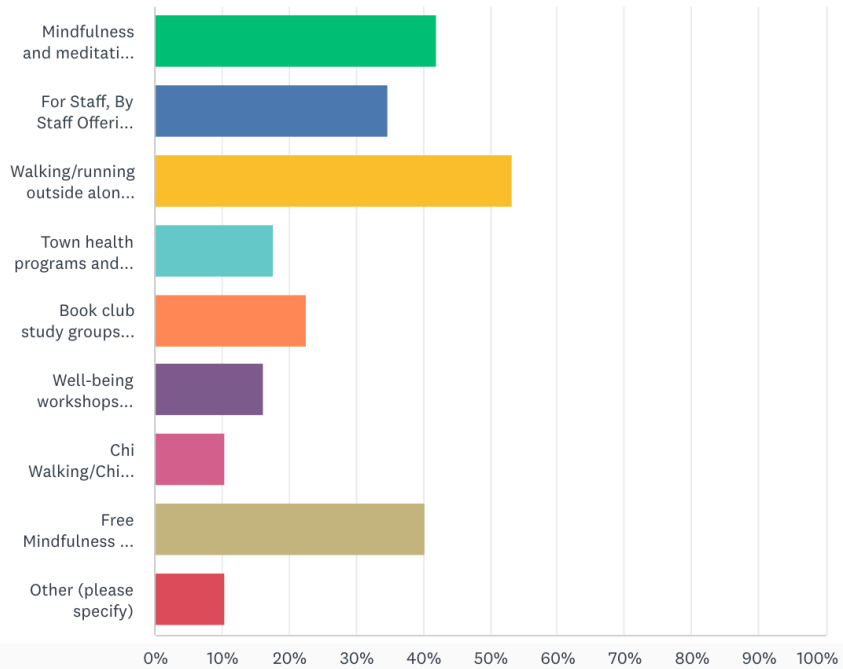


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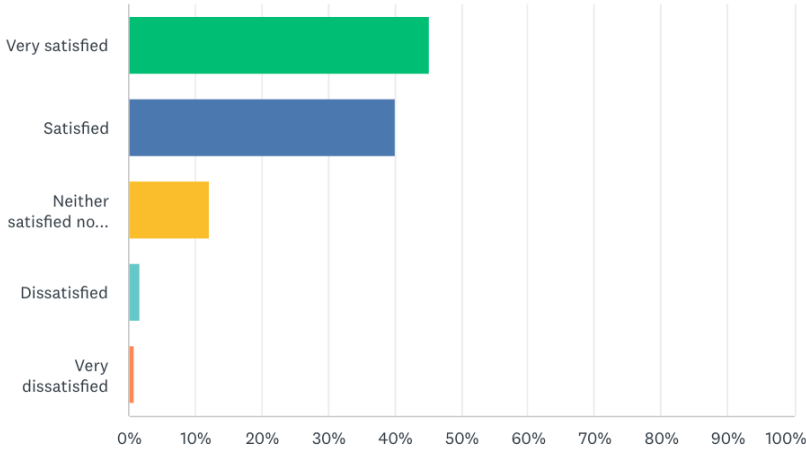
What specific offerings and/or practices have you either participated in or plan to participate in? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 124 Skipped: 42



# If you participated in any of the above, how satisfied were you with the quality of the program(s)?

Answered: 115 Skipped: 51

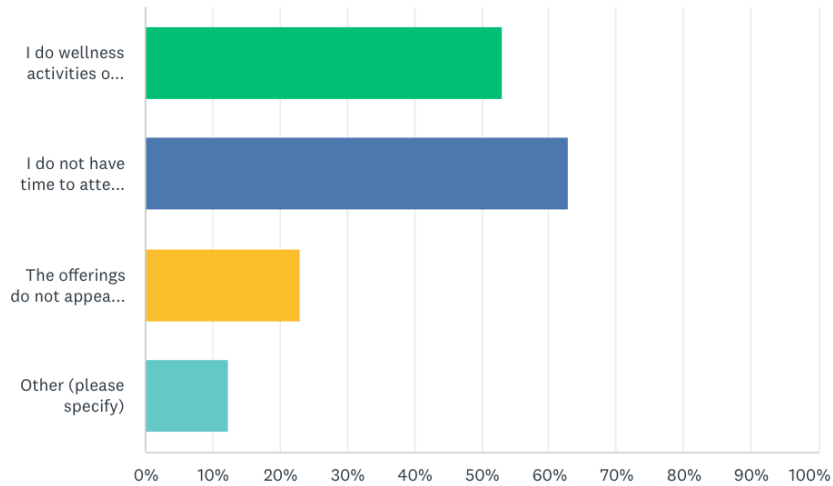


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very satisfied	45.22% 52
Satisfied	40.00% 46
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12.17% 14
Dissatisfied	1.74% 2
Very dissatisfied	0.87% 1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>115</b>



## If you do not participate in SPS wellness offerings, what are the reasons? Check as many that apply.

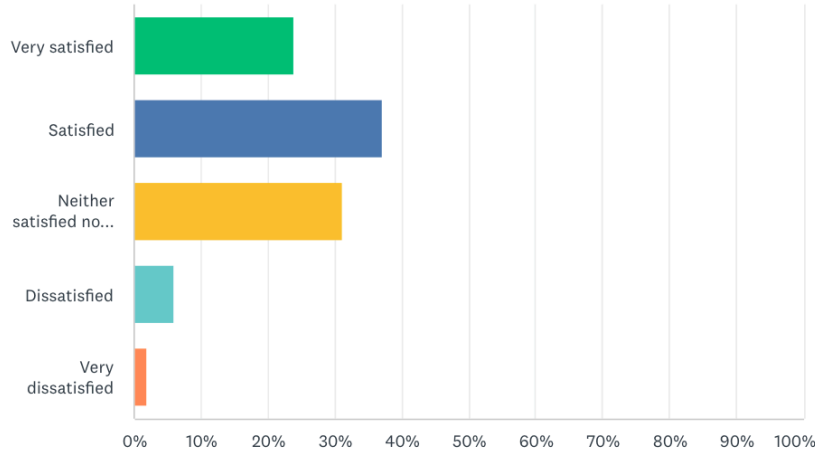
Answered: 113 Skipped: 53



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ I do wellness activities on my own outside of work.	53.10%	60
▼ I do not have time to attend before or after school in-person sessions.	62.83%	71
▼ The offerings do not appeal to me.	23.01%	26
▼ Other (please specify)	<a href="#">Responses</a> 12.39%	14
<b>Total Respondents: 113</b>		

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the wellness offerings for staff in our school district.

Answered: 151 Skipped: 15



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very satisfied	23.84% 36
Satisfied	37.09% 56
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	31.13% 47
Dissatisfied	5.96% 9
Very dissatisfied	1.99% 3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>151</b>

The top rated offerings, as communicated by staff in the survey results included the following:

1. Walking/running outside alone and/or with colleagues before, during and/or after the school day
2. Mindfulness and meditation with Jordan Grinstein
3. Free Mindfulness and Meditation Apps including Ten Percent Happier and Headspace

## **SPS Staff Wellness Survey Themes: Strengths, Challenges, and Suggestions**

### **Strengths:**

“I think the school district has done more for staff wellness than most school districts in the state. I appreciate all of the opportunities, especially the mindfulness sessions for both me and my students.”

“Thank you so much for providing the staff wellness opportunities! I enjoyed both classes very much and appreciate the knowledge that both instructors provided and their willingness to teach these courses.”

“I greatly appreciate the continued focus on this area of development for staff. It is so vital for our sustainability as people and an organization. Thank you!”

“More of what you are doing! I feel very happy about all that is offered and only wish I could do more but due to meetings/ SET , etc after school commitments I can not.”

“Jordan comes in for mindfulness with my class. that is where/when I mostly participate.”

“Thank you for all you are doing to ensure the health and well-being of SPS employees. Your efforts to provide thought-out and meaningful opportunities is greatly appreciated.”

“Thank you for keeping our overall well-being front and center.”

“Really happy that we're focusing on this!”

### **Challenges:**

“Currently, I feel like I need to focus on my health and well-being alone. This is my personal preference for where I am right now. But I am grateful that these programs you've worked hard to create exist for when I am ready for more social-focused well-being.”

“I feel that these opportunities have all been wonderful. However, staff members are getting mixed messages when it comes to work/life balance (depending on the admin). Burnout is real and we can do all the things outside of working hours to help aid in it, but it won't fix the problem unless we focus on what we can do within the school day to help aid in staff well-being.”

“I wish I had more time to participate in the many opportunities- they sound wonderful! I just don't feel I have the time...”

“The well-being choices and programs are excellent in both quality and variety. In order to be fully effective they need to be paired with ways to maintain a healthier work/life balance through a more manageable workload. The number one request that people have expressed is having more time to collaborate/prepare/reflect/follow up...finding some ways to allow this would be so helpful.”

“Trauma for teachers, we are experiencing more and more explosive behaviors and disruptions to teachers throughout our day. It can be traumatic as we experience it day in and day out. We need help walking us through these experiences- what we are feeling and the stress, anxiety and impact it has where we continually think about it. We don't realize the impact it is having on us or our health. Yes there are mindfulness and activities you can do but we need help acknowledging and talking about the impact it is having on teachers. Yes we go home and cry! We need an expert to lead us through our experiences and how to help us.”

“The timing of offerings can sometimes be tricky! It's hard to convince yourself to stay later after a very long day, but honestly, it's always worth it when I do!”

“The district contradicts itself - says take the time for wellness, but does not provide the time for wellness.”

“True attempts to help with staff wellness would focus on reducing unsustainable expectations and workloads.”

### **Suggestions:**

“The well-being choices and programs are excellent in both quality and variety. In order to be fully effective, they need to be paired with ways to maintain a healthier

work/life balance through a more manageable workload. The number one request that people have expressed is having more time to collaborate/prepare/reflect/follow up...finding some ways to allow this would be so helpful.”

“Have some wellness time (even 5-10 minutes) as part of all meetings, longer duration on PD days.”

“I wonder if there is a way for staff to sign up to meet/have a buddy, similar to what we do with SOS for students for additional community building for those who want it.”

“Maybe have Mr. Jordan offer meditation via Zoom? That way all staff can access him at the same time.”

“Make a window of time blocked off for staff to use the weight room/treadmills at the high school or welcome staff to use the machines at a specific time, especially during winter when it is dark early. Movement is so important to my wellness. I wish that I could hit a treadmill for 20 minutes before I leave SHS or in the AM before school, but I do not know where they are or if I am allowed to use the equipment.”

“I appreciate having the opportunity to participate in "drop in meditation sessions" at Beal School on Thursday mornings at 8:15 a.m. It would be great to expand these opportunities to other schools before, during and after the day-perhaps staff drop in times and student drop in times

“Teacher trauma - anxiety and stress, how it affects teachers with explosive and disruptive behaviors.”

“Work in options for staff wellness into PD Days! I would love to have wellness opportunities offered during some portion of PD - go for a walk, have an in-person book club discussion, etc.”

Staff were also invited to complete a Panorama “Teacher and Staff Survey” in June 2023, the results of which can be found [here](#).



**Shrewsbury Public Schools**

"Spring 2022-23 - Teacher and Staff Shrewsbury Public Schools: Teacher and Staff Survey 2022-23, Shrewsbury Public Schools: Teacher and Staff Survey 2022-23"

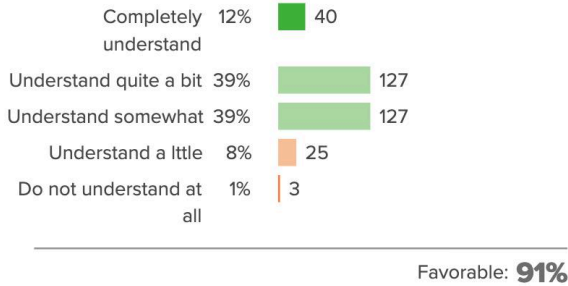


## Summary

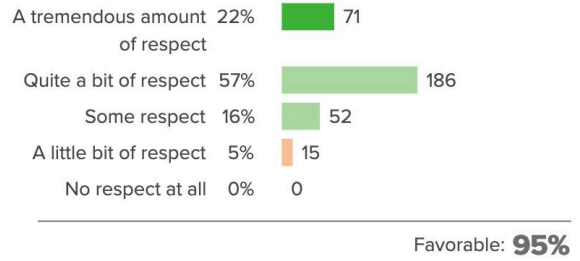
Topic Description	Results
<b>Belonging</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>School Climate</b> Perceptions of the overall social and learning climate of the school.	<b>97%</b>
<b>Background Questions</b> Demographic information about survey-takers.	<b>73%</b>

324 responses

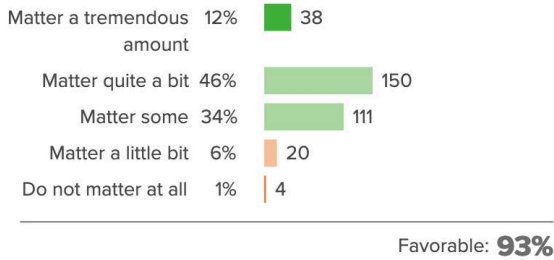
**Q.1: How connected do you feel to other adults at your school?**



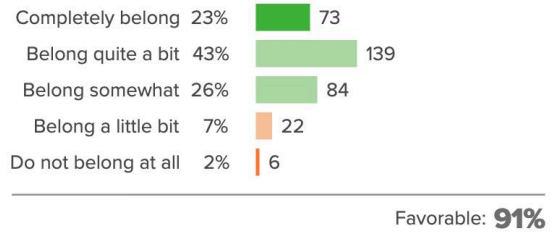
**Q.2: How much respect do colleagues in your school show you?**



**Q.3: How much do you matter to others at your school?**



**Q.4: Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at your school?**



**SPS Staff Wellness Leadership Team and the SPS Staff Well-Being Program**

I am grateful to the 28 members of the SPS Staff Wellness Team for the meaningful work that commenced during the summer months and continues today. Staff wellness team members can be found in the chart below.

**SPS Staff Wellness Team: July, 2023-June 2024**

<b>Team Member</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Role</b>
Jane Lizotte	District	Asst. Supt. for Community Partnerships & Well-Being
Jordan Grinstein	District	Mindfulness Director
Erica Pratt	District	Director of Health/PE/FACS
Anne Monopoli	Calvin Coolidge School	Para, elementary sub caller, after school care
Beth McInerney	Maj. Howard School W. Beal School	Teacher
Sarah Badry	Maj. Howard W. Beal School	Teacher
Ann Lambert	Maj. Howard W. Beal School	School Nurse
Kelly Delaney	Spring Street School	Teacher
Laura Braun-Lush	Spring Street School	School Psychologist
Skyler Acconcio	Beal (Sherwood/Oak travel)	Music Teacher
Kathleen Blair	Beal	special education co-teacher
Tahnee Fallis Baril	Paton	Music Teacher
Lindsey Morse	FSS	Instructional Coach
Kathleen Blair	Beal School	Grade 2 teacher
Allison Campbell	Beal School	Grade 4 teacher
Kristen Minio	Oak Middle School	Adjustment Counselor
Talene Orlando	Oak Middle School	Teacher, Special Education
Katie Monopoli	Parker Road Preschool	Para/ESC Childcare Provider
Jennifer Cotie	Sherwood Middle School	Teacher, Grade 6 ELA/SS
Kelley Casey	Sherwood Middle School	Teacher, Health
Jillian O'Connor	Sherwood Middle School	Teacher, Grade 5 Math/Science
Jamie Hawley	Sherwood Middle School	Teacher, Special Education
Monica Clune	Shrewsbury High School	Teacher, Spanish
Jessica Rice	Shrewsbury High School	School Counselor
Sharon Roland	Shrewsbury High School	Teacher, Science
MariaClara Macedo-Wood	Shrewsbury High School	Media Center and Language Lab Aide
Angie Flynn	Shrewsbury High School	Director of School Counseling
Erin Burtnyk	Shrewsbury High School	Teacher, Health



In his letter of charge to the SPS Staff Wellness Team, Dr. Sawyer tasked the team with creating “a single wellness program resource, where colleagues can find important information and a menu of opportunities in one place.” Some of the resources found within this guide will include professional development opportunities including those in which our staff have engaged with Jessica Gifford from [Project Connect](#), and Lea Christo, Coordinator of [Resiliency in Helping Professions Certificate Program](#) and Director of the Health Advocacy Program at Assumption University, through which some of our staff have obtained certification. Ms. Christo presented [Revisiting the Topic of Burnout: Your Relationship with Work](#), to Pre-K through grade 8 faculty on September 1, 2023, during the first professional development day of the school year, and will soon be facilitating a faculty meeting at SHS.

The creation of a *SPS Staff Well-Being Program* is underway, thanks to the efforts of many, including the SPS Staff Wellness Leadership Team, SPS colleagues, and Liz Poplawski at Shrewsbury Media Connection. This critical effort is being developed to address workplace stress, while building and supporting *a culture of staff wellness* across the Shrewsbury Public Schools. In his letter of charge to the SPS Staff Wellness Team, Dr. Sawyer communicated the need for “a clearly structured and coherent programmatic approach to staff wellness that articulates the needs of staff and outlines how we as a district are providing solutions to those needs.” Additionally, he directed, “Your work must not only focus on how to assist colleagues in balancing and coping with the significant challenges inherent in the work of public education, it must also focus on *how the ways in which that work is done* can reduce or increase stress on the system and the people within it.” Staff consistently communicate (through surveys, meetings and conversations with school and district colleagues) their interest in working with colleagues, school, and district leaders to share strategies and suggestions regarding how to accomplish this goal.

The Staff Wellness Team is reviewing what kinds of supports for staff wellness promise to be most beneficial for SPS. Evidence for the benefits of workplace wellness programs are [mixed](#), with studies dependent on the type of programming provided and the context of the workplace (examples of studies that report positive outcomes are [here](#) and [here](#); examples with findings that indicate no effect on specific measures of health are [here](#) and [here](#); an overview of the topic with links to several

studies from Pennsylvania State University and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation can be found [here](#)).

During the summer, the SPS Staff Wellness Team reviewed wellness resources and discussed implications for our district. [Structural Supports to Promote Teacher Well-Being](#) is one of the resources reviewed by the team and includes a brief shared by the Annenberg Center at Brown University. The “Central Question” posed in this brief included, “What does the research say about structural supports that enable teacher well-being?” The team determined that while we have some of the support referenced in this research in place, we need to continue to ask staff for their input, as we determine ways in which to strengthen staff wellness before, during and after the school day. The Staff Wellness Program aims to articulate the needs of staff, while outlining how we as a district are providing solutions to those needs.

### **A Sample of Current SPS Well-being Offerings**

SPS educators and staff lead and participate in well-being opportunities throughout the school year and summer. These include those offered at the SPS Summer Institute including “Mindfulness and Wellbeing: Living with Purpose and Peace,” taught by Ms. Beth McInerney, grade 2 teacher at Beal School, and Mr. Jordan Grinstein, SPS’s Director of Mindfulness. Opportunities continued through the fall and early winter, some of which are highlighted below, as they are being facilitated by SPS staff. **Winter For Staff, By Staff Offerings** began in late January and will continue through late March, 2024. I am grateful to Karen Isaacson, Director of Extended Learning, for organizing these opportunities for all staff. They are ongoing and offered for six consecutive weeks, three times during the year. Here are the current offerings:

Class	Day	Time	Location	Instructor
Crochet for Beginners	Mondays	3:30-4:30	SHS	Chris Besaw
Embroidery Design	Tuesdays	3:30-4:30	SHS	Adelina Baka
Intro to Pickleball	Wednesdays	4:00-5:00	Beal	Monica Clune
Designing Custom Wooden Signs	Wednesdays	4:00-5:00	RISE	Jen Tabor
Ceramics	Thursdays	4:15-5:15	Shewood	Deirdre Kunar
Yoga	Thursdays	4:15-5:15	Beal	Beth McInerney
Yoga and Mindful Movement	Thursdays	2:50-3:50	SHS	Beth Morin
Reiki Healing Medication	Wednesdays	5:00-6:00	Beal	Elyssa Glassman

### **Staff Mindfulness Opportunities**

Jordan Grinsten, SPS’s Mindfulness Director is in his third year in this role, which is a contracted service through the organization *Whole School Mindfulness*. Mindfulness and meditation opportunities are one of many examples of well-being offerings in our school district. Mindfulness in the workplace has gained significant attention for its positive impact on mental health and overall well-being, particularly in educational settings. Jordan conducts weekly mindfulness opportunities in the Select Board Room at the Town Hall for municipal employees on Tuesdays at noon. These have been well received by those who participate. Below are a few recurring themes of the benefits, as identified by reputable studies and [organizations](#), and highlight the benefits of mindfulness for employees. Examples of research regarding the positive effects of mindfulness training and practices for educators in increasing teacher well-being reducing burnout can be found [here](#) and [here](#),

During the October 6th Professional Development Day, several paraprofessionals attended well-being workshops including mindfulness and meditation, and other learning opportunities. Survey data was positive and included the following:

- “I did enjoy the afternoon sessions about bias, IEP’s and mindfulness. My favorite by far was mindfulness because I think I needed it at the end of the week. I was so thoroughly relaxed with the expertise we had. I think everyone in the district should share this experience at the very end of every week. It left me in a good place to start the weekend.”

- “I think mindfulness should be scheduled into the day for entire schools, so that everyone is practicing mindfulness all together (maybe led over the loudspeaker?). I know people mean well to say practice mindful moments, but with so much to do and so little time, no one actually takes a few minutes to ground themselves. I really think practicing more meditation and mindful moments ALL TOGETHER as a building, would go a long way in beginning to create a better work place in these difficult days in education.”
- “I enjoyed going to three different sessions. The mindfulness piece was helpful. I have taken mindfulness before and it’s really easy to fall out of habit. Doing it as part of PD helped to get back into it and really be in the moment. Sometimes we need a physical reminder to remember how it makes us feel.”

### **Communicating Well-Being Opportunities to SPS Staff**

[Here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) are examples of communications I sent to all staff, each of which focuses on well-being opportunities available to SPS staff throughout the school year, including book clubs (including [The Good Life](#)), staff wellness offerings, and special events . These are a snapshot of district-wide offerings and do not include school-based book club meetings, social events, and staff volunteer endeavors that bring small and large groups of people together. I am grateful for the contributions of staff, community partners, and others who actively seek to support well-being in our schools and district. It is incumbent upon us to continue to provide resources and opportunities to staff at a minimal fee and/or free. These resources include school and district sponsored wellness opportunities referenced above. Additionally, initiatives offered to all municipal employees offered through the *West Suburban Health Group* (including seasonal walking programs, nutrition programs, etc.) and staff well-being and support programming facilitated by outside facilitators (including [Project Connect’s Jessica Gifford](#)) are integral to staff well-being programming. Staff are appreciative of these offerings. Currently, 22 staff members and 11 town employees are participating in Jessica Gifford’s Well-Being Challenge that began on February 4th.

### **Benefits for SPS Employees through the Town of Shrewsbury**

Thank you to Nick Hawes, Benefits Coordinator, Town of Shrewsbury, for sharing important information and reminders regarding health plan and other well-being

opportunities and benefits to SPS employees. Specific information regarding these important Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and health insurance program supports are included in the appendix at the end of this report.

### **Next Steps**

There are a number of action steps that are currently underway in the district to address the well-being needs of staff, the most important of which includes ***building and supporting a culture of staff wellness across the Shrewsbury Public Schools.***

The following action steps will take place between now and mid-April:

- Staff wellness survey data collected through Survey Monkey (January 2024) and Panorama (June 2023) will be utilized by the Staff Wellness Leadership Team and School Leadership Team to determine short and long term goals and action steps related to staff well-being.
- A ***SPS Staff Well-Being Program and Framework*** is currently in development, thanks to the efforts of members of the Staff Wellness Leadership Team sub-committees. This is targeted for completion by April 15th.
- The staff wellness team is in the process of researching ways to receive expert help [at low-no cost] that focuses on how to best approach the issue of staff stress.
- The staff wellness team will continue to look at a range of supports to address staff stress, with the understanding that one size does not fit all.
- Our schools will benefit greatly from staffing capacity to ensure that this important work is done with fidelity district-wide. I ask that you consider shifting \$85,000 in funding currently allocated for the contract with Whole School Mindfulness for the Mindfulness Director position to fund a Well-Being Coordinator position in FY25. This person would operationalize the development and implementation of student and staff well-being initiatives to advance the district's strategic plan "commitment to the enhanced well-being of all." This position will be designed to coordinate well-being supports for both students and staff to address needs related to stress management, emotional regulation, etc.

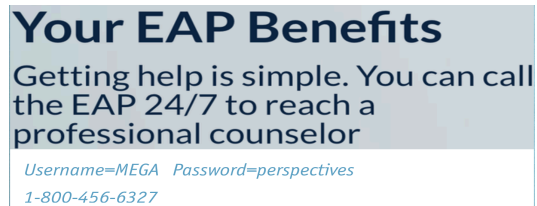
Additional information on this proposed role will be shared later in the budget process.

The Shrewsbury Public Schools continues to actively seek ways to strengthen staff well-being by responding to the needs of all adults who work in our schools. We strive to enhance the well-being of all by valuing, respecting, and supporting one another and creating a culture of staff wellness, as we need our staff to be well in order to provide our students with what they need. Being present is paramount. There is no question that our livelihood depends on the connections we have with others and the relationships that we nurture along the way. [Marc Brackett](#), founding director of the [Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#) and professor in the [Child Study Center, Yale School of Medicine at Yale University](#) shares, “Too often we look for strategies that will shift people out of negative emotional spaces, but that’s not always possible. During difficult times, sometimes we just need to be there for one another.”

Thank you for your time.

## Appendix: Employee Benefit Programs

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP):** The EAP program assists employees with support when needed and provides resources in many different areas, available 27/7/365, entirely free, and entirely confidential.



**Perspectives Work-Life Program:** *Perspectives* serves as our no-cost, fully confidential employee assistance program that aims to:

- Support mental and emotional health, whenever employees need it.
- Provide resources to deal with stress, depression, grief, anxiety, substance abuse, and more.
- Offer skill-building exercises to enhance important work and life capabilities.
- Provide recommendations for quality caretaking, financial, and legal services, and resources.



PERSPECTIVES WORK-LIFE PROGRAM

A Selection of "Wrap-around" Work-Life Services Serving EAPs Nationwide.

800.456.6327  
 perspectivesltd.com  
 Username: MEGA  
 Password: perspectives

CHILDCARE	ELDERCARE	CONVENIENCE SERVICES	LEGAL
Childcare Consultation & Referrals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before/After School Care</li> <li>• Childcare Centers</li> <li>• Family Day Care</li> <li>• Nannies &amp; In-home Care</li> <li>• Summer Camps</li> </ul> Information & Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adolescence &amp; Child Development</li> <li>• Adoption</li> <li>• New Parents</li> <li>• Pregnancy</li> <li>• Special Needs</li> </ul>	Consultation & Referrals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisted Living Facilities</li> <li>• Caregiver Support</li> <li>• Community Services</li> <li>• Home Health Care</li> <li>• Hospice Providers</li> <li>• Nursing Homes</li> <li>• Respite Care Providers</li> <li>• Transportation Services</li> </ul>	Information & Referrals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Education Classes</li> <li>• Fitness Programs &amp; Trainers</li> <li>• Home Cleaning</li> <li>• Home Repair Services</li> <li>• Moving Services</li> <li>• Organizer Services</li> <li>• Pet Care</li> <li>• Relocation Information</li> <li>• Yoga Classes</li> </ul>	Consultation & Referrals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bankruptcy</li> <li>• Child Custody &amp; Support</li> <li>• Consumer Issues</li> <li>• Elder Law</li> <li>• Estate Planning</li> <li>• Immigration</li> <li>• Landlord Tenant Disputes</li> <li>• Real Estate Concerns</li> <li>• Restraining Orders</li> <li>• Separation &amp; Divorce</li> <li>• Wills &amp; Trusts</li> </ul>
NUTRITION	HEALTH	WORK	FINANCIAL
Resources & Referrals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Friendly Meals</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Food Allergies</li> <li>• Gastrointestinal Problems</li> <li>• Healthy Eating</li> <li>• High Blood Pressure</li> <li>• High Cholesterol</li> <li>• Lactation</li> <li>• Weight Management</li> </ul>	Resources & Referrals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complementary Medical Providers</li> <li>• Health Coaches</li> <li>• Health Spas</li> <li>• Meditation Programs</li> <li>• Mindfulness Programs</li> <li>• Sleep Programs</li> <li>• Smoking Cessation Programs</li> <li>• Support Groups for Chronic Illness</li> <li>• Twelve Step Programs</li> </ul>	Resources & Referrals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career Exploration</li> <li>• Interest Testing</li> <li>• Job Performance Concerns</li> <li>• Job Search Strategies</li> <li>• Resume Review</li> <li>• Volunteer Work</li> </ul>	Consultation & Referrals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgeting</li> <li>• Credit Problems</li> <li>• Debt Management</li> <li>• Financial Wellbeing</li> <li>• Financial Aid</li> <li>• Homebuying Information</li> <li>• Insurance Planning</li> <li>• Retirement Planning</li> <li>• Tax Resources</li> </ul>



**FITNESS AND WEIGHT-LOSS BENEFITS:** For employees who are members of a health plan through the Town of Shrewsbury, each plan has varying fitness and weight-loss benefits as seen below.



## WEIGHT-LOSS REIMBURSEMENT

Get Rewarded for participating in a qualified weight-loss program

Save up to  
**\$150**



### Qualified for Reimbursement:

**Participation fees for:**

- Hospital-based programs and Weight Watchers® in-person
- Weight Watchers online and other non-hospital programs (in-person or online) that combine healthy eating, exercise, and coaching sessions with certified health professionals such as nutritionists, registered dietitians, or exercise physiologists.



### Not Qualified for Reimbursement:

- One-time initiation or termination fees
- Food, supplements, books, scales, or exercise equipment
- Individual nutrition counseling sessions, doctor/nurse visits, lab tests, or other services that are covered benefits under your medical plan

## TWO EASY WAYS TO GET REIMBURSED

Start by picking a qualified program. Once you pay for the program, you can either:



### SUBMIT ONLINE

Sign in to your MyBlue account, then go to [member.bluecrossma.com/fitness-and-weightloss](https://member.bluecrossma.com/fitness-and-weightloss) to fill out and submit the form.



### MAIL THE ATTACHED REQUEST FORM

Fill out the attached form, then send the completed form to the address listed.

QUESTIONS?

Visit [bluecrossma.org](https://bluecrossma.org).

## BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD

Up to \$300 reimbursement toward health club membership or exercise classes, or virtual/online fitness memberships, subscriptions, programs. Enroll in a qualified Weight Watchers® or hospital based weight loss program and receive up to \$150 per calendar year toward your program fees.



### Fitness Reimbursement

Your reward for health

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#### Get money back each year for participating in a qualified fitness program.<sup>1</sup>

**Qualified for Fitness Reimbursement:**  
Blue Cross will reimburse your membership fees for **up to three consecutive months** (of one individual or family membership) or, alternatively, fees for **up to 10 fitness classes** at:

- A full service health club with cardiovascular and strength-training equipment like treadmills, bikes, weight machines, and free weights
- **Starting in 2019**—A fitness studio with instructor-led group classes such as yoga, Pilates, Zumba™, kickboxing, indoor cycling/spinning, and other exercise programs. Note: Reimbursement requests for the new 2019 programs must be submitted **after** your 2019 health benefits become effective.

**Not Qualified for Fitness Reimbursement:**

- One-time initiation or termination fees
- Fees paid for gymnastics, tennis, pool-only facilities, martial arts schools, instructional dance studios, country clubs or social clubs, sports teams or leagues
- Personal trainer sessions
- Fitness equipment or clothing

#### Get Reimbursed in Three Easy Steps<sup>1</sup>

 <h4>1. Choose</h4> <p>Start by picking a qualified fitness program.</p>	 <h4>2. Complete</h4> <p>Once you pay for the program, fill out the attached form.</p>	 <h4>3. Mail</h4> <p>Send the completed form to the address listed.</p>
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**Important information:**

- Fitness reimbursement can be granted for any single member or combination of members enrolled under the same Blue Cross health plan. Blue Cross will make a reimbursement decision within 30 days of receiving a complete request.
- Reimbursement requests must be submitted by March 31 of the following year.
- Keep copies of proof of payment in case we request it from you. Proof of payment includes:
  - » Receipts (cash/check/credit/electronic) for membership or class fees clearly documenting your name, the fitness program name, and individual amounts charged with date paid.
  - » Your fitness program membership or participation agreement clearly documenting your name and date signed.
- Reimbursement may be considered taxable income, so consult a tax advisor.

**Be sure to check with your doctor before starting any exercise program.**

1. To verify this reimbursement is offered for your plan, or for more information, log on to MyBlue at bluecrossma.com/myblue or call the Member Service number on your ID card. Most plans offer the reimbursement shown, but refer to your plan information for specific details.

## HARVARD PILGRIM

Fitness reimbursement up to \$150 per subscriber at a Health & Fitness club per calendar year. Must be an active member of HPHC for at least 4 months and an active member of the health facility for at least 4 months. Discounts at IFCN-affiliated clubs. Discount at Weight Watchers®

## TUFTS

Fitness reimbursement up to \$150 per subscriber at a Health & Fitness club, including exercise classes per calendar year. Jenny Craig Discounts: Free 30 Day Program -25% off a premium/metabolic program Nutrisystem Discount: -12% discount off current promo - core or select program

### Supplementary Benefits

**PinnacleCare-** This platform can guide you to appropriate care and connect you with specialists to provide expert opinions for serious or complex medical conditions. They are an unbiased resource to which you can turn when facing or trying to prevent a major health problem. PinnacleCare services facilitate your access to top specialists trained and experienced in your condition to provide an expert review of your diagnosis and treatment options.

**CanaRX Prescription Drug Program-**access to certain brand name medications at *NO COST to the member*, and they will be delivered by mail right to your doorstep!

**Diabetes Care Rewards Program-** get on your way to better health and receive diabetes medications, test strips, and other diabetes supplies for \$0 copays using your Good Health Gateway® Rx Rewards Card.

### Health Savings Account Utilization

For members who are on a high deductible health plan, this plan allows you to set aside a portion of your pay pre-tax to cover out-of-pocket expenses.

### Flexible Spending Accounts

For members who are NOT on a high deductible health plan, this plan allows you to set aside a portion of your pay pre-tax to cover out-of-pocket expenses. There is a healthcare and dependent care specific FSA option available.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**ITEM NO: IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

**MEETING DATE: 02/28/24**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF & STUDENTS AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **V. Curriculum**

MEETING DATE: **02/28/24**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF & STUDENTS AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VI. Policy**

MEETING DATE: **02/28/24**

**A. School District Calendar for 2024 -2025 School Year: Discussion**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Dr. Sawyer will summarize his recommendations for the proposed 2024-2025 school year calendar and answer any questions the Committee may have. The draft calendar will be posted for public comment in advance of a requested vote at the Committee's meeting on March 13, 2024. A memorandum from Dr. Sawyer and the draft of the calendar are enclosed.

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

That the School Committee review the draft calendar and provide feedback in advance of posting it for public comment.

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

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools



# Shrewsbury Public Schools

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Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

February 22, 2024

To: School Committee  
Re: Recommendation for school year calendar for 2024-2025

Enclosed with this memorandum is a draft of the proposed calendar for the 2024-2025 school year.

This proposed calendar follows state law regarding not holding school on [legal holidays](#). The approach used for scheduling vacation periods is the same as in recent years, which is structured according to the [recommendations made in January 2016](#) by a Calendar Committee composed of staff and parents, which included surveys of students, families, and staff.

Same approach as past years: This draft maintains the same approach we have typically utilized for the start of the school year, with the first day for staff being the Monday before Labor Day (August 26), followed the next day by the first student day (August 27), and holding a professional development day that Friday (August 30). It maintains the other full professional development day in early October, a monthly early release day for professional development from December through April (five total).

Parent Conference/Professional Development Day Election Day: This draft calendar also returns the November parent conference day for grades PreK-8 to Election Day (this is a professional development day for SHS and some special subject departments). Given that it is a presidential election year, this is highly beneficial for Coolidge and Spring Street Schools, as they are polling places where parking and visitor control can be particularly challenging when there is a large turnout of voters. This year there was no November election and so this date was situated adjacent to the Veterans Day state holiday.

Return of Kindergarten Screening Days: Another change in this draft is the return of holding two no-school days for kindergarteners on May 1 & 2 so that staff may conduct screenings of incoming kindergarten students. A different approach that did not require no school days was used for kindergarten screening in recent years, but the consensus of the K-4 principals is that returning to this approach will be more effective. Screenings for incoming preschool students are also scheduled for these same two dates, which is the same approach preschool has used for many years.

Approach to Religious Holidays: Last year, the School Committee received many emails and heard public comment requesting that the school district not hold school on the Hindu religious holiday of Diwali. My recommendation remains that our school district calendar continue to follow the longstanding practice of having school in session on religious holidays

related to different faiths, whether Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, or any other, as recommended by the Calendar Committee in 2016. This could change in the future if it were determined that there would be such a large population of students and staff who would need to miss work for their religious observance that we would not be able to reasonably operate schools. As a district I believe we should continue to emphasize to families that we strongly encourage them to observe their religious obligations, including when students may miss a day of school in order to participate, while communicating clearly accommodations will be provided to make up missed work where necessary and that there will be no repercussions for missing school, per state law and [our own district's policy](#).

“No Homework” Calendar: We have taken formal steps this year to have “no homework” dates aligned with school vacations, state holidays, and various religious holidays. A formal, district-wide “no homework” calendar was approved by the Committee last spring, as part of the adoption of an [updated district homework policy](#). Because we are only a bit past the halfway mark of the first year of this updated policy, and feedback on the “no homework” calendar for this year will be collected in the near future, my recommendation for next year’s “no homework” calendar dates will be made in the spring.

Juneteenth: This draft calendar has the 180th day on Friday, June 13, 2025. As a reminder, the relatively new state holiday, Juneteenth Independence Day, must be observed on Thursday, June 19, 2025. This will only affect the school calendar if there are snow days or other closures that require the school year to be extended by four days or more beyond June 13.

Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples’ Day: Finally, I wish to remind you that in 2021 the district calendar included a change in language to acknowledge that the second Monday in October has become widely recognized in American society as Indigenous Peoples’ Day, in addition to its designation as the official state holiday of Columbus Day. This date is again listed in this year’s draft calendar as “Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples’ Day.” This approach both includes the legal name of the state holiday that requires schools to be closed on this day, while also recognizing that Indigenous Peoples’ Day has become a more widely accepted and known holiday that honors the native peoples of America and commemorates their history. Because of our school district’s efforts to increase the sense of belonging and inclusivity for our students, families, and staff, in 2021 I recommended this language change and the School Committee concurred. I understand that those who have petitioned in the past to remove the verbiage of “Columbus Day” have strong feelings that the district’s calendar should not include this reference. My recommendation remains the same as what I communicated in past years, which is that the district continue the practice of listing both, with the understanding that the listing on a calendar of state holidays that are determined outside of the control of the School Committee or School Department should not be seen as the school district’s endorsement of the holiday itself, or the origin or history of the name of the holiday. While I understand some see this differently as a matter of importance regarding symbolism, I do not agree that the listing of a holiday name on a calendar is coupled with how students are taught about a holiday, its subject, or its history – which in all cases should be done accurately and thoughtfully.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have regarding this recommended calendar for the 2024-2025 school year.



# Shrewsbury Public Schools 2024-2025 School Year Calendar

DRAFT

AUG/SEP					23 Days
M	T	W	T	F	
19	20	21	22	23	
26	27	28	29	30	
2	3	4	5	6	
9	10	11	12	13	
16	17	18	19	20	
23	24	25	26	27	
30					

OCTOBER					21 Days
M	T	W	T	F	
	1	2	3	4	
7	8	9	10	11	
14	15	16	17	18	
21	22	23	24	25	
28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER					16 Days
M	T	W	T	F	
				1	
4	5	6	7	8	
11	12	13	14	15	
18	19	20	21	22	
25	26	27	28	29	

DECEMBER					15 Days
M	T	W	T	F	
2	3	4	5	6	
9	10	11	12	13	
16	17	18	19	20	
23	24	25	26	27	
30	31				

JANUARY					21 Days
M	T	W	T	F	
		1	2	3	
6	7	8	9	10	
13	14	15	16	17	
20	21	22	23	24	
27	28	29	30	31	

### August/September

8/21-23 New Educators' Orientation  
 8/26 Opening Program for All Staff/No School  
 8/27 Gr.1-12 First Day of School  
 8/28 Kindergarten/Preschool First Day  
 8/30 Professional Development for Educators/No School  
 9/2 Labor Day/No School

### October

10/11 Professional Development for Educators & Paraprofessionals/No School  
 10/14 Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day/No School

### November

11/5 Parent Conferences PreK-8/Professional Development Gr. 9-12/No School  
 11/11 Veterans Day/No School  
 11/27-11/29 Thanksgiving Vacation

### December

12/10 Professional Development/Early Release  
 12/23-12/31 December Vacation

### January

1/1 New Year's Day/No School  
 1/7 Professional Development/Early Release  
 1/20 M.L. King Jr. Day/No School

### February

2/4 Professional Development/Early Release  
 2/17 Presidents Day/No School  
 2/18-2/21 Winter Vacation

### March

3/4 Professional Development/Early Release

### April

4/1 Professional Development/Early Release  
 4/21 Patriots Day/No School  
 4/22-4/25 Spring Vacation

### May

5/1 & 5/2 No School for Preschool & Kindergarten (New Student Screenings)  
 5/26 Memorial Day/No School  
 5/29 Graduation Day

### June

6/13 Last day of school if no snow days  
 Half day for K-12, no PM preschool  
 6/19 Juneteenth Independence Day/  
 No school if (if there are 4 snow days)

FEBRUARY					15 Days
M	T	W	T	F	
3	4	5	6	7	
10	11	12	13	14	
17	18	19	20	21	
24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH					21 Days
M	T	W	T	F	
3	4	5	6	7	
10	11	12	13	14	
17	18	19	20	21	
24	25	26	27	28	
31					

APRIL					17 Days
M	T	W	T	F	
	1	2	3	4	
7	8	9	10	11	
14	15	16	17	18	
21	22	23	24	25	
28	29	30			

MAY					21 Days
M	T	W	T	F	
			1	2	
5	6	7	8	9	
12	13	14	15	16	
19	20	21	22	23	
26	27	28	29	30	

JUNE					10 Days
M	T	W	T	F	
2	3	4	5	6	
9	10	11	12	13	
16	17	18	19	20	
23	24	25	26	27	

0 snow days = 6/13 last day  
 1 snow day = 6/16 last day  
 2 snow days = 6/17 last day  
 3 snow days = 6/18 last day  
 4 snow days = 6/20 last day  
 5 snow days = 6/23 last day



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

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

MEETING DATE: **02/28/24**

**A. Fiscal Year 2025 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment Budget: Report**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The enclosed report provides a Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Overview that includes information on key areas of budget responsibility, key investments, use of grant funds, and optimization of additional resources. It provides information on the FY 2024 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment Budget, and presents proposals for this budget in FY 2025. Ms. Clouter will present the report and be available for questions from the Committee.

**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:**

Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment



## Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment – Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Overview

Amy Clouter

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

### Key Areas of Budget Responsibility

- I. Providing curriculum materials, including textbooks, trade books, workbooks, math manipulatives, science materials, etc.; providing digital curriculum resources, including online texts, interactive applications, etc.
- II. Ensuring instructional leadership and support of strong teaching practices, with primary supervision of Department Directors, Curriculum Coordinators, and Reading Specialists who work across multiple schools, and secondary supervision of those roles assigned to an individual school
- III. Coordinating state and local assessment systems, including state MCAS testing, English Language Education state ACCESS testing, and district-based formative assessments (such as the Star assessment)
- IV. Facilitating district professional development offerings, including working with the Professional Development Committee regarding offerings on professional development days and early release days; necessary training for implementation of new curriculum and instruction (such as the new K-6 literacy program); planning and implementing the Summer Professional Development Institute; etc.

### Key Budget Investments for Fiscal Year 2025

Textbooks/Curriculum Materials

Key investments of \$310,000

Included in this category are:

- \$250,000 to complete the investment in new K-6 literacy program materials (total cost \$500K, with the other half coming from a competitive grant for high quality curriculum materials through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)

- \$60,000 to purchase new textbooks/curriculum materials for the SHS Social Sciences courses in World Civilization, U.S. History I, and U.S. History II

Reading Specialists

Key investment of \$100,000

Included in this category is:

- 1.0 FTE additional Reading Specialist position to be assigned to the middle school level to address student reading instruction; estimated salary of \$100,000 for experience and level of education and training

English Language Education Coordinator

Key investment of \$115,000

Included in this category is:

- 1.0 FTE new English Language Education Coordinator position to address needed capacity for state-mandated screenings, assessments, and program support; this position would also supervise and evaluate ELE teaching staff; estimated salary of \$115,000 for experience and level of education and training, plus coordinator stipend for leadership role including 10 additional work days

### Efficiencies Through Use of Grants or Alternative Funding in Fiscal Year 2025

Grant or alternative funds used for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Professional Development include:

- Federal entitlement grants ~\$330K
- DESE High Quality Materials grant of \$250K for literacy materials
- Federal Covid grant funds (ESSER-3; amount TBD, this year ~\$190K)
- Access to the ST Math interactive digital math program for K-4 students worth ~\$50K through a DESE-sponsored program with the One8 Foundation
- DESE- sponsored programs to provide access to Mass Tiered Literacy and the Instructional Prioritization group, which enables us to access consultant support at no cost, worth ~54K
- Use of Professional Development tuition revolving account to fund the Summer Professional Development Institute ~\$88K (tuition paid by Shrewsbury and Westborough educators)
- **Estimated total use of grants/alternative funds in FY25: ~\$962K**

### Other Examples of Efficiencies in Fiscal Year 2025

Other Examples of Efficiencies for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Professional Development include:

- Repurposing leveled readers for use in text sets to supplement the new literacy program, worth ~\$138K
- Donated / discounted supplies ~\$1K
- **Estimated total of value of other efficiencies: \$139K**

# SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545

Phone: 508-841-8403 Fax: 508-841-8490



Amy Clouter

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

To: School Committee

Re: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

## Context

The purchase of new curriculum materials for foundational literacy, together with the addition of reading specialist support has improved the district's capacity to support students in need. At the same time, students who did not have the benefit of these supports sooner - and particularly students in Grades 4-6 that experienced disrupted schooling during the pandemic - will require more time to close academic gaps.

Educators continue to use screening assessments and technology tools to align supports to students, to monitor progress and to differentiate instruction. Professional development and ongoing training play a big part in this work - as do the members of the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment team. The adoption of new curriculum materials for all educators in Grades K-6 next year will require continued investment in the structures that support both teacher and student learning.

## Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Overview

### I. Key Areas of Budget Responsibility

Shrewsbury Public Schools' motto is "empowering learners" and the budgets for curriculum, instruction and assessment are aligned with that purpose in mind. Our expenditures are closely tied to the district's strategic priorities and goals and the resources needed to meet them.



*"Of all the things that matter for having good schools, nothing is as important as the teacher and what that person knows, believes and can do." (Jon Saphier)*

The excerpts from our strategic plan below show our chief areas of focus from 2023-2027:

2023-2027 Well-Being Priority 1		
Ensure a Safe and Inclusive Culture: 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.		
Strategic Goals for 2023-2024 School Year	Action Steps 2023-2024	Staff Responsible
<p><b>1.1:</b> Continue to provide access to targeted professional development focused on inclusive and culturally proficient practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide professional development for paraprofessionals regarding understanding and responding to bias</li> <li>• Complete the three-year professional development cycle of providing the <i>Becoming an Equitable Educator</i> course during early release days to those professional educators who did not take the course in years one and two</li> <li>• Provide monthly professional development for District Leadership Team members regarding ways to promote instructional equity, counter bias and foster inclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, &amp; Assessment</li> <li>• Members of the District Leadership Team</li> <li>• Designated Educators and Paraprofessionals</li> </ul>

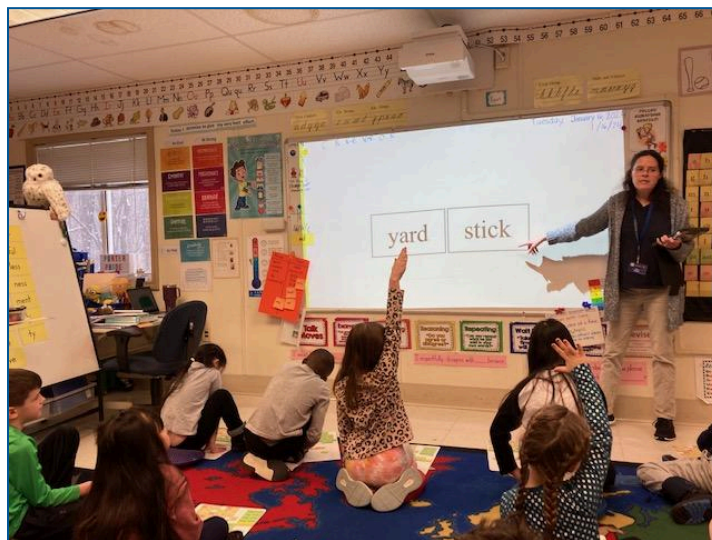
As depicted above, the results our students achieve are tied to the investments we've made in developing strong instructional practices, securing powerful tools and maintaining effective systems of support for students and families. Accordingly, providing high quality professional development for educators and district leaders alike is a key responsibility of the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment team.

Professional development should be sustained over time to be effective. For the past three years we've centered professional learning opportunities on three common focus areas including Universal Design for Learning; Belonging, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity; and deeply understanding new curriculum standards for specific grade spans and/or content areas. For example, the World Language Department has worked to integrate new expectations for oral proficiency into their instructional plans. More recently, educators in Grades K-6 have learned about the Science of Reading and worked to integrate the teaching of foundational reading skills into their practice. In the next few years we will continue to focus on strengthening literacy practices.



Related goals are captured in detail below:

2023-2027 Educational Excellence Priority 1		
Ensure High-Quality Teaching and Learning: Provide all students access to high-quality learning experiences in every classroom every day by developing and committing to districtwide expectations for high-quality teaching.		
Strategic Goals for 2023-2024 School Year	Action Steps 2023-2024	Staff Responsible
<p><b>1.1:</b> Implement the next phase of the PreK-Grade 6 literacy initiative in order to provide all students with the research-based instruction and high-quality materials necessary to support reading and writing achievement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to shift literacy instruction in PK-6 classrooms by providing robust professional development, start implementation of a foundational reading skills curriculum, and begin adoption of the new literacy program with at least one "early adopter" classroom per grade in each K-6 school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, &amp; Assessment</li> <li>PK-6 Principals, Assistant Principals, Preschool Director, Special Education Directors</li> <li>Instructional Coaches/Curriculum Coordinators &amp; Reading Specialists</li> <li>All PK-6 General and Special Educators who teach reading/English language arts</li> <li>All PK-6 Paraprofessionals who provide tutoring or support for reading/English language arts</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.2:</b> Develop collective expertise of PK-Grade 12 instructional leaders to identify and provide feedback on key elements of effective, high-quality teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide professional development opportunities at no fewer than six District Leadership Team meetings focused on instructional leadership strategies that promote students' access to appropriately challenging assignments requiring high levels of student thinking and engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, &amp; Assessment</li> <li>Members of the District Leadership Team</li> </ul>



Already we are able to see that the supports put in place last year are making a difference in academic outcomes. However, it's also evident that new supports are needed to address the needs of our older students. The chart below depicts the total

percentage of students receiving different types of support for reading by grade over time:

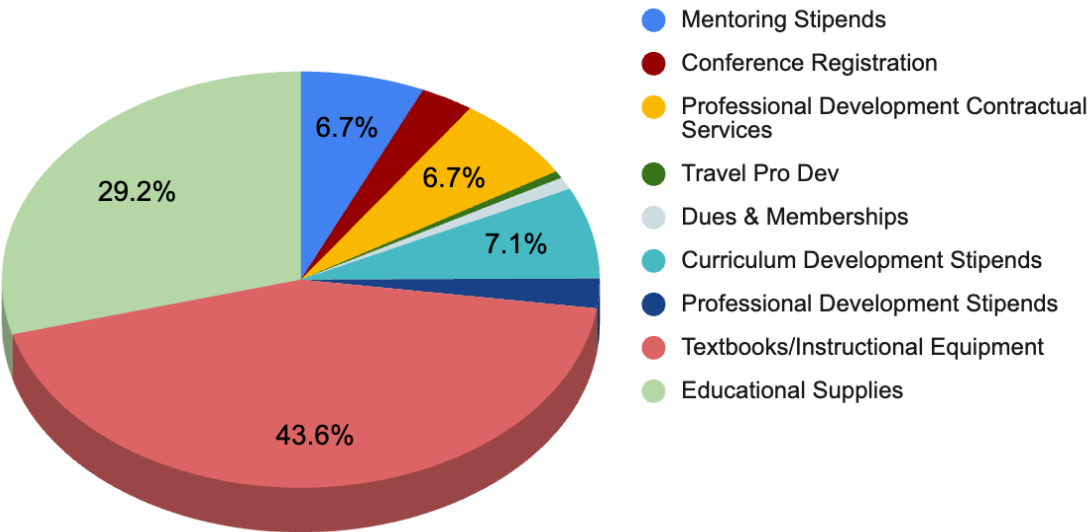
**Fall to Winter Comparisons of % of Students Designated for Reading Support (based on Star Reading assessment data)**

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Fall	N/A	55%	37%	38%	35%	44%	46%	21%	21%
Winter	45%	34%	26%	24%	22%	40%	43%	21%	21%
Change		-21%	-11%	-14%	-13%	-4%	-3%	0%	0%

Of course, the Curriculum budget must cover the ongoing costs of providing students and teachers with a wide range of instructional materials. Funds for math workbooks, digital subscriptions, student manipulatives (like magnetic letters, base ten blocks and sound cards) and text books for older students are appropriated annually as well. Overall, the budget for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment is made up of nine categories. You can see how the cost of materials compares to other expenses in the pie charts below.

FY 2024 Total Non-Personnel Budget for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: \$543,592

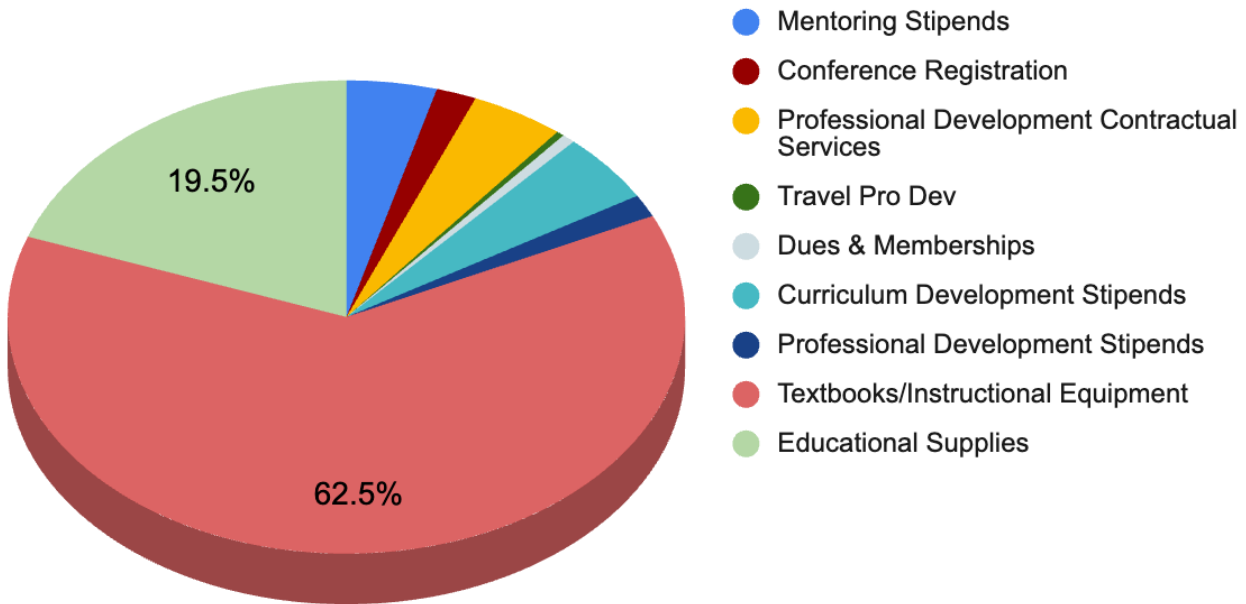
**FY24 Actual Budget**





PROPOSED FY 2025 Non-Personnel Budget for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: \$846,038

### FY25 Proposed Budget



The Curriculum budget also manages a revolving account that is used to run the Summer Institute, a four-day conference that takes place in June. Educators from area districts are invited to take classes for in-district credit, and Shrewsbury partners with



Westborough Public Schools to offer professional development to area educators. Last year we also included area nurses in a new program facilitated by Shrewsbury’s Director of Nursing, Noelle Freeman.

The Summer Institute provides good value for the district because we are able to offer graduate courses that align with district priorities and satisfy relicensing requirements for our

educators. The registration fees for the Institute cover the cost of hosting it. In all, we collected \$97,340 last year and spent \$85,822. The difference remains in the account to cover anticipated costs for the 2024 Summer Institute.

*"...it takes more than a book study and a few one-off strategies stripped from the pages to level up our instructional practice for deep learning." (Zaretta Hammond)*

## II. Key Investments for Fiscal Year 2025

### *Personnel*

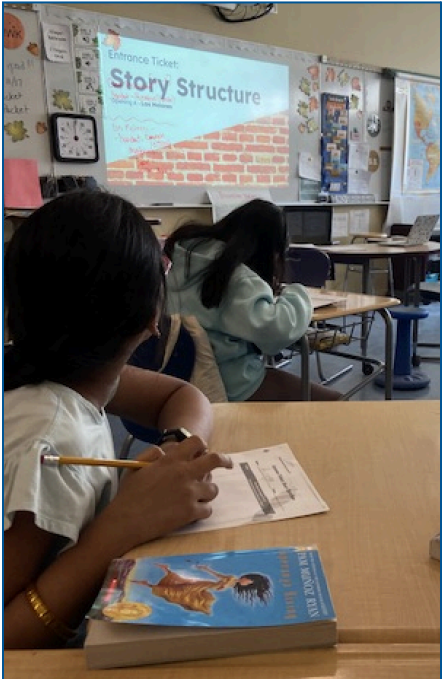
- An English Language Education (ELE) Coordinator position is needed to meet the increasing needs of the English learners and immigrant students in our schools. As we work to achieve district goals, we must respond to state directives as well. New guidelines for supporting English learners has resulted in increased focus on individualized learning plans and additional screening requirements. The addition of a Coordinator position is necessary to maintain existing supports for new students and families and to meet mandated services. This role is akin to the Middle Level Curriculum Coordinator roles, although it may be deployed where needed across grades K-12. The position will address needed capacity for direct involvement with students for state-mandated screenings and assessments; provide overall program support; and supervise and evaluate ELE teaching staff. The estimated salary is \$115,000 based on the experience and level of education and training for this role, which includes the coordinator stipend for a leadership role and 10 additional work days.
- The addition of a Reading Specialist at the middle level is recommended. This role, which would support Grades 7 and 8 in FY25, will work with students requiring interventions to provide expert reading support, as well as help train Oak Middle School educators in reading interventions and support them as they shift practice as we continue to systematize instructional support for students in need of reading support. In the same way that our Reading Specialists provide these kinds of support at the K-6 level, this will promote a stronger reading foundation for success in the upper middle and high school grades. This position is budgeted at \$100,000 based on the experience and level of education and training for this role.
- The Literacy Team  
The table below depicts the current staffing dedicated to literacy by level:

<b>Reading Specialist</b>	<b>Building(s)</b>	<b>Total Tutors (Head Count) &amp; Total Hours</b>
Maureen Henry	Coolidge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CCS: 3 tutors (65.5 hours per week)</li> </ul>
Vanessa Colleran	Floral & Paton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FSS: 4 tutors (74 hours per week)</li> <li>● WJP: 2 tutors (39 hours per week)</li> </ul>
Heather Mistretta	Beal & Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HWB: 4 tutors (117.5 hours per week)</li> <li>● SSS: 1 tutor (19.5 hours per week)</li> </ul>
Susan Direnzo	Sherwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SMS: 1 tutor (30 hours per week)</li> </ul>

We are in the process of adding a second tutor position at Sherwood and considering other additions of tutoring hours at K-4 by using ESSER-3 funds (see additional information on page 10 below). Briefly, by reallocating funds set aside for Summer Academy there will be enough grant money remaining to maintain these expanded hours next year. In this way we can more effectively match targeted intervention to the students that need it and provide consistent support.

*Materials*

After a year-long selection process in 2022-2023, the Literacy Council selected a new literacy program, the EL Education Literacy Curriculum. This year, the EL Implementation Team of 33 teachers (including general educators, special educators and one English language education teacher) are using this program with approximately 700 students. Their work, under the guidance of our Instructional Coach/ Curriculum Coordinators and Massachusetts Tiered Literacy consultant Kristin Osborne, will enable a successful full implementation of the program next year. I am pleased to report that students and teachers are finding the new program to be rigorous and highly engaging.



In order to provision all students and educators in Grades K-6 as planned, we will need additional investments. The cost of the new program, including teacher resources, student

workbooks and classroom sets of trade books, will cost approximately \$500,000. Fortunately, the district will not need to fund the full amount, as Shrewsbury received a \$250,000 High Quality Instructional Materials competitive grant from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Unfortunately, Shrewsbury was unable to secure grant funds to update our Social Studies materials at Shrewsbury High School. For this reason an additional \$60,000 for new textbooks is included in this year's budget.

As technology evolves, so too do instructional materials. Many curriculum materials are coupled with digital subscriptions that allow students to have broader access to content without requiring them to carry books back and forth to school. Given that these subscriptions require annual renewal they are also included in the Curriculum budget.

Finally, in our efforts to support equity and systemic thinking, it's important to note that costs that may have been covered by building-based funds are now included in the district budget, such as library books and subscriptions such as the online library Sora.

Due to inflation, the expenses of providing access to curriculum materials put pressure on the budget. For this reason the district has eagerly pursued grant opportunities.

### III. Grant Funds That Support Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

#### *COVID-specific Grant Funds*

Additional funds necessary to support the K-6 literacy initiative were provided in FY2024 through the use of federal grant funds. Specifically, the cost of renewing the Star Assessment Software last June for FY24 and FY25 came out of the ESSER-2 grant. This freed \$182,000 that would otherwise have been taken from the appropriated Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment budget for literacy materials. In January 2023, the ESSER-3 funding plan was revised to include \$55,000 for additional literacy tutoring hours in FY24 as well as \$28,472 to be used for curriculum materials, along with \$108,000 to fund Summer Academy academic programming. These funds supplemented the planned-for appropriations for texts, instructional equipment and educational supplies. We are in the process of determining an updated recommendation for how to utilize remaining ESSER-3 funds that can be spent through the early part of FY25 in the most impactful way, and will provide this recommendation before the FY25 appropriated budget is finalized. This recommendation will likely advocate using remaining funds to maintain increased literacy tutor hours during the 2024-2025 school year instead of having a Summer Academy program in 2024.

*Federal Grants*

Less familiar to most people are the federal entitlement grants we receive annually for specific purposes. The table below shows how these grants supplement the Curriculum budget.

<i>Grant</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>FY24 SPS Allocation</i>
Title 1	*provides financial assistance to schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to provide additional academic support. *Currently Beal and Coolidge benefit	\$195,716
Title IIa	*used to improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals and other district leaders by supporting mentoring and professional development	\$83,701
Title III	*earmarked to help English learners and immigrant students succeed in school by providing access to rich educational experiences, including summer support	\$38,097
Title IV	*designed to support safe and healthy schools that provide all students and particularly marginalized children access to technology and experiences with the arts	\$13,673
FY24 Total Federal Grants		\$331,187

While it's safe to assume that our grant allocations should remain stable in the coming year, these funds alone are not sufficient to cover the cost of needed materials and programs. For example, the cost of the district mentoring program continues to exceed the district's Title IIa grant allocation. This same grant typically augments funds allocated within the budget for professional development, which means that for the past few years more of the appropriated budget was used for this purpose, leaving fewer dollars available for other expenses.

#### IV. Optimization of Resources and Additional Fiscal Efficiencies

In the past five years, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has encouraged districts to seek additional resources by offering partnerships with non-profit educational organizations and by providing competitive grant opportunities. As you know, Shrewsbury has been fortunate to receive several of these supports. The timing of these opportunities was also helpful in that grants became available as the district was seeking to purchase literacy materials.

As mentioned previously, this year we were awarded \$250,000 for the High Quality Instructional Materials grant. This grant will offset about half of the cost of provisioning all K-6 educators with the new EL Education Literacy Curriculum. Similarly the cost of ST Math for K-4 students is largely covered by a DESE program sponsored by the One8 Foundation (an estimated \$50,000 value, with the district paying about \$4,000).

Last year the district was accepted into two different three-year professional learning partnerships with a focus on improving outcomes for students. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Massachusetts Tiered Literacy Academy and the Instructional Prioritization group provided our district leaders at all levels access to consultant expertise at considerable savings. Educators and district leaders on the Literacy Council benefit from 60 hours of professional coaching for each year of the grant at no cost, including access to a self-paced course, training for district leaders, and two Summer Institute courses.

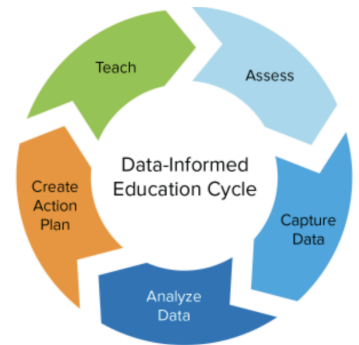
The professional learning organization who is providing consultation on instructional prioritization, TNTP, is furthering our efforts to close achievement opportunity gaps in the areas of Math in grades 5-6 and English and Social Sciences in Grade 9 at SHS, by providing job-embedded coaching for district leaders. Two consultants work with the district on site, and district leaders participate in a virtual learning network with area districts as well.

Shrewsbury is also fortunate to enjoy broad-based community support. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the role of Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Wellbeing, for her role in securing donations from local businesses. For example, the local Staples store donated Summer Reading postcards to help promote summer learning, a savings of approximately \$500.

*“Better is possible. It does not take genius. It takes diligence. It takes moral clarity. It takes ingenuity. And above all, it takes a willingness to try.” (Atul Gawande)*

## V. Conclusion

The mark of a strong school district is the degree to which it prioritizes the needs of students and teachers. Our strategic goals are ambitious, and our educators are extraordinarily hardworking. This report endeavors to capture the curriculum, instruction and assessment needs required to maintain our current momentum toward improved academic outcomes for students in order to meet our district’s strategic “commitment to educational excellence.” I look forward to your questions and feedback as well. Thank you for your consideration.





**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

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

MEETING DATE: **02/28/24**

**B. Fiscal Year 2025 Information Technology Budget: Report**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The enclosed report provides an overview of the current FY 2024 Information Technology Budget and presents proposals for this budget in FY 2025.

**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:**

Mr. Brian L'Heureux, Director of Information Technology





## Information Technology – Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Overview

Brian L'Heureux

Director of Information Technology

### Key Areas of Budget Responsibility

- I. Providing computing hardware, software, and technical support to all staff members and students
- II. Ensuring that the district's network and telecommunications systems are reliable and secure
- III. Providing audio-visual hardware and support to facilitate classroom instruction and school events
- IV. Supporting physical security systems such as keycards and surveillance cameras
- V. Providing data systems and ensuring their availability and security

### Key Budget Investments for Fiscal Year 2025

Personnel

Key investments of \$235,000

Included in this category are:

- 1.0 FTE for IT Project Manager, as demands on IT Department for implementation of technology programs for education and operational purposes are beyond capacity of current personnel, estimated salary \$125,000
- 1.0 FTE for a second IT Network Manager, as cybersecurity and network maintenance to ensure continuity of IT services and to protect student and staff confidential records has become substantially more demanding, estimated salary \$110,000
- These two positions are included in the initial Superintendent's FY25 Budget Recommendation

Cybersecurity

Key investments of \$193,000

Included in this category are:

- \$123K for managed security detection response service, providing 24x7 security monitoring of our network, risk assessment, and staff cybersecurity education resources
- \$47K toward maintenance & support for main town firewalls and related security services
- \$23K for laptops for student teachers & interns to enhance protection of student data
- The first two items above are included in the initial Superintendent's FY25 Budget Recommendation

Important: The items listed in the remaining categories below are not included in the Superintendent's FY25 Budget Recommendation of a 4.25% increase in IT, which covers year-to-year expenses, including hardware (student iPad program, educator laptops, etc.), software (PowerSchool, ParentSquare, etc.), and the network. The district is working with our municipal and SELCO partners in an effort to use alternative funding sources for these additional needs – otherwise, funds for other IT needs will need to be shifted for funding, or some/all will need to be deferred beyond FY25

#### Needs for Replacement of Aging Hardware

Key investments of \$694,000

- \$402K for replacement of phone system due to go end-of-life in early 2026 (includes cloud-based phone service, new handset hardware, network switches to support new network-based phones, interface hardware for PA systems and existing phone system, and \$140K in wiring expenses for older school buildings). This cost could be spread across multiple years with SELCO if upfront funding is not available.
- \$85K for replacement of core network switches at Sherwood, Oak, and SHS due to lose vendor security support in October 2025. Some components of these switches have started to fail.
- \$80K for classroom projector replacements at Spring Street & Floral Street due to manufacturer no longer making replacement bulbs
- \$54K for replacement of SHS engineering computer lab, as computers in this lab will be 7 years old as of FY25, and new vocational programs may be relying on this lab
- \$40K for replacement of SHS mathematics computer lab, as computers in this lab will be 7 years old as of FY25 and hardware is starting to fail
- \$33K for replacement of various audio amplification systems in public spaces (gyms, auditoriums) across the district. These systems are more than 20 years old and are starting to show signs of failure

#### Recommended New Investments

Key investments of \$97,000

- \$50K for new Special Education IEP and 504 Plan records system to accommodate the state's new IEP forms and improve integration with PowerSchool Student Information System
- \$22K for absence/time off/substitute teacher management system
- \$25K to issue iPad cases with built-in keyboards to kindergarten students for use in grades K-4 to facilitate typing instruction

#### Recommended Changes to Existing Systems

Key investments of \$110,000

- \$34K for PowerSchool Student Information System hosting, as we currently host PowerSchool on our own servers. Given that PowerSchool is an Internet-facing system, there is a need to react quickly to new security vulnerabilities. Moving to a hosted solution for PowerSchool would allow us to take advantage of additional security protections that PowerSchool would have in place for its hosted customers. This would also reduce time spent by IT staff maintaining the system.
- \$18K to upgrade to "Google Workspace for Education Standard" edition, as we currently use the free "Education Fundamentals" edition of Google Workspace. Upgrading to the Education Standard edition would provide additional tools for managing email and data security.
- \$12K for enhancements to keycard security
- \$22K for repair of SHS electronic door lock systems
- \$24K for Wi-Fi authentication system (RADIUS) replacement to mitigate changes Microsoft is planning to make to the product we currently use for this purpose

### **Efficiencies Through Use of Grant or Alternative Funds in Fiscal Year 2025**

Grant or alternative funds used for Information Technology include:

- \$50K (40%) E-Rate reimbursement to the Town for Internet Access, Wide Area Network, and Wi-Fi maintenance costs
- \$80K in trade-ins of obsolete off-lease technology toward future lease payments

### **Other Examples of Efficiencies in Fiscal Year 2025**

Other Examples of Efficiencies for Information Technology include:

- Using Level Data service to automate data tasks, including account creation
- Using Clever service to automate population of student data into various systems and provide for streamlined and secure login



February 21, 2024

To: School Committee  
Re: FY2025 IT Budget Recommendation

As we know, the pandemic brought rapid change to the world of K-12 educational technology. While the daily use of Zoom in lieu of in-person instruction is no longer reality, educators became much more comfortable with the use of technology during remote learning, and the level of technology use remains high.

At the same time, the pace, complexity, and severity of cybersecurity threats has increased dramatically. Reacting to these threats requires more frequent and timely responses than ever before. In addition to reacting to threats, we have necessarily become more proactive about taking time to vet the privacy and security of various technologies that teachers use with their students.

The expectation of reliable use of technology and the increased level of security threats has necessitated the addition of a number of increases to the IT budget request, for both personnel and services.

## **Personnel Requests**

While we have been fortunate to have been able to increase our frontline tech support staffing over the past few years, we have not kept pace in terms of increasing the capacity of the more specialized roles in the department.

### *IT Project Manager*

The day-to-day demands of “keeping the lights on” for our technology infrastructure and managing more staff members have impacted the capacity of the IT Director role to move projects forward in an effective way that maintains and improves the district’s effective use of technology.

There are a number of projects that we will need to implement, including (but not limited to):

- Transportation software management system replacement
- Phone system replacement
- New Special Education IEP & 504 Plan tracking system (federal and state mandated new IEP)

- Schoology standards-based grading integration
- Student-created app deployment
- Improved backup for staff computers
- Facility use scheduling improvements
- Security camera server refresh
- English Language Education (ELE) assessment software implementation
- RADIUS (Wi-Fi authentication) changes
- Staff laptop login method changes
- Electronic purchase orders
- Human capital management
- Absence management system

For these reasons, I am recommending the addition of an IT Project Manager position, which will be responsible for research, implementation, documentation, operationalization, and training for initiatives such as the above-listed projects.

The addition of this role would free time for the IT Director to focus on other responsibilities such as supervising staff, improving policies and procedures, maintaining technology inventory, budget development, long-term planning, and vetting of new technology requests.

### *Network Manager*

Our department runs a large, mission-critical network serving over 7,000 users on a daily basis. Given the day-to-day demands of resolving normal issues while responding to security threats that require quick responses, in addition to increasing numbers of off-hours events that use our network, it has become clear that we need to augment our existing Network Manager position with an additional similar position. This will allow for us to become more proactive in managing our network while becoming more resilient at this position and also allowing for a formal on-call rotation.

Typical routine cybersecurity tasks include (but are not limited to) evaluating and deploying regularly-scheduled vendor patches, evaluating the results of vulnerability scans, and evaluating and improving our overall security posture. However, each day can bring unexpected (and often more frequent) needs to quickly react to vendor-issued patches for zero-day vulnerabilities (vulnerabilities that were under exploitation before vendor patches were issued), large-scale phishing attempts against staff, and alerts from our security monitoring provider. These unplanned tasks take time away from efforts to improve our infrastructure and respond to non-security issues.

### **Non-Personnel Budget Request**

In addition to recommended personnel supports to address cybersecurity needs, we have engaged a managed security and detection response service to provide 24x7 monitoring for our network. Given that we are not a 24x7 operation and network security threats may often occur off hours (there has been some suggestion that malicious actors actually target holidays and weekends when IT departments may be less staffed), we feel this is an essential component of our cybersecurity strategy. An important component of this

monitoring service is the review of log data by skilled professionals, which reduces nuisance “false positive” alerts that can waste time. Costs for this service are included in the “Cybersecurity” section of the budget summary that precedes this memo. The reality is that a ransomware attack or the like could paralyze our systems for an unspecified period of time, with significant negative impact on our instructional program and our day-to-day operations. Further, school districts have been experiencing cyber threats related to accessing and exposing confidential student and staff data. Protecting highly confidential student, family, and staff records must be a priority.

Our district has been fortunate to have been able to make a number of large-scale investments in technology. These investments have resulted in a reliable, well-used technology infrastructure. As with any infrastructure, ongoing investment is required to ensure that it maintains its reliability and utility. We find ourselves with a need to replace aging technology in a number of areas of our infrastructure and end-user facing technology.

The “Replacement of Aging Hardware” section of the budget summary that precedes this memo details the individual areas of our technology infrastructure that should be replaced soon. Some of the items listed are starting to fail and have required additional IT staff time to keep running. Other items are more proactive replacements or items (such as the phone system replacement) that will require large-scale projects to replace before their “end-of-life” date, after which time no additional vendor security updates will be issued.

The sum total of the items in the IT budget request (\$2,696,834) exceeds the available funding currently allocated in the initial FY25 Superintendent’s Budget Recommendation dated February 7, 2024 (\$1,520,403). However, we are pursuing one-time funding sources for a number of these items, and, based on initial conversations, we’re expecting outside funding to take care of items such as the phone system replacement.

In addition to the replacement of aging systems, we have identified a number of recommended improvements, including the addition of new systems to address district needs, and changes to existing systems to improve our operations and/or security posture. These are detailed in the “Recommend New Systems” and “Recommended Changes to Existing Systems” sections of the budget summary that precedes this memo. While some of these items are one-time purchases that may be included in one-time funding that we are pursuing, other items are recurring costs that would need to be funded within the appropriated budget if additional funding can be accessed for these recommendations. Otherwise, funding would need to be identified in the current fiscal year for some purchases, shifted from another cost within next year’s budget plan, or deferred beyond FY25.

### **Existing IT Costs Recommended for Continuation in FY25**

Aside from newly-requested items such as those referenced above, there are a number of ongoing costs to maintain our current level of service. These include:

#### *Hardware*

- \$100K for lease payments for staff laptops leased in prior years

- \$372K for lease payments for student iPads leased in prior years
- \$50K for initial lease payment for staff laptops to be leased in FY25
- \$155K for initial lease payment for student iPads to be leased in FY25
- \$29K for iPad cases for kindergarten students
- \$64K for iPad cases for grade 5 students
- \$62K for iPad cases for grade 9 students

#### *Existing Data Systems*

- \$28K for existing Special Education IEP/504 tracking software
- \$28K for Level Data data management service
- \$40K for PowerSchool Student Information System maintenance & support
- \$23K for PowerSchool Enrollment/Registration/Lottery management
- \$15K for August Schools nursing records software
- \$15K for Alexandria Library Catalog software
- \$1K for FileMaker for miscellaneous databases
- \$16K for Vector educator evaluation tracking system

#### *Existing User-Facing Services*

- \$33K for Schoology learning management system (grades 3-12)
- \$15K for Seesaw learning management system (grades PK-4)
- \$32K for ParentSquare communication system
- \$16K for SHS Language Lab renewal and support
- \$3K for Adobe Creative Cloud for SHS visual arts instruction
- \$3K for Carousel digital signage system
- \$9K for Swank Streaming platform
- \$5K for Typing Club typing instruction app (grades 3-6)
- \$13K for Freshservice IT ticketing system
- \$10K for video surveillance system maintenance & support
- \$4K for cloud fax service
- \$12K for website hosting, including ADA compliance monitoring
- \$26K for ThoughtExchange
- \$2K for Smore Newsletter service
- \$11K for ClearGov service
- \$29K for Zoom service
- \$3K for BoardMaker communication board service

#### *Existing Backend Services*

- \$8K for Apple Enterprise Support to assist with interoperability issues with third-party systems
- \$80K for mobile device management, antimalware, and Internet filtering
- \$1K for password management services
- \$83K for SELCO Internet access and WAN service

- \$12K for maintenance & support for SHS core switches
- \$7K for server virtualization software maintenance and support
- \$1K for Windows-based antimalware
- \$1K for SSL certificates
- \$1K for hosted DNS
- \$43K for Wi-Fi access point maintenance & support
- \$7K for network availability monitoring software
- \$9K for storage array maintenance & support
- \$3K for maintenance & support for authentication & remote VPN devices
- \$1K for server hardware maintenance & support
- \$1K for Wi-Fi troubleshooting tool maintenance & support
- \$9K for backup software & service maintenance & support
- \$3K for online payment fee tracking & maintenance

#### *Existing Supply Allocations*

- \$22K for miscellaneous supplies (examples include adapters, cables, labeling tape, asset tags, etc.)
- \$3K for Educational Television Studio supplies
- \$6K for AV & projector supplies

#### *Repair & Maintenance*

- \$5K for computer repairs
- \$5K for computer chargers

Thank you for taking the time to review this information regarding our Information Technology budget needs. I look forward to answering any questions you have at your meeting on February 28.





**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VIII. Old Business**

MEETING DATE: **02/28/24**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **IX. New Business**

MEETING DATE: **02/28/24**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

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

MEETING DATE: **02/28/24**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The minutes from the School Committee Workshop held on January 31, 2024, are enclosed, and the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on February 7, 2024, will be provided under separate cover.

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

That the Committee accept the minutes from the School Committee Workshop held on January 31, 2024, and the School Committee Meeting held on February 7, 2024.

**STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:**

Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson

Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary

**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORKSHOP**  
**Wednesday, January 31, 2024**  
**Shrewsbury High School**  
**2002 Conference Room**

**Start Time:** 6:10pm

**Present:** Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Ms. Erin Boucher, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jonathan Wensky, Secretary; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan (by phone); Ms. Rachel Sharifipour; Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Amy Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment; Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Well-Being; Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Christian Girardi, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations; and Barbara Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources.

**FY 25 Budget Development - Status Update**

Dr. Sawyer provided an update on the FY 25 budget recommendations. He reviewed a proposal of investments that assumes a 4.5% increase to the schools budget under the current projections from the Town Manager and aligned to the guidelines of the May 2021 Operational Override Commitment to the Town of Shrewsbury. Recommended investments include a Kindergarten FTE, IT Project Manager, Literacy Tutor, and Middle School Reading Specialist. Additionally, the Committee shared its perspectives regarding other key district needs to factor into the budget recommendation. Committee members asked questions and provided feedback regarding which will be factored into the Superintendent's initial FY25 Budget Recommendation to the School Committee, scheduled for presentation at the Wednesday, February 7 General Meeting.

**Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn the workshop into 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
- 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”)

On a motion by Ms. Heffernan; Seconded by Ms. Wensky; on a Roll Call Vote: Ms. Sharifipour: Yes; Ms. Heffernan: Yes; Mr. Wensky: Yes; Ms. Boucher, Yes; and Ms. Fryc: Yes, the School Committee

unanimously approved to adjourn the workshop into Executive Session at 8:36pm.

**Motion to adjourn the Workshop:** On a motion by Ms. Heffernan; Seconded by Ms. Boucher; on a Roll Call Vote: Ms. Sharifipour: Yes; Ms. Heffernan: Yes; Mr. Wensky: Yes; Ms. Boucher, Yes; and Ms. Fryc: Yes, the School Committee Workshop adjourned at: 9:02pm.

**Documents referred to:**

FY 25 Budget Development Considerations Memo - January 31, 2024



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **XI. Executive Session**

MEETING DATE: **02/28/24**

**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 clerical and support staff and/or 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 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.

**STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:**

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

Ms. Barbara A. Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources

Mr. Chris Girardi, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **XII. Adjournment**