

**School Committee
Meeting Book**

**March 13, 2024
7:00 pm**

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



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

AGENDA

**March 13, 2024 7:00pm
Town Hall—Selectmen’s Meeting Room
100 Maple Avenue**

Items

Suggested time allotments

I. Public Participation	
II. Chairperson’s Report & Members’ Reports	
III. Superintendent’s Report	
IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:	
A. Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget: Public Hearing	7:05 – 7:25
B. Fiscal Year 2025 English Language Education Budget: Report	7:25 – 7:50
C. Fiscal Year 2025 Special Education & Student Services Budget: Report	7:50 – 8:15
V. Curriculum	
VI. Policy	
A. School District Calendar for 2024 -2025 School Year: Vote	
VII. Finance & Operations	
A. Fiscal Year 2025 Fees & Tuitions: Report & Discussion	8:15 – 8:35
B. Massachusetts School Building Authority Statement of Interest for Potential Addition to Shrewsbury High School: Discussion & Vote	8:35 – 8:55
VIII. Old Business	
IX. New Business	
X. Approval of Minutes	8:55 – 9:00
XI. Executive Session	9:00 – 9:30
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.	



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

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”)

XII. Adjournment

9:30

Next regular meeting: March 27, 2024



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM NO: I Public Participation

MEETING DATE: 03/13/24

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:** MEETING DATE: **03/13/24**
A. Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget: Public Hearing

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The public and members of the School Department are invited to provide input to the Committee and the administration regarding the FY25 Budget. This public hearing meets the requirements of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 38N, which requires school districts to provide an opportunity for members of the public to be heard regarding the proposed school district budget.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee hold a public hearing in order to listen to feedback on the topic of the FY25 Budget.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Christian Girardi, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: IV. Time Scheduled Appointments: MEETING DATE: 03/13/24
B. Fiscal Year 2025 English Language Education Budget: Report

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Ms. Manos will provide an overview of the English Language Education Program at Shrewsbury Public Schools as well as a Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Overview that highlights key budget investments. The report is enclosed and Ms. Manos will be available to answer questions from the Committee.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee hear the report and take whatever action it deems necessary in the best interest of the Shrewsbury Public Schools.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Ms. Christina Manos, Director of English Language Learning

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



English Language Education Department– Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Overview

Christina Manos

Director of the English Language Education Department

Key Areas of Budget Responsibility

- I. Ensuring the provision of legally mandated English language education services to students who qualify per state standards
- II. Facilitating registration of new students and families; organizing related supports including translation and interpretation services; maintaining student records; ensuring compliance with state and federal educational and civil rights guidelines
- III. Ensuring instructional leadership and support of strong teaching practices, with primary supervision of 19 professional educators and one tutor.
- IV. Coordinating English Language Education state-mandated ACCESS testing and related progress monitoring responsibilities.
- V. Facilitating district professional development offerings in English language education, including professional development days and early release days; necessary training for implementation of new curriculum and instruction (such as the new ELlevation curriculum used to support newcomer students) etc.

Key Budget Investments for Fiscal Year 2025

English Learner Student Information Software

Key investments of \$ 8,000

Included in this category are:

- \$8,000 to purchase new software for a student information management system to track mandated screenings, assessments, and progress of English Learner students

English Language Education Teacher

Key investment of \$75,000

- 1.0 FTE English Language Education teaching position to be assigned to the high school level to address increased student caseloads, estimated salary of \$75K for experience and level of education and training; this position was added this year for mandated ELE services and was funded from emergency homeless shelter state funding (Note: Another 2.0 FTE ELE teaching positions were added this year and are expected to continue next year at Beal and Floral Street Schools using this same state funding source)

English Language Education Coordinator

Key investment of \$115,000

- 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

Estimated total requested new investments in the appropriated budget in FY25: ~\$198K

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

Grant or alternative funds used for the English language education include:

- Federal entitlement Title III grants for English language education, designed to supplement district funding; ~\$38K was allocated in FY24. This grant supports summer programming for English learners, professional development for the ELE department, and family engagement. This funding may increase in future years if English learner student enrollment increases, but is not predictable – at least level funding is presumed
- Emergency shelter grant- currently funding 3.0 FTE ELE professional teacher positions. (Next year we anticipate this grant will continue to fund 2.0 FTE positions at ~\$114K
- MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)-sponsored programs to provide access to consulting experts, which enables us to access consultant support at no cost, worth approximately \$11.5K
- **Estimated total use of grants/alternative funds in FY25: ~\$164K**

SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545

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



Christina M. Manos
Director of English Language Education, Pre K - 12

To: School Committee
Re: English Language Education Program Needs

Context

In the past ten years, the district's student population has grown increasingly diverse. Similarly, the growth of the ELE population and the changing profile of the English learners arriving in Shrewsbury means that we must improve instructional supports. At the same time, new requirements from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education compel all districts to develop new systems for monitoring student progress. In order to keep up, we require additional resources. For this reason, the budget recommendations detailed in this report include a request for additional personnel and the related software systems that support our English learners, former English learners and the dedicated educators that teach them.

English Language Education Program Overview

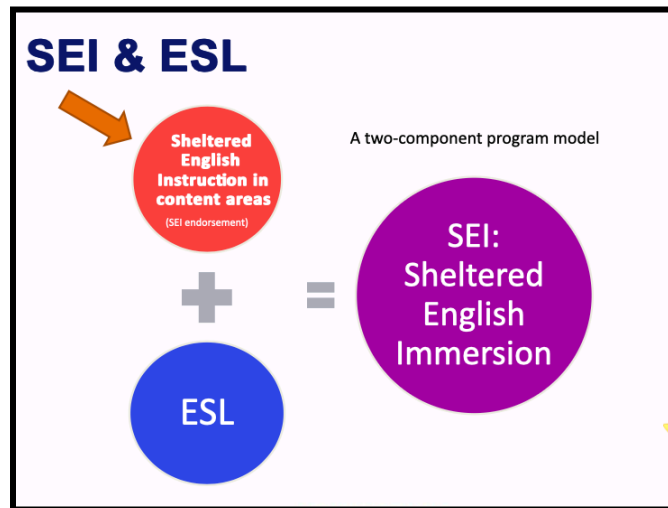
The English Language Education (ELE) program currently serves 316 students in grades K - 12. This represents just about 5% of our total student population in those grades, a relatively low percentage given that over one third of our student body has a first language that is not English. Students are identified as English learners (EL) through the use of the Home Language Survey and a screener assessment tool called the WIDA¹ Screener. The WIDA Screener assessment is used to determine which multilingual students are identified as English learners and will be enrolled in the English Language Education program.



¹ WIDA is a group of 42 member states with origins in No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which brought English learners into the national spotlight. The name WIDA originally stood for the three original member states: Wisconsin, Delaware and Arkansas.

Today, the name WIDA has come to represent 42 states, territories, federal agencies and international schools. The WIDA consortium provides language development resources to those who support the academic success of multilingual learners, including language standards, assessments, professional learning and educator support.

The ELE program in Shrewsbury is a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) model, which is the one program that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires all districts offer. An SEI program consists of two components – English language development classes, sometimes called English as a Second Language (ESL) or English Language Development (ELD), and Sheltered Content Instruction, sometimes abbreviated SCI. Whatever term is used, ESL instruction is delivered by an English language education teacher, most often in a pull-out or small group setting. In contrast, SCI is delivered by an SEI-endorsed, content-licensed teacher, typically in a general education classroom. ESL instruction and sheltered content instruction are both integral elements to develop academic language and English proficiency skills in our English learners.

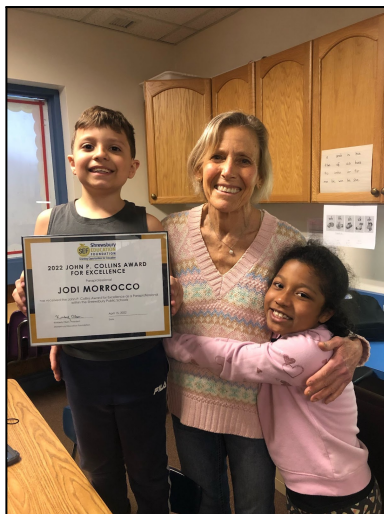


The ELE department in Shrewsbury currently employs nineteen ELE teachers, including three long-term substitutes added since the start of this year to meet mandated service needs (paid for through the emergency homeless shelter state education funding). We also have one half-time SEI tutor, currently working at Floral Street School. One director oversees all aspects of the ELE program, including ensuring district compliance with federal and state mandates.



District ELE Staff

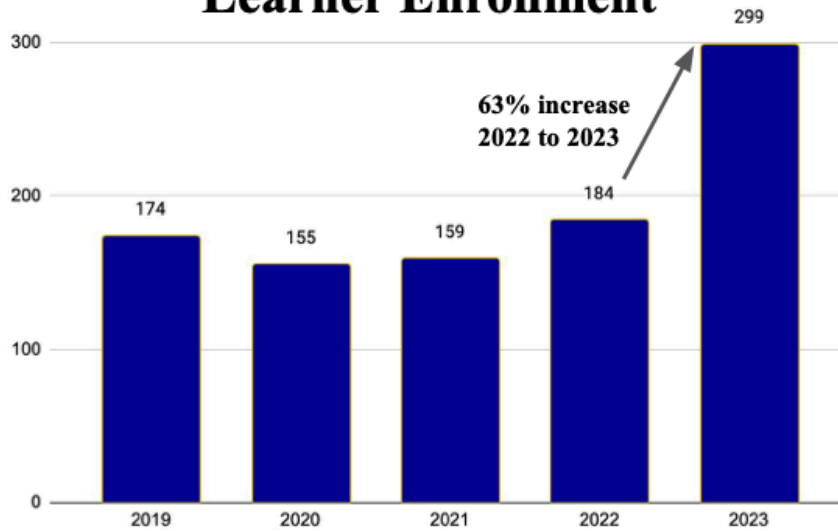
	ELE Teachers	Long-Term Substitute ELE Teachers	Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Tutors	Director
Shrewsbury High School	3.0	1.0		
Oak Middle School	2.0			
Sherwood Middle School	2.0			
Beal School	2.0	1.0		
Coolidge School	3.0			
Floral Street School	3.0	1.0	0.5	
Paton School	0.7			
Spring Street School	0.3			
Parker Road Preschool				
District				1.0
Totals	16.0	3.0	0.5	1.0



English Learner Students in Shrewsbury

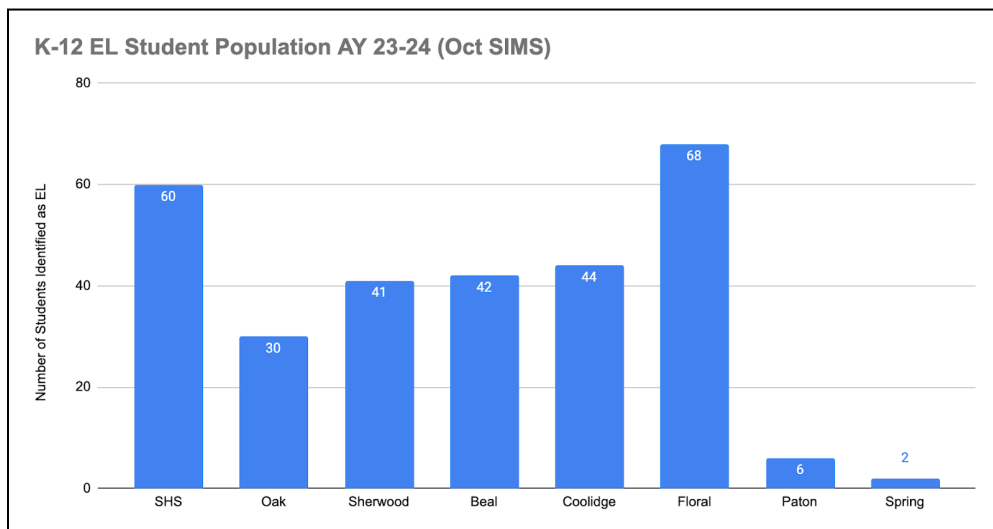
English Learner Enrollment, October 2019 - October 2023

English Language Learner Enrollment



The district is required twice a year to submit information in the state's student information management system (SIMS). At the time of the October 1, 2023 SIMS reporting date, there were 293 English learner students enrolled in our K-12 schools, a marked increase from the previous year as demonstrated in the above graphic from Dr. Sawyer's enrollment presentation last October. The breakdown by school for this year is visible in the chart below.

K-12 English Learner Student Population October, 2023

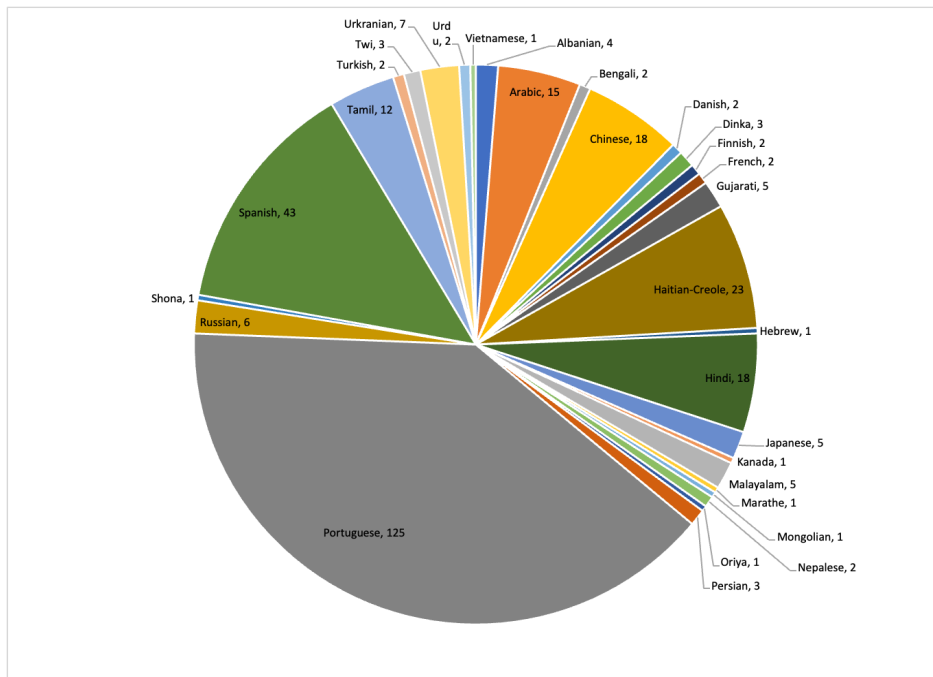


The wide disparity in EL population across the elementary schools is largely due to the demographics of the region served by each individual school. Beal, Coolidge and Floral each have one or more large apartment complexes in their district, and are also positioned closer to amenities that are accessible to families without a vehicle. Newly arrived immigrant families are more apt to rent apartments than buy single family homes. 152 families, comprising approximately 50% of our EL students, live in large apartment complexes like Shrewsbury Green and the Commons.



Our English learner student population, like our student body as a whole, is incredibly diverse. Our students come from around the globe and represent 31 different native languages. The top five native languages are Portuguese (40% of our EL population), Spanish (14%), Haitian Creole (7%), Chinese and Hindi (both about 5.5%); collectively, 72% of our English learners speak one of these five languages. The chart below shows the breakdown of all 31 languages spoken by our current EL students.

Languages Spoken by SPS EL Students, K-12



In addition to being an incredibly diverse group, EL students and families are more transient than most SPS families. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) uses a District Analysis and Review Tool (DART) to compare districts with similar demographics. 2023 DART data shows that EL students are more apt to transfer in or out of district during the school year, and on average, EL students have a lower stability rate than any other subgroup reported for our district.

Shrewsbury
2023 Mobility Rates

Student Group	Churn/Intake Enroll	% Churn	% Intake	Stability Enroll	% Stability
All Students	6,127	6.0	4.4	5,925	97.3
High Needs	2,125	10.7	8.0	1,983	95.9
LEP English language learner	252	31.7	27.4	194	89.7
Low Income	1,183	13.4	10.0	1,081	95.1
Students with disabilities	946	6.0	4.5	913	97.6
African American/Black	246	13.4	11.8	227	93.8
American Indian or Alaskan Native	41	9.8	4.9	39	94.9
Asian	2,097	5.5	3.9	2,043	97.0
Hispanic or Latino	641	12.6	8.6	591	95.3
Multi-race, non-Hispanic or Latino	327	7.0	6.4	307	99.0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-	-
White	2,774	3.9	2.8	2,718	98.1

This is important to remember when we analyze data for the English learner subgroup. More than any other subgroup, from year to year and even from term to term, the individual students who make up this subgroup are changing. This higher level of mobility makes it more challenging to draw conclusions from trends in data such as standardized test results, benchmarks, and course enrollment information.

Former English Learners (FEL)

In addition to our 293 identified EL students, we currently have 186 students who are identified as former English learners, or FEL students. The FEL designation indicates that a student was previously identified as an English learner, and is now in the required monitoring period after re-classification. Students are reclassified from English learner to former English learner once they achieve a certain minimum score on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessment, given annually to all English learners. Students need to achieve a composite score of 4.2 and a literacy score of 3.9 in order to be reclassified as a former English learner (FEL). ELE educators monitor FEL students at least twice each school year to ensure they retain their English proficiency skills and continue to successfully engage with academic content. After the four-year monitoring period concludes, FELs are no longer classified as such.

Rationale for Increased Resources

It’s expected that the overall budget for the English Language Education department next year will reflect the small increases factored in for all departments to offset the rising cost of contracted services

and materials and supplies. In addition, an approximately \$10,000 portion of the district's overall curriculum budget will be used to supply new curriculum materials for intermediate English Learners as recommended by a recent program review. Given that the biggest unmet need is personnel, the English Language Education program is requesting additional staff and resources for the coming year in order to meet the growing needs of our department.

In addition to carrying forward two long-term sub positions into the 2024-2025 academic year using emergency shelter grant funds, we are respectfully requesting to shift a long-term substitute teaching position at Shrewsbury High School to the appropriated budget, and to add a second district-wide administrative leadership position, an English Language Education Coordinator. The new compliance mandates coming from the federal government are simply too large in number and scope for one director to successfully manage in conjunction with the other responsibilities for managing the day-to-day needs of the English Language Education Department.

In addition, we are requesting about \$8,000 of new funding to provide ongoing access to an online tool called ELlevation, a data management system designed to provide tools to facilitate compliance notices sent to families, progress monitoring, and data reporting. While an added expense, having a digital data management system will ensure efficiency in meeting increased needs. Our needs are increasing as a direct result of three factors:

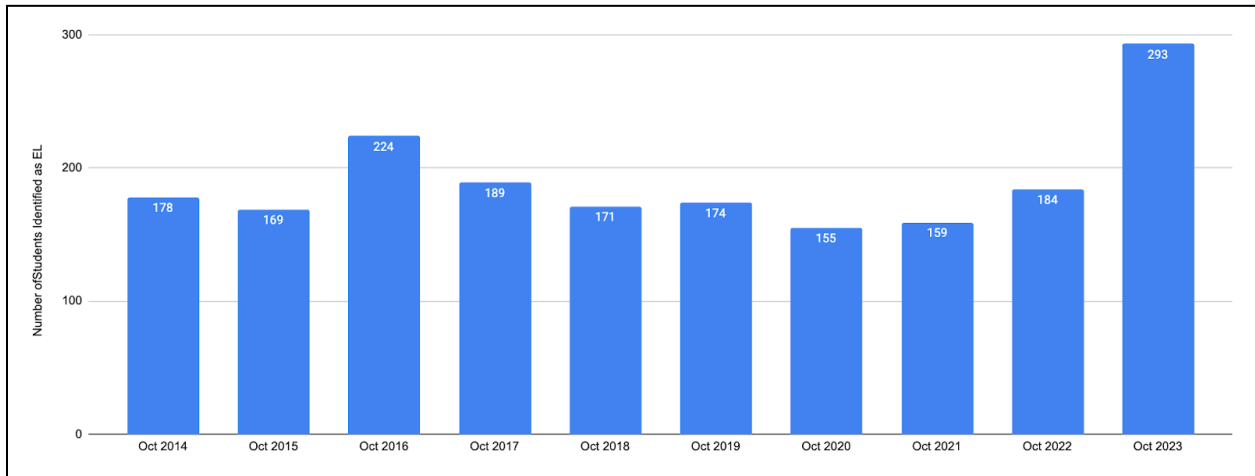
1. Increasing student population
2. Changing learning profile of the EL population
3. New and enhanced mandates from DESE

More details will be provided in the subsections that follow.

Increasing EL Population

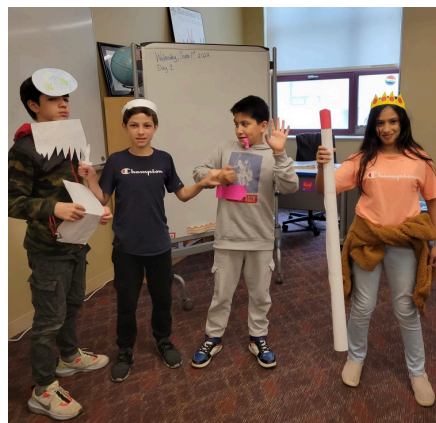
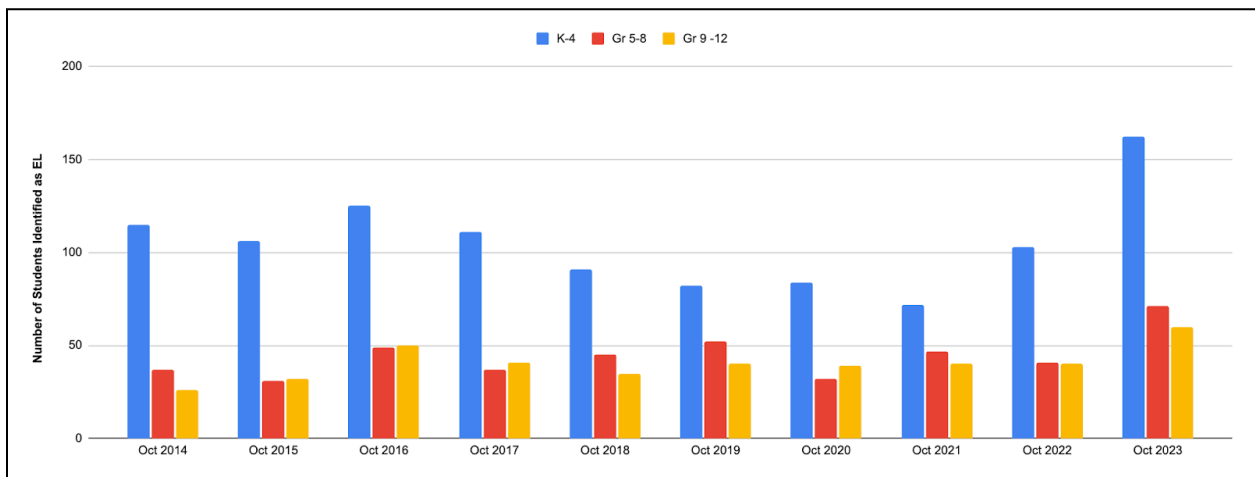
The number of students identified as English learners who attend Shrewsbury Public Schools has increased significantly. Looking at data over the last ten years, you can see that our student population has fluctuated a bit over this period, with notable dips in the fall of 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. Last year, we saw a post-pandemic rebound, and this year, we experienced a surge. From October 2022 to October 2023, our EL population increased by just over 60%, in part because of the emergency shelter located in the district this year. However, even if you control for the EL students residing at the shelter by not including them in the total, our EL population in grades K-12 would have increased by about 35%, which in itself would have been the largest increase we've experienced over the last ten years.

K-12 EL Population District-Wide, October 2014 - 2023:

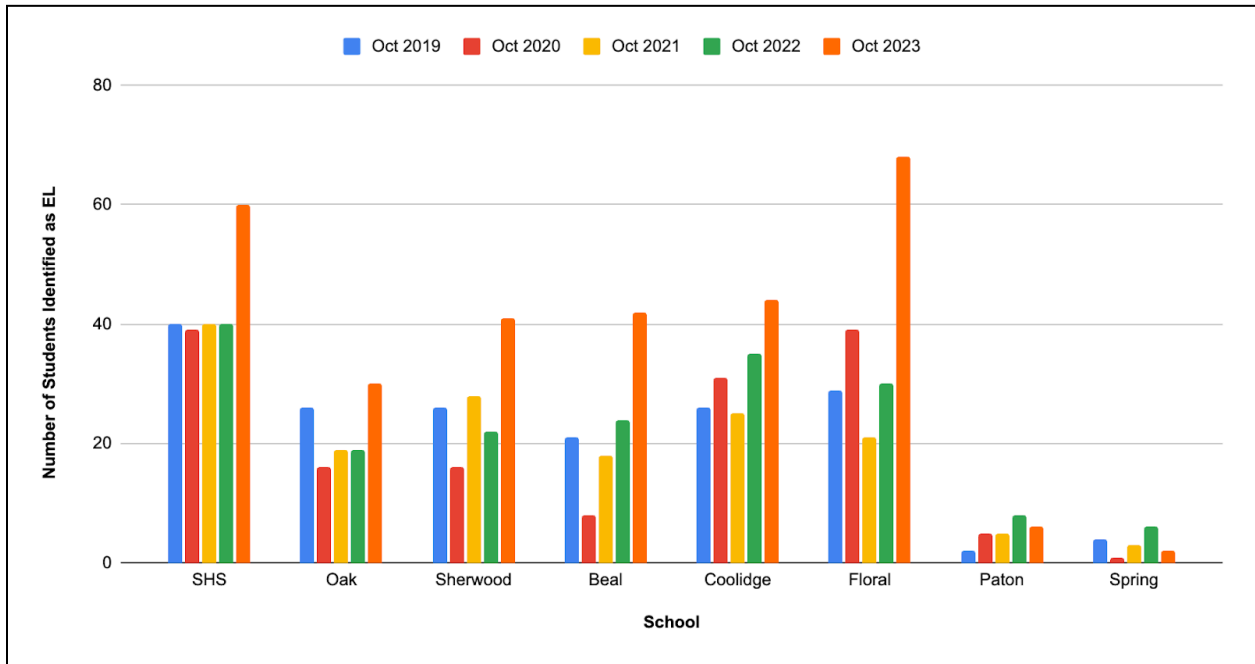


This chart illustrates the fluctuations across grade spans over the past decade. Our EL population is typically higher in the elementary school grades, although all three grade spans have grown over the past decade.

K-12 EL Population by Grade Spans October 2019 - 2023



K-12 EL Population by School October 2019 - 2023



Increasing Space Constraints

Although our newer schools have been designed for small group instructional spaces, it's important to note that increased numbers of English learners and the staff that serve them means that there are increasing demands for instructional space across almost all of our schools. In the past, when faced with space limitations our educators have creatively repurposed various spaces. As this population grows, repurposing spaces for ELE services will also need to increase; as is the case for students with disabilities, by law English learners must have equitable access to adequate instructional spaces. In the past Shrewsbury has been cited by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for failing to consistently provide such space.

Changing learning profile of EL Students

Increasing numbers is only one part of the story. In the past decade, the profile of new English learners has changed as well. The WIDA proficiency scale uses number ratings between 1-6 to describe a student's level of language proficiency, with Level 1 learners considered beginners and Level 6 students comparable to native speakers. About ten years ago, the profile of a typical newly identified EL student was a student coming to us with some English, either from a country with a strong tradition of English education, or the child of multilingual parents who spoke English along with their native language(s) in the home. About ten years ago, somewhere between 20 - 30% of our newly identified/enrolled English learners were newcomers, with an English proficiency level of 1 or 2. This year, approximately 60% of our newly enrolled EL students in grades 1 - 12 have an English proficiency level of 1 or 2, and over 75% of our new Kindergarten EL students have an English proficiency level of 1 or 2. DESE guidance is for students at this level to receive two or three periods of English language development class each

day. An increase in students who enter our program at a level 1 or 2 means more instructional hours, which requires more licensed ESL teachers.

In addition to more students who come in at the entering and emerging levels of English proficiency, we have also seen an increase in English learners identified as having limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). SLIFE students may be from an area of the world where access to education is limited due to geography, socio-economic status, or political situation. Some areas in the world are still struggling to fully reopen schools after the pandemic shut-down, so while students may be completing schoolwork, direct instruction and accountability are lacking. In addition to English language instruction, SLIFE students may need explicit literacy instruction, math intervention, school readiness skills, and access to counseling services; in addition, SLIFE students often experience a longer and more challenging acclimation period to US schools and English education, and ultimately may spend more time identified as an English learner.

New and Enhanced Mandates

Even if we were not seeing an increase in the numbers and the needs of our EL population, the demands on ELE educators would still be increasing due to enhanced and new mandates required by the state and federal government. In recent years, DESE's Office of Language Acquisition (OLA) has added new mandates and tightened the requirements of others, in order to better comply with federal law. These new and enhanced mandates have increased the number of newly enrolled students that must be screened for English language learner eligibility. They have also added new requirements for progress monitoring for students who are not meeting their benchmark on the annual language proficiency test. In the next school year, we will also have a new timeline for screening preschool students, increased expectations for progress monitoring of former English learners (FEL) and opt-out students, and guidance requiring regularly scheduled consultation between ELE educators and general education teachers in preschool and kindergarten. While these mandates are well-intentioned and help ensure equity of access for English learners, they also increase the workload for both ELE teachers and administrators.

To summarize, our growing ELE population and the changing profile of new EL students means that we have more students who need more instructional support. At the same time, DESE is requiring that we do more for English learners, SLIFE students, and former English learners. The demands on ELE educators have and will continue to increase. In order to keep up, we require additional resources.

Thank you for your consideration.

Glossary of Related Terms

English learner (EL) - a student who does not speak English or whose native language is not English, and who is not currently able to perform ordinary classroom work in English

Former English learner (FEL) - a student who was an identified English learner and who has achieved an English proficiency score high enough to exit the ELE program and who is in their four-year monitoring program

Multilingual learner (ML) - a student who is or has been consistently exposed to more than one language (includes ELs, FELs, world language learners, heritage language learners, etc)

Newcomer - recently arrived immigrant English learner (EL) at the earliest levels of English proficiency. Typically used to describe students within their first 12 months of US education, although the time period may vary based on source.

SLIFE - Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) are English learners (ELs) with little or, in some cases, no formal education, or whose education has been significantly interrupted.

Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) - An English language acquisition program model in which students receive English language development in both an ESL class and in their content classes. In ESL (also called ELE) classes, students receive systematic, explicit and sustained English language instruction. In content classes, SEI-endorsed content-licensed educators shelter academic instruction and help ELs develop academic language and learn grade-level content along with their proficient English-speaking peers.



ELlevation provides software customized to the needs of English language education programs and is aligned with the majority Massachusetts' Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requirements for reporting, monitoring and communicating with families. Adopting ELlevation will streamline many of the administrative tasks required, provide improved access to EL student data for all SPS educators, inform instructional planning, and allow for more robust progress monitoring. Additional information is available [here](#).



Special Education and Student Services– Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Overview

Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

Meghan Bartlett, Assistant Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel

Key Areas of Budget Responsibility

- I. Responsible for supervising all special education staff, including directors, nurses, teachers, therapists, specialists, psychologists, adjustment counselors, applied behavior technicians, child-specific aides, RISE, and other special education aides.
- II. Oversees and ensures compliance with state and federal special education and 504 Accommodation legal requirements including the preparation of all special education and 504 plans and reports required by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the federal Department of Education, and Shrewsbury Public Schools. Coordinates the creation and maintenance of complete and accurate records on all students receiving special education services through an Individualized Education Program and/or 504 Accommodation Plans.
- III. Fiscally and programmatically responsible for out of district special education placement programs.
- IV. Cooperates and contracts with public and private agencies and schools, organizations, and other professionals in securing and providing services for students with special needs.
- V. Oversees the creation and maintenance of a current list and description of program options available for school age children with special needs.
- VI. Oversees and coordinates the staffing of the summer special education programs.
- VII. Ensures processing and submissions of Circuit Breaker Reimbursement Program and federal Medicaid reimbursement claims.
- VIII. Seeks and applies for appropriate state and federal grants.
- IX. Design and facilitate district professional development department offerings, including the key strategic priorities of co-teaching, the new IEP rollout, alternatives to discipline, and mental and behavioral health training for implementation of a multi-tiered system of support across all grades and buildings.
- X. Designing programming to meet our diverse student body including the design and implementation of a transition program and retail store.

Key Budget Investments for Fiscal Year 2025

Mandated Services Need

Key investments of \$305,000

Included in this category are:

- 0.5 FTE Elementary Special Education Teacher (\$37,500)
- 1.0 FTE Occupational Therapist (\$75,000)
- 1.0 FTE Speech Language Pathologist (\$75,000)

- 1.0 FTE SHS Adjustment Counselor –Previously funded through ESSER 3 Grant (\$77,000)
 - 1.0 FTE SHS Structured Reading Teacher-Adjustment from Tutor to Teacher (\$40,500)*
- *Updated mandated need not reflected in the initial Superintendent’s FY25 Budget Recommendation

Clinical Coordinator

Key investment of \$90,000

Included in this category is:

- 1.0 FTE Clinical Coordinator (Board-Certified Behavior Analyst role position) to be assigned to specialized programs to address and support students with significant behavioral health concerns; estimated salary of \$90,000 for experience and level of education and training

Elementary Therapeutic Program*

Key investment of \$145,000

Included in this category is:

- 1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher and 1.0 FTE School Adjustment Counselor positions to address clinical and academic support to target social, emotional, and behavioral skill deficits for elementary students. This program will be designed to support students in developing foundational social, emotional, and behavioral skills to be successful in the least restrictive environment. Students who enter this program will access assessment, intensive skill-based treatment, and programming developed by a multidisciplinary team. Students will develop skills essential to stabilize and re-enter the least restrictive learning environment. Estimated at ~ \$72,500 for each role.
- *This program is based on ongoing analysis of student needs at the elementary level and is not included in the initial Superintendent’s FY25 Budget Recommendation; funding will need to be identified in order to implement. This type of program would provide in-district therapeutic services at a level that currently would require out-of-district placement, potentially saving out-of-district costs

Efficiencies Through Use of Grants or Alternative Funding in Fiscal Years 2024 & 2025

Grant or alternative funds used for Student Services include:

- \$1,784,122- Federal entitlement 240 grant to support the RISE (Staff, Building Operations, Supplies, etc.), Disproportionality, Proportionate Share, Out of District Transportation, 2 SHS Student Support Instructors
- \$22,855- DESE Social, Emotional, Mental Health Grant (311)- supporting professional development
- \$38,702- DESE Professional Improvement Grant (274)- supporting the new IEP program from DESE
- \$10,000- DESE Chronic Absenteeism grant- supporting develop of process and procedures to address chronic absenteeism
- \$10,000- DESE- [Social Emotional Behavioral Academy](#) participation with DESE consultant
- \$25,000- [JED Foundation](#) consultant program review and consultation
- **Estimated total use of grants/alternative funds in FY25: \$1,905,679**

Other Examples of Efficiencies in Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Other Examples of Efficiencies for Student Services: Retail sales and fundraising work for [RISE and Maple & Main](#)

- **Estimated total of value of other efficiencies: to date: \$90,000**



To: School Committee

From: Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

Meghan Bartlett, Assistant Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel

Re: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget for Special Education and Student Services

The mission of the Special Education and Pupil Personnel Department is to identify students who meet the federal and state criteria for a disability requiring specialized instruction and/or accommodations through an Individualized Educational Program or 504 Accommodation Plan. It is Shrewsbury's responsibility to provide services in the least restrictive environment that will empower access to our students to become active members of society based on their individual strengths and abilities. As a district, we are committed to providing an inclusive setting of dedicated multidisciplinary teams while involving parents and community members to help meet the academic and social-emotional needs of all students in a respectful and positive environment.

Our vision is to afford *all* students the opportunity to succeed through high quality, evidence-based practices, and we will do so by connecting and communicating with families, students, school teams, and the greater community. Together, we will focus on the positive attributes and recognize the individual strengths and achievements of our students while promoting their future successes.

Our Department, and district, prioritizes equity and access for all students. This ongoing work has ensured that the Shrewsbury Public Schools continue to meet high expectations with efficient and thoughtful resources and programs to meet the needs of all learners.

This report aims to assess the level of complexity within Special Education and Student Services. The dedicated staff within this sector demonstrate exceptional commitment, diligence, and passion towards supporting and instructing students, irrespective of their abilities. As the educational landscape evolves, our district remains steadfast in its mission to expand programs and services, catering to the diverse needs of all students. This expansion is geared towards enhancing social, emotional, academic, and behavioral outcomes across the board. We continue to celebrate many services and programs across the district such as the creation of the elementary transitions program, co-teaching partnerships, social, emotional, behavioral professional development and instructions, unified programming, RISE and Maple & Main.

*****Of note, Nursing, Mental and Behavioral Health, and RISE (Reaching Independence through Supported Employment) reports and presentations will be given in the near future with more detailed information under separate cover.**

Student Services Overview

Each staff member plays a unique role in providing comprehensive support services to students in areas such as academics, mental health counseling, career planning, special education accommodations, behavior management, and crisis intervention. Together, they work collaboratively to ensure the well-being and success of all students in the school. The Student Services Department is comprised currently of the following:

Role	Amount
Directors (PreK-HS, Nursing, Counseling and Mental Health, Specialized Programs)	7.0 FTE
RISE Program Coordinator and Retail Manager	2.0 FTE
Teachers: PreK, Moderate, and Severe Licensed	72.0 FTE
Therapists (Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Physical Therapy)	4.8 OT FTE 13.6 SLP FTE 1.0 PT FTE
Clinicians: Psychologists and School Adjustment Counselors	31.0 FTE
District Clinical Coordinators	4.0 FTE
Paraprofessionals: ABA Technicians, Child Specific Assistants, Special Education Assistants, Preschool Assistants, Speech Language Assistants, Job Coaches	124.0 ABA Technicians FTE 60.0 Child Specific Assts. FTE 30.0 Special Education Assts. FTE 10.0 Preschool Assts. FTE 2.0 Speech/Language Assts. FTE 6.0 FTE ABA Job Coaches FTE

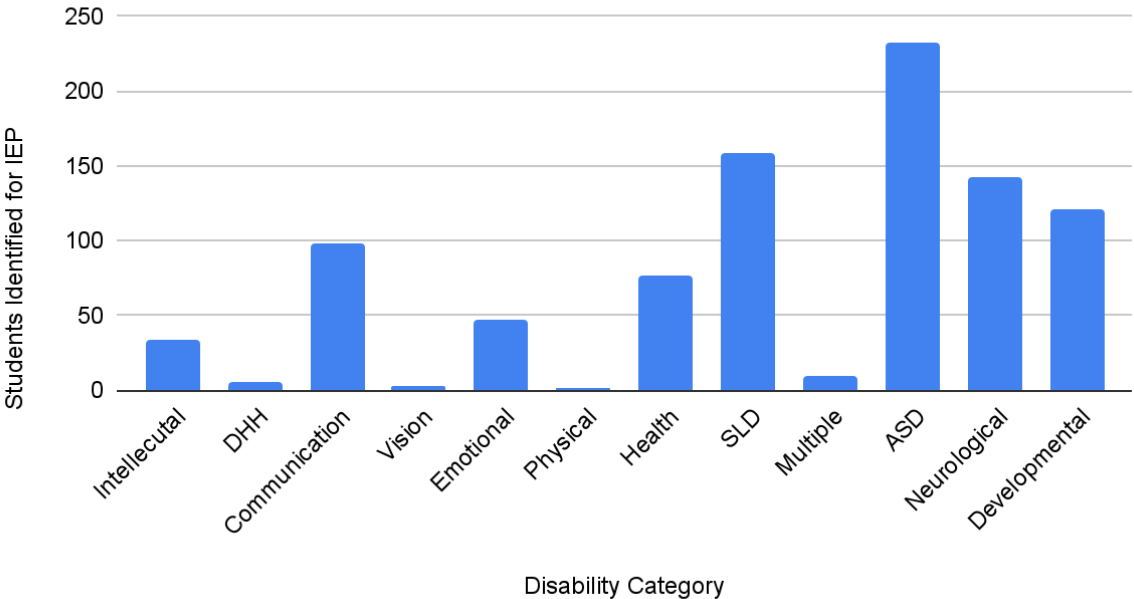
Nurses	13.6 FTE
Team Chairs	7.5 FTE
Secretaries	6.0 FTE
Current Staff	372.5 FTE

**This is a moving target with paraeducator staff frequently shifting roles for career advancement and staff resignations.*

Number of Students with Individualized Education Programs:

As of March 2024, we have 1055 students with active Individualized Education Programs (IEP) for ages 3-22 who are accessing special education services that require specially designed instruction. The concurrent data indicated that there are 124 students with active referrals for Special Education. This number is included in the total Special Education number of 1055 students. Students in referral are considered special education students until eligibility has been determined. The chart below breaks down the educational disability by eligibility of service. As it has been historically, qualification under Autism (ASD) remains our highest primary area of educational disability category.

Students Identified for IEP



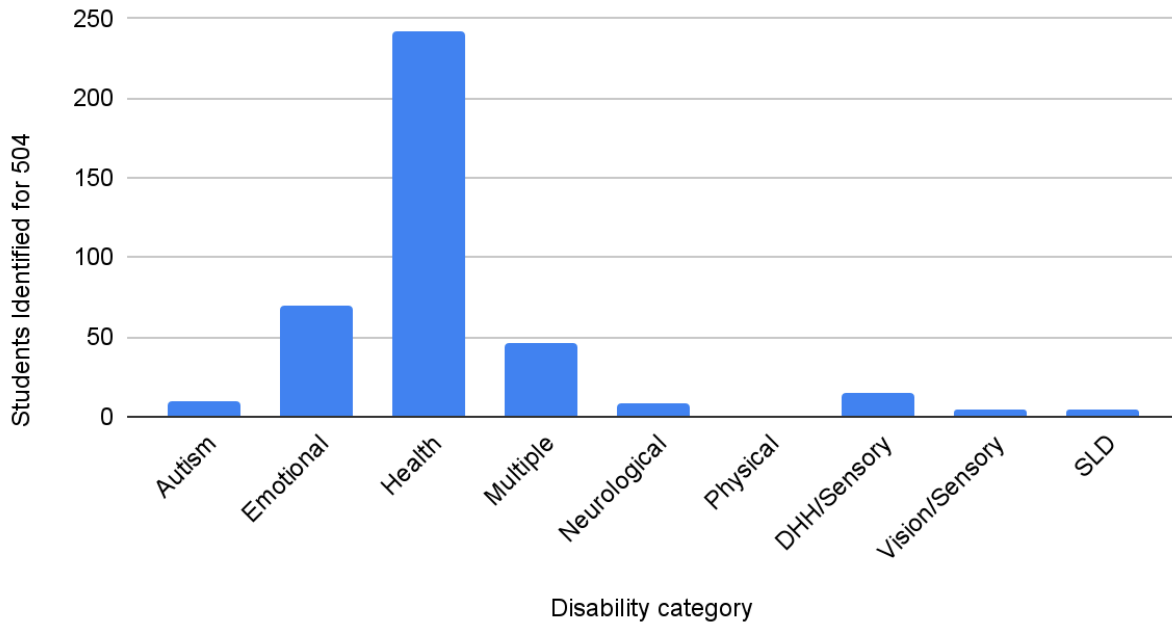
Key: DHH: Deaf & Hard of Hearing; SLD: Specific Learning Disability; ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

Number of Students with Section 504 Accommodation Plans:

504 Accommodation Plans define eligibility as a diagnosed disability that is limiting one or more major life functions. To be eligible for a 504 plan, the student needs to have a record and be regarded as having such an impairment. Students that are eligible for a 504 Accommodation Plan do not require specially designed instruction, however, they do require accommodations within the classroom to access their education. 403 students are receiving accommodations within the classroom setting through Section 504 Accommodation Plans. There are an additional 25 students in referral for eligibility.

The district continues to identify Health Impairment as the primary disability category for 504 eligibility. Many students that have this as a category may identify as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, food allergies, Diabetes, Asthma or other health impairments. The district continues to see an increase trend in students with emotional disabilities becoming eligible for 504 Accommodation Plans. The Student Services Department will continue to support students with a variety of disabilities within both the IEP and 504 eligibility processes.

Students Identified for 504



Key: DHH: Deaf & Hard of Hearing; SLD: Specific Learning Disability

Analysis of Services:

There continues to be an increasing trend of students qualifying for 504 Accommodation Plans and Individualized Education Programs based on data collected over a 5 year period. This increase is due to the larger number of referrals, students moving into the district, students with both IEPs and 504s, continued Child Find activities, and the impact of the school closure and mental health crisis.

School Year	Total Number of Enrolled Students	Students with Section 504 Accommodation Plans	Percentage of Students Receiving 504s	Students with Individualized Educational Programs	Percentage of Students with IEPs
2018-2019	6,207	206	3.0%	962	15.4%
2019-2020	6,251	235	3.0%	1,020	16.3%
2021-2022	6,008	275	4.5%	996	16.6%
2022-2023	6,076	336	5.5%	977	16.1%
2023-2024	6,108	403	6.6%	1055	17.3%

Extended School Year Services (ESY):

ESY services are required and developed for students with disabilities who qualify for a continuation of services based on the nature or severity of their disability or who exhibit substantial regression and/or significant recoupment throughout the school year. ESY eligibility and data tracking help teams make data-driven decisions. This data is used in annual team meetings to help the team determine the level and need for extended school year services. Throughout the school year, the ESY Coordinators and the special education leadership team meet monthly to address: staffing, program organization, student recommendations, and qualification for services. Student recommendation forms are reviewed and used to develop programming for students who require a longer school year.

FY 24 Extended School Year Student Enrollment:

Programming Type	Student Count
4 Week Half Day Academics	29
4 Week Half Day Intensive & ELC	3
4 Week Related Services Walk-In	9

5 Week Half Day PreK Classroom	19
5 Week Half Day RISE	16
6 Week Half Day Academic	70
6 Week Intensive & ELC Half-Day	99
6 Week Full Day Academic	14
6 Week Related Services Walk-In	28
Total	287

A total of 287 students accessed ESY services. However, this number only represents a portion of the ESY program. Many students who participate in the academic, intensive, and ELC programs also receive multiple related services on a weekly basis, which requires additional staff to complete all services during the summer.

FY 24 Extended School Year Professional Staffing Plan:

ESY Staff	Total FTE
Teachers: PreK & Moderate	9.5 FTE
Therapists (Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Physical Therapy)	1.0 OT FTE* 13.0 SLP FTE 0.1 PT FTE
Structured Reading	2.0 FTE
Coordinators	2.0 FTE
RISE Coordinator and Retail Manager	2.0 FTE
ELC Coordinators	1.9 FTE

****0.2 OT Contracted Services***

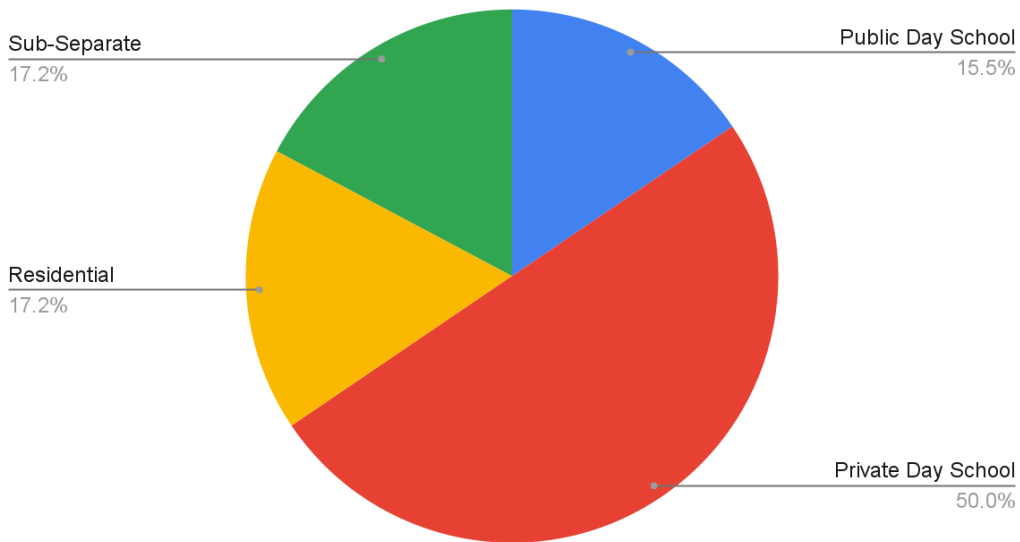
Out of District Programming:

As previously mentioned, the mission of the Special Education Department is to provide services in the least restrictive environment that will empower and provide access to our students to become active members of society based on their individual strengths and abilities. There remains a population of students that, due to the scope and severity of their disability, the child will require a more restrictive educational experience in order to make effective progress commensurate with their disability.

When identifying programs for students to access their education, teams must consider placements that are gradually more restrictive than public schools.

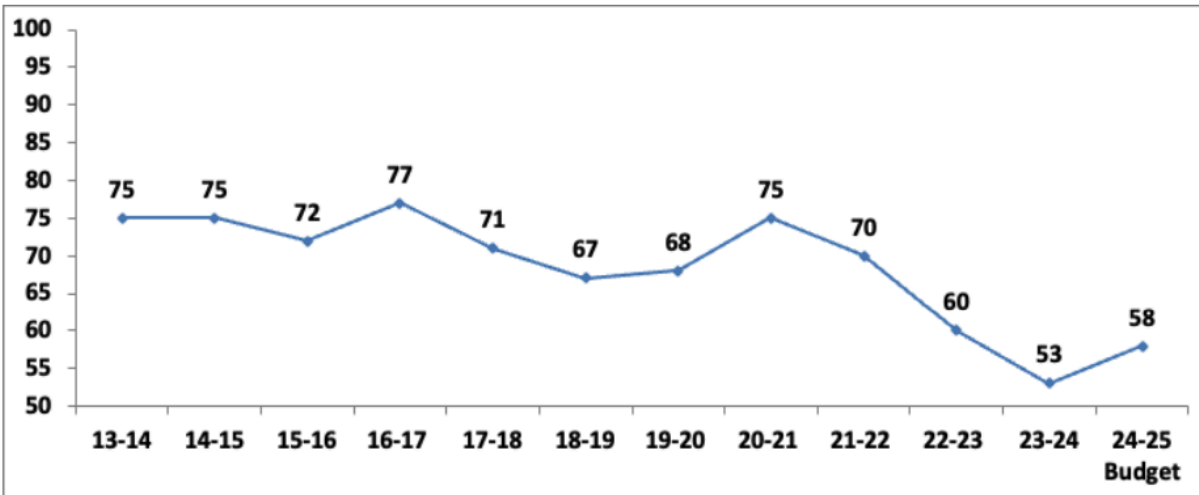
When considering out of district placements, approved programs grow in restrictive nature. Some out of district programs are still considered Substantially Separate placements. These are through collaboratives that are placed within a public school, or for students ages 18-22 accessing their entitlement services through a collaborative placement and are placed within the community setting. Students that access their education in a Public Day placement are accessing their education through a collaborative placement governed by a board of area town administrators. Private Day placements are for students who require an even more restrictive setting. These placements are [Chapter 766](#) approved placements and are sanctioned by the DESE. Residential Placements are also governed by the DESE. However, these placements are for students that due to the scope of their disability and safety needs, the child requires 24 hour 7 days a week, and 365 days coverage and supervision.

Student Accessing OOD Placements



Out of district enrollment is projected to remain stable and or increase in the following fiscal year. This has to do with the complexity of student profile and ability to access their learning.

Special Education Out of District Placements – Budgeted



The Special Education Department continues to review the profile of students that require more restrictive placements. This is a multi-tiered approach that includes further examination of the student demographics that are currently being serviced in an out of district placement and identifying if their unique needs could be met within the district, and/or what supports and services would be needed to have students transition to a less restrictive setting. This data aligns with the key investment for next fiscal year to develop and design an elementary therapeutic program to address student clinical and academic needs to target social, emotional, and behavioral skill deficits as a means to not refer this young population of students to an out of district placements.

Out of District Fiscal Impact:

As indicated above, the out of district budget is a moving target and may shift as students are accepted into approved special education programs. The [Operational Services Division](#) sets the tuition prices for M.G.L. approved private special education programs for purchase by cities and towns and Commonwealth departments. This year the Operational Services Division approved a 4.69% fiscal increase for all Chapter 766 approved schools. This rate of inflation has been applied to all out of district placements.

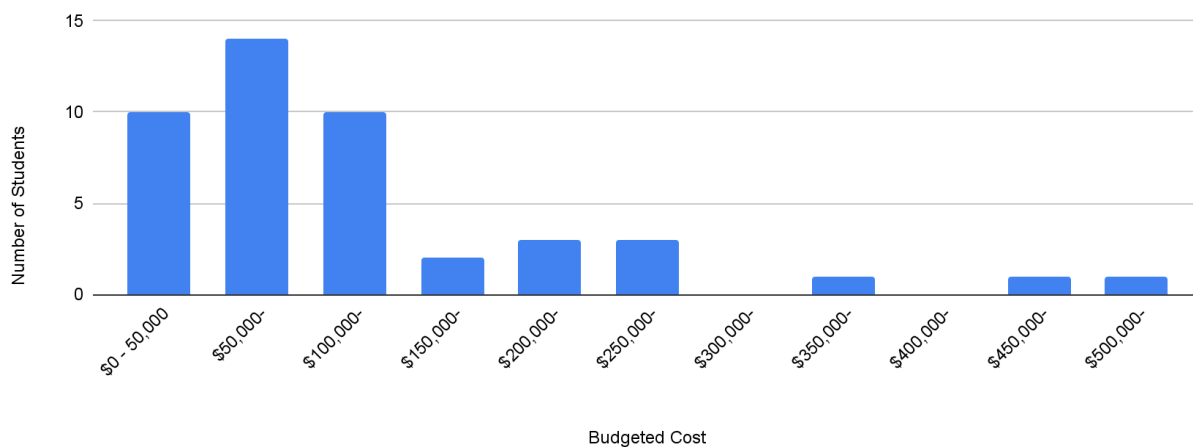
Even with the approved inflation rate for tuitions, there continues to be a staffing shortage within out of district placements which impacts the speed of student acceptance. Shrewsbury has 4 students who are waiting to be accepted to an out of district program. This is impactful to the student, family, and school community.

OSD governs and regulates Individual Price Authorization, 808 CMR 1.06(7)(a). An “Individual Price” is required for the payment of additional, unique or specialized services for a student that are required by an approved or amended Individual

Education Plan (IEP) which are not reimbursed in the program’s established price. This “Individual Price” may be for an additional 1:1 or other related service not regularly provided by the placement. Thus incurring an additional fee beyond the approved tuition cost. Funding cost for these additional services are determined by the program or contracted provider.

Because the number of students in out of district placements can fluctuate depending on varied circumstances, this projection could shift in either direction in the coming months. The charts below breaks down the number of forecasted out of district students by tuition cost. The total budgeted cost for out of district expenditures is currently estimated at \$6.63 Million for FY 25 (this total estimated cost does not reflect the proportion budgeted to be paid from state Circuit Breaker reimbursement funds, which is illustrated in the next section; it is likely that this estimate will change prior to the updated FY25 budget recommendation that will be made in April).

Cost Affiliated with Student OOD Enrollment, FY 25



Special Education Circuit Breaker:

The state’s Special Education Circuit Breaker reimbursement program began in fiscal year 2004 to provide additional funding to districts for high special education costs. Reimbursements are for the district’s prior year’s expenses. Each spring, the Student Services Office completes and submits claim forms to DESE listing the types and amounts of services, and tuitions provided to students that meet the threshold formula.

The threshold for eligibility is tied to four times the state average foundation budget per pupil as calculated under the Chapter 70 Program. The state reimburses “up to 75 percent of the costs above the threshold. Subject to appropriation.” Rates are determined by the Department and established annually. The Circuit Breaker account is

essential to ensuring that municipalities and school districts are able to pay the costs associated with more costly special education placements without cutting from other general and special education areas. Below highlights the allocation of funds through the Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services budget for out of district placements and circuit breaker reimbursement.

For out of district placements, total tuition costs are estimated to decrease by 5.78% in FY25, based on the expected placements and tuition rates for next year. The actual enrollment in out of district schools changes within each year, and from year to year, as new students may be placed in out of district schools, students return to an in-district placement, students move in or out of town, or students graduate or age out when they turn 23 years old. The net amount budgeted for out-of-district tuitions in the School Department’s town appropriated budget in the initial Superintendent’s FY25 Budget Recommendation is estimated to decrease by 5.06%. This is due to a an estimated \$406,878 reduction in tuition costs while utilizing \$266,972 less in Circuit Breaker funding to offset these costs compared to the current year, in order to maintain an estimated Circuit Breaker fund balance of 75% of maximum.

Special Education Tuition Costs and Funding Sources				
	FY 2024 Budget	FY25 Initial Budget	Difference	% Difference
Estimated Out-of-District Tuition Costs*	\$7,039,572	\$6,632,694	-\$406,878	-5.78%
Budgeted Use of Circuit Breaker Funds for Out-of-District Tuitions ("Circuit Breaker Offset")	\$4,274,091	\$4,007,119	-\$266,972	-6.25%
Budgeted Use of Town Appropriated Budget Funds for Out-of-District Tuitions ("Net Special Education Tuitions")	\$2,765,481	\$2,625,575	-\$139,906	-5.06%

*Actuals for FY24 will not be known until July 2024; initial estimates for FY25 will likely change prior to updated budget recommendation in April

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Special Education Grant 240: In Shrewsbury, Federal Special Education Grant 240 primarily funds RISE (Reaching Independence through Supported Employment) and special education transportation. The 240 Grant also allocates funds for Proportionate Share. Proportionate Share is an amount of the district’s IDEA funds allocated to eligible parentally-placed students who are privately educated in the district’s geographic boundaries regardless of student's residency and those that are home-schooled and reside in Shrewsbury. There was also carryover 240 Grant funding from the previous finding of Significant Disproportionality. These funds were used to help support the social-emotional and behavioral needs of our students.

Proportionate Share

In July 2017, DESE issued guidance regarding the IDEA funds through the 240 Grant allocation to monitor Proportionate Share. Annually, our district must calculate the

proportionate share for privately placed schools in Shrewsbury and home schooled students. Each year the district must have meaningful consultation with our local private institutions at minimum 3 times a year. Annually, the district holds individual student service meetings with each family that has a student with an active IEP. The allocated set funds for FY24 was a net sum of \$55,345 to support the needs for students that are eligible and maintain active IEPs. This net sum is calculated using the Department's formula which is based upon the enrollment numbers of students with active IEPs that are provided to Shrewsbury by the private schools.

In terms of expenditures, Shrewsbury has partnered with St. John's High School and their Gregory Academic Center to provide two part time tutors to address the academic and executive functioning needs of eligible students with active IEPs. Shrewsbury also consulted with Gateway School to provide additional academic and social skills support as well as curriculum materials for their students with active IEPs. Shrewsbury does have 7 private schools; however, the other schools in town do not have students with identified disabilities and therefore are not eligible for special education services. Shrewsbury is then not able to partner in expending the Proportionate Share funds to the other institutions.

Additionally, the United States Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs approved the proposed resolution by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for resolving concerns relating to IDEA funds that school districts were required to spend on parentally-placed private school children with disabilities and home-schooled children with disabilities. As a result, in FY24, Shrewsbury had an additional \$21,552 allocation of these resolution funds for all 7 private institutions regardless of having identified students with special needs. All private schools were notified of this funding and have spent the allocated funding on professional development opportunities, supplies and materials.

Significant Disproportionality

DESE is required under federal regulations to analyze data from school districts to identify and report to the United States Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs regarding Significant Disproportionality in special education within racial and ethnic groups. This analysis is conducted pursuant to requirements under IDEA. The determination was made following a review of data reported to DESE through the Student Information Management System and the Student Safety and Discipline Reports for the prior three years. The threshold rate for the formula established by the state decreased from a "risk ratio" of 4.0 to 3.0, meaning a demographic group is 3.0 or more times as likely to be identified as other groups for one of several categories of disability or discipline.

Shrewsbury has been notified that the district has been identified as over the new, lower threshold for students who identify as “White with a Health Impairment.” Therefore in planning for FY25, Shrewsbury will need to set aside the 15% of the 240 Grant, approximately \$250,000, to address this disproportionality. We will begin to develop an action plan to address this area for DESE in April 2024. We will continue to monitor for the overidentification of any group of students based on race and ethnicity as it impacts the disproportionality relating to placement, disability type, and discipline.

**Fiscal Year 24-240 IDEA Grant Expenditures for
Disproportionality, Proportionate Share & Resolution Funds**

Budget	Source	Awarded
Stipends	Disproportionality	\$0
Contractual Services	Disproportionality	\$0
Contractual Services	Resolution Funds	~\$121,552
Contractual Services	Proportionate Share	~\$55,345
Supplies and Materials	Disproportionality	\$0
Supplies and Materials	Resolution Funds	~\$10,776
Total		\$187,673

~Estimated due to Child Count numbers due from the private schools by April 1, 2024

Contracted Services:

Student Services uses certified contract specialists to support low incidence disabilities and mandated services for in-district students. These specialists are within the following domains: Psychiatry, Orientation and Mobility, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Vision Specialists, Behavior, Speech and Language, Teacher of the Deaf, Home Based Services, Teacher of Deaf/Blind, Audiological services, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, and Assistive Technology.

Legal Consultation:

Our legal counsel supports the district with administering state and federal laws governing special education. Special education legal counsel helps to support legal decision making as district representation through appeals processes. Despite our team's best efforts to resolve family and district IEP disputes, the school system may need to proceed to mediation, pre-conference hearings and/or hearings through the Bureau of

Special Education Appeals in order to find educational programming appropriate for a student. Full legal representation may be warranted through those proceedings.

Translation/Interpreter:

Students and parents receive special education written and verbal communication in their home language as stated in state and federal law.

Home/Hospital Tutoring:

The district must provide tutorial services for students when they are absent for more than 14 consecutive school days or cumulative days due to illness. A physician’s statement requesting home/hospital tutoring must be completed in order for the tutoring process to be initiated with the district.

Assessment Materials:

Special education staff use standardized assessments for initial evaluations and reevaluations to determine eligibility for special education. Once a testing assessment battery is obsolete, there is a two-year window for when it must be replaced.

Contracted Services	FY 23 Budget	FY23 Actual	FY 24 Budget	FY25 Recommended	Difference FY24 to FY 25
Legal Fees	\$41,000	\$18,089	\$45,000	\$46,913	\$1,913
Home/Hospital	\$5,000	\$1,050	\$5,000	\$5,213	\$553
Educational Services	\$82,000	\$28,250	\$82,000	\$85,485	\$3,485
Translations	\$50,000	\$104,387	\$90,000	\$93,985	\$3,985
Evaluations	\$17,500	\$40,930	\$17,500	\$18,244	\$744
Psychological Services	\$50,000	\$22,529	\$50,000	\$52,125	\$2,125
Summer Therapies	\$7,500	\$18,450	\$10,000	\$10,425	\$425
SPED Therapies	\$250,000	\$102,606	\$206,692	\$215,476	\$8,784

Staffing:

Student Services continues to monitor the staffing needs across the district to ensure teams are providing students with the necessary support and the greatest opportunities for independence. We have seen great success with our programs where students are accessing more of their day independently and are making continued progress across all domains of their education. Even with this focused lens, the district continues to experience staffing challenges given the number of unanticipated move-ins students, along with other students who were identified with high levels of academic, behavioral and complex medical needs.

Challenges and Complexity:

1. **Diverse Student Needs:** The student population presents a wide spectrum of needs, ranging from learning differences to behavioral challenges. Catering to this diversity requires a multifaceted, multi-tiered approach, involving specialized resources, individualized education plans, and ongoing support mechanisms.
2. **Legal and Regulatory Compliance:** Special Education is governed by a complex framework of laws and regulations, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Compliance with these legal mandates necessitates meticulous planning, documentation, and adherence to procedural requirements.
3. **Individualized Education Programs (IEPs):** Developing and implementing IEPs for students with disabilities demands careful consideration of their unique strengths, weaknesses, and learning objectives. Crafting effective IEPs requires collaboration among educators, parents, and relevant stakeholders, ensuring alignment with academic standards and instructional best practices.
4. **Resource Allocation:** Meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities entails significant resource allocation, encompassing personnel, funding, assistive technology, and specialized instructional materials. Optimizing resource allocation involves strategic decision-making to maximize the impact of available resources and enhance student outcomes.
5. **Staff Training and Professional Development:** Equipping staff with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to effectively support students with disabilities is paramount. Continuous professional development initiatives, encompassing workshops, and training programs, empower educators to stay up to date on emerging best practices and evidence-based interventions.
6. **Collaboration and Coordination:** Effective collaboration among educators, support staff, administrators, and external agencies is essential for delivering comprehensive services to students with disabilities. Facilitating seamless coordination and communication ensures that students receive support across academic, social, and emotional domains.

Recommendations for 2024/2025 School Year

Through observations, analysis and collaborative conversations with administrators and staff, the following positions will further develop Shrewsbury Public Schools Student Services programs with integrity and consistency.

Recommended New Investments for Fiscal Year 2025

Positions needed to meet increased student need for mandated services:

- 0.5 FTE Elementary Special Education Teacher (\$37,500)
- 1.0 FTE Occupational Therapist (\$75,000)
- 1.0 FTE Speech Language Pathologist (\$75,000)
- 1.0 FTE SHS Adjustment Counselor –Previously funded through ESSER 3 Grant (\$77,000)
- 1.0 FTE SHS Structured Reading Teacher-Adjustment from Tutor to Teacher (\$40,500)*

*Updated mandated need not reflected in the initial Superintendent’s FY25 Budget Recommendation

Positions needed to meet increased frequency and intensity of student behavioral health needs:

- 1.0 FTE Clinical Coordinator (board-certified behavior analyst role position) to be assigned to specialized programs to address to support students with significant behavioral health concerns. (\$90,000)
- 1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher and 1.0 FTE School Adjustment Counselor positions to address clinical and academic support to target social, emotional, and behavioral skill deficits in students. This program will be designed to support students in adjusting to the school environment and developing linguistic skills and foundational social, emotional, and behavioral learning skills to be successful in the least restrictive environment. Students who enter this program access assessment, intensive skill-based treatment, and programming developed by a multidisciplinary team. Students will develop skills essential to stabilize and re-enter the least restrictive learning environment. (\$145,000)*

*This program is based on ongoing analysis of student needs at the elementary level and was not included in the initial Superintendent’s FY25 Budget Recommendation; funding will need to be identified in order to implement. This type of program would provide in-district therapeutic services at a level that currently would require out-of-district placement, potentially saving out-of-district costs

Conclusion:

The realm of Special Education and Student Services is characterized by inherent complexity, driven by the diverse needs of students and the evolving regulatory landscape. Despite these challenges, our district remains committed to fostering an inclusive learning environment where all students can thrive. By leveraging the dedication and expertise of our staff, along with strategic resource allocation and collaborative partnerships, we continue to enhance outcomes for students with disabilities, nurturing their academic, social, and emotional growth.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **V. Curriculum**

MEETING DATE: **03/13/24**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF & STUDENTS AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VI. Policy**

MEETING DATE: **03/13/24**

A. School District Calendar for 2024 -2025 School Year: Vote

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A draft school calendar was presented to the Committee at the meeting on February 28, 2024, with a summary of changes provided by Dr. Sawyer. The draft calendar was posted on the District website for public comment. The Shrewsbury Education Association and Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association officers were consulted. Dr. Sawyer's recommendation for the calendar is unchanged from the one presented on February 28. The memorandum of recommendation from Dr. Sawyer and the proposed school calendar are enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the School Committee vote to approve the proposed 2024-2025 School Year Calendar.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools



Shrewsbury Public Schools

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: **03/13/24**

A. Fiscal Year 2025 Fees & Tuitions: Report & Discussion

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Mr. Girardi will present information for fees related to busing, athletics, music lessons, and preschool tuition. The report is enclosed along with a slide deck detailing bus transportation and sports fees from other districts.

Ms. Isaacson will present information and a recommendation on the Extended School Care program and her report is also enclosed.

Dr. Sawyer will consider feedback from the School Committee and will then make recommendations for potential adjustments for consideration and vote at the School Committee's meeting on March 27, 2024.

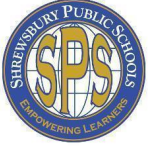
ACTION RECOMMENDED:

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. Christian Girardi, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

Ms. Karen Isaacson, Director of Extended Learning



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Christian Girardi

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

March 13, 2024

To: School Committee

Subj: Fiscal Year 2025 Fee Rate Information for Discussion

Background

Fee information and updates are provided to the School Committee during the annual budget process prior to Dr. Sawyer's fee recommendation and School Committee vote, which is scheduled for March 27, 2024. Setting fees for Fiscal Year 2025 will provide clarity to the overall FY25 financial plan and allow administration to finalize program registration documents and publish rates, affording parents ample time to plan, especially if increases are to be implemented.

Dr. Sawyer's initial FY25 budget plan assumed a "status quo" for fee rates with the understanding that the School Committee votes later in the budget process.

Fee Rate and Total Revenue Information

Fees and tuition fall into two categories:

1. Fees/tuitions that provide partial funding but do not cover the entire cost of services:
 - Bus fees
 - Athletic fees
 - Preschool tuition

The current FY25 Budget recommendation made the following assumption: *fee/tuition levels for busing, athletics, and preschool programs were planned as "status quo"*

2. Fees that cover the entire cost of services since these are auxiliary services provided by the School Department for the convenience of students and families:
 - Extended School Care
 - Music lesson

The current FY25 Budget recommendation made the following assumption: *fees for Extended School Care and Music Lessons may increase to cover expected costs in order to maintain their "self-funding" status*

Fees/ tuitions that provide partial funding but do not cover the entire cost of services

Bus Transportation Fee:

Shrewsbury Public Schools will enter into year two of a five year contract with AA Transportation, with a 6% increase in transportation costs each year over the term of the contract. Bus fees were last adjusted from \$310 in FY20 to \$320 (\$960 family cap) in FY22 (FY21 transportation fees were waived due to the pandemic.)

Bus Fee History									
	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Busing Fee	\$ 250	\$ 275	\$ 275	\$ 300	\$ 310	waived	\$ 320	\$ 320	\$ 320
Total Budgeted Revenue									\$ 740,000

For discussion:

- The current transportation fee for Shrewsbury remains the highest in our region (see accompanying slide deck)
- An increase of \$5 to this fee from \$320 to \$325 would represent a 1.5% increase
- An increase of \$10 to this fee from \$320 to \$330 would represent a 3.0% increase
- Budgeted revenue would be estimated to rise by a commensurate amount, if the fee level does not reach its saturation point and the same number of fees were paid
 - \$740,000 budgeted revenue increased by 1.5% would be \$751,100 (+\$11,100)
 - \$740,000 budgeted revenue increased by 3.0% would be \$762,200 (+\$22,200)

Athletic Fee:

Coaching salary rates will increase by 2.25% per the collective bargaining agreement and busing costs will again rise by 6%. Athletic fees for high school sports were last adjusted in FY23 to the current \$325 fee (\$975 family cap). Students eligible for free or reduced lunch pay \$50/sport (\$150 family cap). Athletic fees for middle school sports were set in FY21 at \$100/sport (\$300 family cap). Students eligible for free or reduced lunch pay \$15/sport (\$45 family cap). Middle school athletic fees have not been adjusted since the program fee's inception.

Athletic Fee History										
	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	Total Budgeted Revenue
High School	\$ 290	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 310	\$ 315	\$ 275	\$ 275	\$ 325	\$ 325	\$ 370,000
Oak Middle						\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 25,000
										\$ 395,000

For discussion:

Shrewsbury High School Athletic Fee

- The total estimated cost for the SHS Athletics program this year is \$1,115,462, so the fee revenue supports about 33% of the cost of the program
- The high school athletic fee is among the highest in the Midland-Wachusett League (see accompanying slide deck)
- An increase of \$5 to the SHS athletic fee from \$325 to \$330 would represent a 1.5% increase
- An increase of \$10 to the SHS athletic fee from \$325 to \$335 would represent a 3.1% increase
- Budgeted revenue for SHS athletics would be estimated to rise by a commensurate amount, if the fee level does not reach its saturation point and the same number of fees were paid
 - \$370,000 budgeted revenue increased by 1.5% would be \$375,550 (+\$5,550)
 - \$370,000 budgeted revenue increased by 3.1% would be \$381,470 (+\$11,470)

Oak Middle School Athletic Fee

- The Oak athletics program has grown substantially over the past few years with the addition of field hockey, softball, baseball, football, spring track, girls soccer, and boys soccer to the longstanding options of cross country, cheerleading, girls basketball, and boys basketball. Its estimated total cost in this current year is approximately \$106,616 (which reflects the costs of coaching stipends, transportation to games, game officials, and some equipment, but not administrative support). This cost is expected to be offset by approximately \$25,000 in athletic fees, supporting about 23% of the program.
- In order to provide more financial support for offsetting coaching stipends, bus costs, and some additional athletic trainer contracted service and a stipend for program/site supervision could be provided, it is recommended that the Oak athletics fee be increased substantially, although keeping it significantly below the SHS athletics fee given that the seasons are shorter with fewer games. Potential increases could be:
 - Increase from \$100 to \$150, a 50% increase that would change the budgeted revenue to \$37,500 (+\$12,500)
 - Increase from \$100 to \$175, a 75% increase that would change the budgeted revenue to \$43,750 (+\$18,750)
 - Increase from \$100 to \$200, a 100% increase that would change the budgeted revenue to \$50,000 (+\$25,000)

- See the accompanying slide deck for a comparison of middle school athletic fees

Preschool Tuition:

Teacher salary rates will increase by 2.25% per the collective bargaining agreement and health insurance cost increases are trending to be in the 8-9% range. The fee for the three days per week program was last adjusted in FY22 to the current \$2,910.

Preschool Fee History									
	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Preschool Tuition (tuition rates vary by program for 3, 4, and 5-day programs. This ex. shows 3 days/wk)	\$ 2,466	\$ 2,663	\$ 2,663	\$ 2,743	\$ 2,825	\$ 2,825	\$ 2,910	\$ 2,910	\$ 2,910
	Total Budgeted Revenue								\$ 425,000

For discussion:

- An increase of 1.5% to the preschool tuition would result in a new total of \$2,954 for a 3-day program (+\$44); budgeted revenue would increase from \$425,000 to \$431,375 (+\$6,375)
- An increase of 3.0% to the preschool tuition would result in a new total of \$2,997 for a 3-day program (+\$87); budgeted revenue would increase from \$425,000 to \$437,750 (+\$12,750)

Fees that cover the entire cost of services since these are auxiliary services provided by the School Department for the benefit of students and families

-Extended School Care:

The Extended School Care Program is a “self-funding” operation in that all costs (salaries, health insurance, supplies etc.) are covered by the tuition fees. For FY25 we are presenting two options for the School Committee to consider; a 5% and an 8% model rate increase to adjust for expenses including projected staff salaries and health insurance in the range of 8-9%. More information is provided in the Extended School Care report and accompanying slide deck submitted separately by Karen Isaacson, Director of Extended Learning.

-Music Lessons:

Music lesson rates were adjusted in FY24 to fully self-fund all costs related to the program. The diagram below shows the current rates in relation to other local music lesson programs. The recommendation is to keep music lesson fees at the current rate for FY25.

	Session length		
	30 min.	45 min.	60 min.
Sudbury Public Schools	\$ 45.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 80.00
Worcester Music Academy	\$ 45.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 75.00
Joy of Music (Worcester)	\$ 42.00	\$ 59.00	\$ 75.00
Apple Tree Arts (Grafton)	\$ 40.87	\$ 59.75	\$ 74.13
Shrewsbury Public Schools- FY24 NEW	\$ 37.00	\$ 55.50	\$ 74.00
Concord-Carlisle Public Schools	\$ 36.00	\$ 53.50	\$ 71.00
Wellesley Public Schools	\$ 34.13	\$ 48.34	\$ 66.67
Shrewsbury Public Schools- Previous	\$ 30.49	\$ 44.07	\$ 57.79
David French (Westboro)	instructors set their own rates		



FY25 Fee Information

Chris Girardi

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

March 13, 2024



Two Categories of Fees/Tuitions

1. Fees/tuitions that provide partial funding but do not cover the entire cost of services:

- Bus Transportation fee
- Athletic fee
- Preschool tuition

The current FY25 Budget recommendation made the following assumption:

**fee/tuition levels for busing, athletics, and preschool programs were planned as “status quo”*

2. Fees that cover the entire cost of services since these are auxiliary services provided by the School Department for the convenience of students and families:

- Extended School Care
- Music lesson

The current FY25 Budget recommendation made the following assumption:

**fees for Extended School Care and Music Lessons may increase to cover expected costs in order to maintain their “self-funding” status*



Bus Transportation Fee

Bus Fee History									
	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Busing Fee	\$ 250	\$ 275	\$ 275	\$ 300	\$ 310	waived	\$ 320	\$ 320	\$ 320
<i>Total Budgeted Revenue</i>									\$ 740,000

\$960 Family Cap for FY24



Bus Transportation Fee Survey (MAPT)

District	Do you charge bus fees?	What is your annual fee?	What is your family cap?	Details (Grades, mileage, misc.)
Berlin-Boylston	No	Free	N/A	
Hudson	No	Free	N/A	Students living less than one mile from school are ineligible for transportation
Marlborough	No	Free	N/A	Students grades 6-12 living in "non-eligible zone" (close proximity to school) are ineligible for transportation
Milford	No	Free		
Millbury	No	Free		
Nashoba	No	Free		
Northboro-Southboro	No	Free	N/A	
Wachusett	No	Free		
Westborough	No	Free	N/A	Students grades 7-12 living less than one mile from school are ineligible for transportation
Worcester Public Schools	No	Free	N/A	N/A
Shrewsbury Public Schools	Yes	\$320	960	K-6, free over 2 miles
Hopkinton	Yes	\$280	\$560	Fee applies to all students grades 7-12
Maynard	Yes	\$270		2nd child and more, \$200 each
Framingham	Yes	\$250	\$500	Fee applies to all students grades K-6 who live 2.0 miles or less from school and all students grades 7-12
Grafton	Yes	\$200	\$400	Fee applies to all students grades 7-12
Natick	Yes	\$200	\$400	Fee applies to all students grades K-6 who live 2.0 miles or less from school and all students grades 7-12
Auburn Public Schools	Yes	\$100	\$250 Family Cap	Grades K-6 under 2 miles from school - All students Grades 7-12 - Fees are waived for Free and Reduced students.

Shrewsbury has the highest bus fee amongst the Assabet Valley Collaborative

Regional school districts are prohibited from charging a fee due to regional transportation state reimbursement



Athletic Fee

Athletic Fee History										
	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	Total Budgeted Revenue
High School	\$ 290	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 310	\$ 315	\$ 275	\$ 275	\$ 325	\$ 325	\$ 370,000
Oak Middle						\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 25,000
										\$ 395,000

SHS Athletics

\$975 Family Cap for FY24

\$50/sport (\$150 Family Cap) for students eligible for Free or Reduced Price lunch

Oak Athletics

\$300 Family Cap for FY24

\$15/sport (\$45 Family Cap) for students eligible for Free or Reduced Price lunch



Mid-Wach League Athletic Fees - High School

School District	Per Sport Fee	Notes
Groton-Dunstable	\$ 400	\$1,200 family cap
Maynard	\$ 400	\$200 per sport for siblings, no cap
Bromfield	\$ 325	this is an average cost for sports (i.e. basketball is \$395, cross country is \$260)
Shrewsbury	\$ 325	\$975 family cap
Tyngsborough	\$ 300	\$300 1st sport/ \$200 2nd sport/ \$100 3rd sport (no cap)
Oakmont	\$ 285	no cap
Tahanto	\$ 250	\$600 family cap
Wachusett	\$ 250	\$350 family cap
Lunenburg	\$ 225	\$400 family cap per season
West Boylston	\$ 225	\$750 family cap
Algonquin	\$ 200	\$900 family cap
Westborough	\$ 200	\$600 family cap
North Middlesex	\$ 190	\$390 for hockey
Nashoba	\$ 175	\$175 1st sport/ \$150 2nd sport/ \$125 3rd sport (\$900 family cap)
Leominster	\$ 150	\$250 for hockey
Shepherd Hill	\$ 150	\$500 family cap
Hudson	\$ 125	\$250 for hockey; no family cap
Fitchburg	\$ 50	no family cap
<i>Districts with no athletic fee</i>		<i>Clinton, Gardner, Murdock, Quabbin, Marlborough</i>



Mid-Wach League Athletic Fees - Middle School

School District	Per Sport Fee	Notes
Bromfield	\$ 300	this is an average cost for sports (i.e. basketbal is \$395, cross country is \$260)
Tahanto	\$ 250	\$600 family cap
North Middlesex	\$ 250	\$600 family cap
Groton-Dunstable	\$ 210	\$1,000 family cap
Maynard	\$ 200	\$100 per additional sport, no cap
Tyngsborough	\$ 200	\$200 1st sport/ \$175 2nd sport/ \$150 3rd sport (no cap)
Westborough	\$ 200	\$600 family cap
Holden	\$ 120	No family cap
Ayer-Shirley	\$ 100	\$500 family cap
Shrewsbury	\$ 100	\$300 family cap
Nashoba	\$ 55	
Northborough	\$ 50	
Hudson	\$ 30	No family cap
<i>Districts with no athletic fee</i>		<i>Clinton, Gardner, Fitchburg, Quabbin, Marlborough, Grafton, Auburn, Millbury</i>



Preschool tuition

Preschool Fee History									
	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Preschool Tuition <i>(tuition rates vary by program for 3, 4, and 5-day programs. This ex. shows 3 days/wk)</i>	\$ 2,466	\$ 2,663	\$ 2,663	\$ 2,743	\$ 2,825	\$ 2,825	\$ 2,910	\$ 2,910	\$ 2,910
	Total Budgeted Revenue								\$ 425,000

**A Massachusetts state-derived income
 “sliding scale” allows for lower
 payments for families with economic
 need**



Preschool tuition survey

DISTRICT	YEARLY TUITION 2 half-day/wk (2.5/hr)	YEARLY TUITION 3 half-day/wk (2.5/hr)	YEARLY TUITION 4 half-day/wk (2.5/hr)	YEARLY TUITION 5 half-day/wk (2.5/hr)	YEARLY TUITION 4 full-day/wk (6/hr)	YEARLY TUITION 4 full-day/wk or 5 full days/wk
**Shrewsbury	\$2,228	\$2,910	\$3,507	\$4,294		
Berlin - Tahanto Reg.	\$1,680	\$2,520				
Bolton - Nashoba Reg.		\$3,170		\$4,800		\$9,600
Boylston - Tahanto Reg.	\$1,680	\$2,520				
Grafton			\$3,000	\$4,000		\$6,500
Hudson			\$2,305			
Marlboro				\$2,500		
Southboro School District			\$3,625		\$7,250	\$9,000
Southboro School District			\$3,625		\$7,250	\$9,000
Wachusett Regional	\$1,200		\$2,400	\$2,950		
Westboro				\$3,600		\$8,800
Lilliput	\$3,280	\$4,920		\$8,200		\$12,300



Music Lessons

- Music lessons are offered on a semester basis with a package of 14 lessons per semester. The fee structure was increased to \$37/ half hour and is as follows:
 - 14 lessons, 30 minutes each, \$518 per semester
 - 14 lessons, 45 minutes each, \$777 per semester
 - 14 lessons, 60 minutes each, \$1,036 per semester
- Fees support 100% of instructor cost
- Parents sign up on a semester basis and agree to pay for the 14 lesson package



Music Fee Rate Survey

	Session length		
	30 min.	45 min.	60 min.
Sudbury Public Schools	\$ 45.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 80.00
Worcester Music Academy	\$ 45.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 75.00
Joy of Music (Worcester)	\$ 42.00	\$ 59.00	\$ 75.00
Apple Tree Arts (Grafton)	\$ 40.87	\$ 59.75	\$ 74.13
Shrewsbury Public Schools- FY24 NEW	\$ 37.00	\$ 55.50	\$ 74.00
Concord-Carlisle Public Schools	\$ 36.00	\$ 53.50	\$ 71.00
Wellesley Public Schools	\$ 34.13	\$ 48.34	\$ 66.67
Shrewsbury Public Schools- Previous	\$ 30.49	\$ 44.07	\$ 57.79
David French (Westboro)	instructors set their own rates		



Next Steps

- Discussion from tonight's presentation
- Receive and process input from the community
- March 27th- Dr. Sawyer will make his recommendation
- March 27th- School Committee will vote on fees so we can prepare written materials for rollout, adjust payment systems where necessary, and communicate to families



3/13/24

To: Shrewsbury School Committee

From: Karen Isaacson, Director of Extended Learning

RE: Extended Learning Programs – Report and Tuition Recommendation

In many ways, the extended school care program has returned to a sense of normalcy after the pandemic. Students have made great strides in rebuilding their social skills, staff have been able to bring back favorite activities and introduce new creative new clubs, and we recently had our first field trips since 2019.

From an operational and financial perspective, we are still struggling to achieve stability in the post-pandemic world. Key factors include:

- Parents continue to work from home and do not need as much child care
- The number of families needing financial assistance continues to rise
- The change in school start and end times increased enrollment in the before-school program, but decreased enrollment after school

This year's tuition is a 13.5% increase over the previous year, and we changed the reduced fee discount from 80% to 60%. While this was a necessary change to keep extended day self-sufficient, it had a significant impact on our most vulnerable families. Tuition more than doubled for these families, and many dropped out or decreased the number of days they enrolled, citing prohibitive costs. This is most evident in the significant drop in the after-school program at Coolidge (23 fewer students).

Enrollment comparison FY23 to FY 24

	22-23	Current
Beal AM	40	54
Beal PM	123	112
Coolidge AM	32	30
Coolidge PM	62	39
Floral AM	23	35
Floral PM	62	53
Paton AM	30	31
Paton PM	54	43
Spring AM	25	28
Spring PM	47	55
Sherwood AM	0	16
Sherwood PM	77	69
AM FTE	150	194
PM FTE	425	371

*Before school programming was added to Sherwood this year when school start time changed from 8:05-8:35.

At the same time, the number of families requesting assistance continues to rise. This year, the number of students attending full-time has decreased, likely due to cost. More students are utilizing the program 2 days a week instead of 5. The following chart shows the recent history of financial assistance and the impact on the program. The percentage of our revenue used to subsidize income eligible families has decreased this year due to the change in discount amount, even as the number of students increases.

School Year	total # students receiving a discount per year	Total amount of subsidy	percentage of revenue	Monthly parent cost after discount	Average monthly enrollment	% students attending full time
2023-2024	144	\$246,507	14%	\$151	86 FTE	75%
2022-2023	134	\$306,000	19%	\$67	105 FTE	85%
2021-2022	79	\$187,000	13%	\$64	65 FTE	90%
2019-2020	70	\$135,000	8%	\$57		

Change for 2024-2025 – State Child Care Vouchers

Extended School Care is in the process of becoming a “funded program” through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Once approved, this will allow us to accept child care vouchers. Parents who qualify for a voucher will pay a daily fee based on their income and family size, and EEC will reimburse us the difference between the parent co-pay and our full fee. In most cases, the families will be paying significantly less for their child care. This will improve accessibility to our program and provide greater equity within the community, while infusing much-needed funds into our operating budget. Additionally, I expect our enrollment will increase as childcare becomes more affordable to families.

We stopped accepting vouchers in 2018 due to the length of time it could take a family to obtain a voucher (over a year) and because of a policy that prohibited us from offering internal discounts at the same time as accepting vouchers. At the time, the number of families receiving financial assistance was small, and we felt we could better serve our community by providing our own discount. As the need for financial aid increased, we did not want to go back to accepting vouchers because the aforementioned restrictions would result in the majority of our families losing their discount, and in effect, losing their child care.

The discount policy has since been dropped by EEC, and an increase in state funding to the voucher program has shortened wait times for families. At the start of the next school year, we will be able to accept a voucher from any family, while continuing to subsidize families who meet our financial guidelines, but do not yet have a voucher.

The requirements for becoming a funded program have changed significantly since 2018, requiring a lengthy application for each of the six sites, initial EEC inspections prior to approval and annual unannounced visits thereafter. Many of the requirements duplicate DESE requirements and SPS procedures, but documentation needs to be compiled separately, adding to the administrative burden. It will be a time-consuming, but worthwhile, process, and we expect to have all sites approved before the end of the school year.

The uncertainty of how many families will be able to get a voucher by September makes next year’s financial planning difficult. There are two categories that qualify families for an immediate voucher – homelessness and DCF custody. In estimating next year’s subsidy, I assumed that all of our current students in those categories will be fully funded by EEC, but for the sake of conservatism, I assumed none of the other families will have a voucher. I expect as the school year progresses, an increasing number of families will receive vouchers and our revenue will gradually increase.

Next year will be a year of transition and I recommend we keep our current financial assistance policy in place for the duration of the school year. In future school years we may want to create new guidelines for how we will support low-income families who wish to enroll but don’t have a voucher.

FY 25 Planning and fee recommendations

For planning purposes, I made the following assumptions

- Enrollment levels will remain the same
- Staffing levels will remain the same
- Employees will get step increases and up to a 3% wage increase
- The number of families requiring financial assistance will remain the same, with DCF and homeless students receiving vouchers
- Health insurance will increase by 9%
- All other expenses will remain the same as FY24
- Strive for a cushion of 3-4% of gross revenue to accommodate unpredictable circumstances.

Option A

5% tuition increase

No cushion

AM & PM tuition	\$1,808,210
Reduced Fee	(\$218,704)
Registration Fees	\$9,000
Other fees	\$9,000
Total Revenue	\$1,607,506
Wages	\$1,193,957
Health Insurance	\$179,850
SELCO	\$50,000
Supplies, Services, Snack	\$106,000
Admin Expense	\$15,000
Professional Development	\$5,000
On-line payment processing	\$56,000
Total Expense	\$1,605,907
Net	\$1,599

Option B

8 % tuition increase

2.6% cushion

AM & PM tuition	\$1,860,192
Reduced Fee	(\$223,107)
Registration Fees	\$9,000
Other fees	\$9,000
Total Revenue	\$1,655,085
Wages	\$1,193,957
Health Insurance	\$179,850
SELCO	\$50,000
Supplies, Services, Snack	\$106,000
Admin Expense	\$15,000
Professional Development	\$5,000
On-line payment processing	\$56,000
Total Expense	\$1,605,907
Net	\$49,178

Unpredictable factors

- Enrollment fluctuations. If we lose 1 FTE per site, staffing levels don't change, but annual revenue would drop by \$22,000
- Number of families who qualify for FRL has increased each year
- Number of students who require 1:1 support is very hard to predict. We strive to make our program inclusive and accessible to all.
- Need for substitutes. I allocate \$20,000 for substitutes each year, but factors like medical leave or parental leave can greatly increase the cost of subs.

Market Rate Survey – Average \$458 per month

Town	program type	monthly tuition 5 days/week	Year
YMCA - Westborough - with transportation from SPS	private	\$720	FY 24
Hopkinton	private	\$602	FY 24
Hopkinton - YMCA	private on site	\$595	FY 24
Acton-Boxborough	public	\$590	FY 24
Shrewsbury Montessori	private	\$575	FY 24
YMCA - Framingham/Natick	private with transp.	\$542	FY 24
Dover-Sherborne	public	\$535	FY 24
Dedham	public	\$525	FY 24
Holliston	public	\$522	FY 23
Franklin	public	\$520	FY 24
Hingham	public	\$520	FY 25
Medford	public	\$500	FY 24
Westborough	public	\$488	FY 24
YMCA - Worcester, Greendale	private	\$486	FY 24
Natick	public	\$467	FY 24
Attleboro	public	\$460	FY 24
Grafton	private - on site	\$459	FY 24
Hopedale	public	\$450	FY 25
YMCA - Westborough - no transportation	private	\$450	FY 24
Marlborough	private on site	\$447	FY 23
Northborough	private on site	\$444	FY 24
State reimbursement rate for subsidized care		\$438	FY 24
Melrose	public	\$429	FY 25
Ashland	public	\$428	FY 24
Southborough	public	\$427	FY 24
Shrewsbury Option B - 8% increase	public	\$409	FY 25
Nashoba Regional	public	\$405	FY 24
Ayer-Shirley	public	\$400	FY 24
Littleton	public	\$400	FY 24
Shrewsbury Option A - 5% increase	public	\$398	FY 25
YMCA - Worcester, Central	private	\$378	FY 24
Framingham	public	\$360	FY 24
Hudson	private on site	\$360	FY 24
West Boylston	private - on site	\$342	FY 24
Berlin Boylston	public	\$315	FY 23
Wilmington	public	\$284	FY 24
Leominster	public	\$270	FY 24

Not only does Shrewsbury remain one of the most affordable local programs, our rates remain significantly lower than the state reimbursement rate. When we begin to accept vouchers, we will only be reimbursed up to our highest daily rate. Many child care programs find it financially difficult to accept vouchers because the reimbursement rate is much lower than their private rate. In Shrewsbury's case, we would not be able to take advantage of the maximum reimbursement.

Recommendation – 8% tuition increase.

Due to the uncertainty of voucher availability and state reimbursement, we feel it is prudent to increase tuition by 8% to provide a greater cushion for unpredictable circumstances. It will be at least six months before we have a sense of the amount of funding we can expect from EEC, and not enough confidence that we will be able to significantly lower our subsidy for FY25.



Karen Isaacson
Director of Extended Learning



Extended School Care 2023-2024

Factors impacting operations

- Many parents continue to work from home and don't need child care
- The change to school start and end times affected this year's enrollment
- The number of students qualifying for financial assistance continues to grow
- The changes to our discount policy has made the cost prohibitive for many families, further decreasing enrollment



Enrollment Comparison

Site	2023-2024	Current	Change
Beal AM	40	54	+14
Beal PM	123	112	-11
Coolidge AM	32	30	-2
Coolidge PM	62	39	-23
Floral AM	23	35	+12
Floral PM	62	53	-9
Paton AM	30	31	+1
Paton PM	54	43	-11
Spring AM	25	28	+3
Spring PM	47	55	+8
Sherwood AM	0	16	+16
Sherwood PM	77	69	-8
Totals	2023-2024	Current	Change
AM FTE	150	194	+44
PM FTE	425	371	-54

History of financial support

Year	# students	% revenue	Parent cost
Current	144	14%	\$151
2022-2023	134	19%	\$67
2021-2022	79	13%	\$64
2019-2020	70	8%	\$57



Child Care Voucher Timeline

Action	Timeline	Completed
Attend required training	December 2023	✓
Receive application portal access	January 2024	✓
Conduct new background checks on all employees	March 2024	
Submit all documentation through portal	April 2024	
Schedule site inspections	May and June 2024	
Contact all families with instructions on how to obtain a voucher	May and June 2024	
Begin accepting vouchers	September 2024	



FY24 Budget Assumptions

- Enrollment holds steady
- Staff will receive an increase of up to 3%, in line with other district positions
 - Health insurance will increase 9%
 - Discretionary spending on supplies and activities will not increase
- A small percentage of parents will have a voucher by September
- Plan for a “cushion” of 3-4% of gross revenue

A tuition increase will be necessary, and two options and a recommendation will be presented.

FY 2025 Option A

5% tuition increase would be necessary to cover all expenses, no money to cover unexpected costs

AM & PM tuition	\$1,808,210
Reduced Fee	(\$218,704)
Registration Fees	\$9,000
Other fees	\$9,000
Total Revenue	\$1,607,506
Wages	\$1,193,957
Health Insurance	\$179,850
SELCO	\$50,000
Supplies, Services, Snack	\$106,000
Admin Expense	\$15,000
Professional Development	\$5,000
On-line payment processing	\$56,000
Total Expense	\$1,605,907
Net	\$1,599



FY 2025

Option B

(Recommended)

8% tuition increase will cover all expenses and provide a 2.5% cushion

AM & PM tuition	\$1,860,192
Reduced Fee	(\$223,107)
Registration Fees	\$9,000
Other fees	\$9,000
Total Revenue	\$1,655,085
Wages	\$1,193,957
Health Insurance	\$179,850
SELCO	\$50,000
Supplies, Services, Snack	\$106,000
Admin Expense	\$15,000
Professional Development	\$5,000
On-line payment processing	\$56,000
Total Expense	\$1,605,907
Net	\$49,178



Monthly tuition for each Option

After School, 5 days per week

	Rate	40% discount	60% discount
Current	\$379	\$227	\$151
5% increase	\$398	\$238	\$159
8% increase	\$409	\$245	\$163



Local Rate Comparison

See complete comparison of over 30 programs in written report

Town/Program	Program Type	Monthly Rate
Westborough YMCA	Private	\$720 w/transport from SPS
Shrews. Montessori	Private	\$575
Hopkinton	Private, in school	\$595
Holliston	Public School	\$522
Marlborough	Private, in school	\$447
Northborough	Public School	\$444
State Reimbursement		\$438
Ashland	Public School	\$428
Southborough	Public School	\$427
Shrewsbury ESC - 8%	Public School	\$409
Shrewsbury ESC – 5%	Public school	\$398
Hudson	Private, in school	\$360
West Boylston	Public School	\$342



Conclusion and Recommendation

Recommendations:

- 8 % tuition increase
- No change to current discount policy this year while voucher system is being re-established



QUESTIONS?





SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

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

MEETING DATE: **03/13/24**

B. Massachusetts School Building Authority Statement of Interest for Potential Addition to Shrewsbury High School: Discussion & Vote

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A PreK-12 Capital Inventory and Improvement Study was undertaken by architectural firm LPA|A in the Spring of 2022 to assess current school facilities capacity, and the highest space priority identified by the study was Shrewsbury High School. The school opened in 2002 and since 2006 its enrollment has exceeded its design capacity. A report from Mr. Girardi is enclosed, and at the meeting a recommendation will be made to submit a Statement of Interest (SOI) for Shrewsbury High School to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for consideration of a potential future project to expand Shrewsbury High School. An SOI is a no-commitment request to the MSBA to consider inviting the Town of Shrewsbury into the process to consider a potential project that would be funded in part by the MSBA. MSBA grants can cover a significant portion of project costs and lessen the tax burden on the local community.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

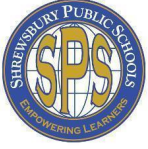
Request a motion that:

Having convened in an open meeting on March 13, 2024, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the School Committee of Shrewsbury Public Schools [Town of Shrewsbury, MA], in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 2024 for Shrewsbury High School located at 75 Cypress Avenue, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future to alleviate persistent severe overcrowding [Priority#2]; to replace and modernize the schools roof and HVAC systems which are near end of life and install new, energy-efficient systems [Priority#5]; to provide an addition to the school so that a full range of programs including technical training via Innovation Pathways Programs and/or Chapter 74 vocational/technical programs [Priority#7]; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town of Shrewsbury to file an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Christian Girardi, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Christian Girardi

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

March 13, 2024

To: School Committee

Subj: Recommendation to vote to submit a Statement of Interest for Shrewsbury High School to the Massachusetts School Building Authority

Summary

This memo outlines a recommendation that the School Committee vote to submit a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for a potential building project for expanding Shrewsbury High School (SHS) to address severe and persistent overcrowding that affects the day-to-day operations of the school and limits the instructional program due to lack of space.

Please note:

- 1) Both the School Committee and Select Board must vote to authorize the submission of an SOI.
- 2) Submission of an SOI does **not** commit the Town of Shrewsbury to any future action on a potential building project.
- 3) If the MSBA issues an invitation for the Town of Shrewsbury to enter their process that could potentially result in shared state and local funding for a project to expand SHS, there would be multiple decision points throughout that process as to whether the town would decide to move forward.
- 4) For the past two school building projects in Shrewsbury that the MSBA jointly funded (Sherwood Middle School and Beal School), the MSBA funded roughly half of the project costs.

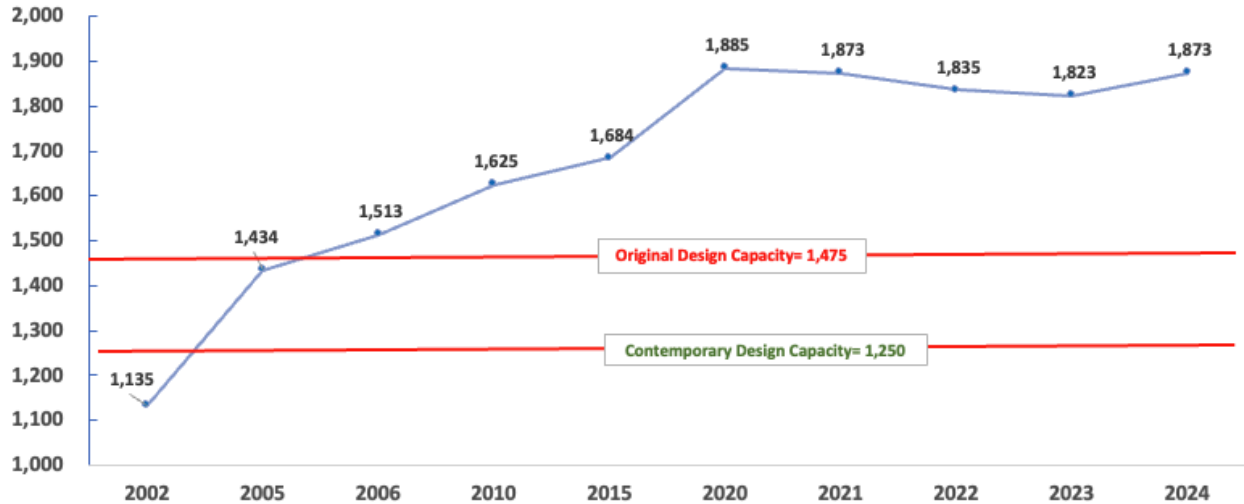
Background

Town Meeting appropriated funding to conduct a [PreK-12 Capital Inventory and Improvement Study](#) as part of the Beal School Project. This comprehensive study was undertaken by architectural firm LPA|A in the Spring of 2022 to assess current school facilities capacity and condition in conjunction with the [McKibben Report](#), the ten-year enrollment projection for each grade level which was completed by McKibben Demographics in March of 2022.

Highest Priority Identified

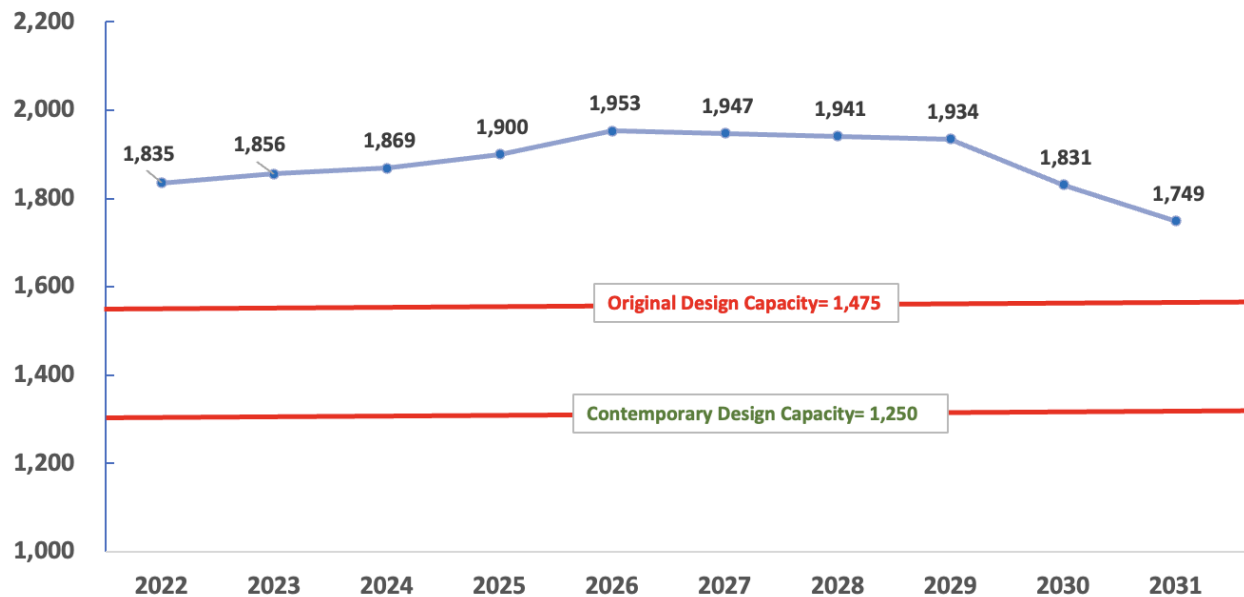
The highest space priority identified by the PreK-12 Capital Inventory and Improvement Study was Shrewsbury High School. The school opened in 2002 and since 2006 its enrollment has exceeded its design capacity. The following graph shows the enrollment growth from the school's opening in 2002 with significant and sustained overcapacity since 2006.

Shrewsbury High School Enrollment History



Shrewsbury High School Enrollment Projection- McKibben Report 10 Year Projection

The ten-year enrollment forecast completed by McKibben Demographics in 2022 projects continued significant and sustained overcrowding.



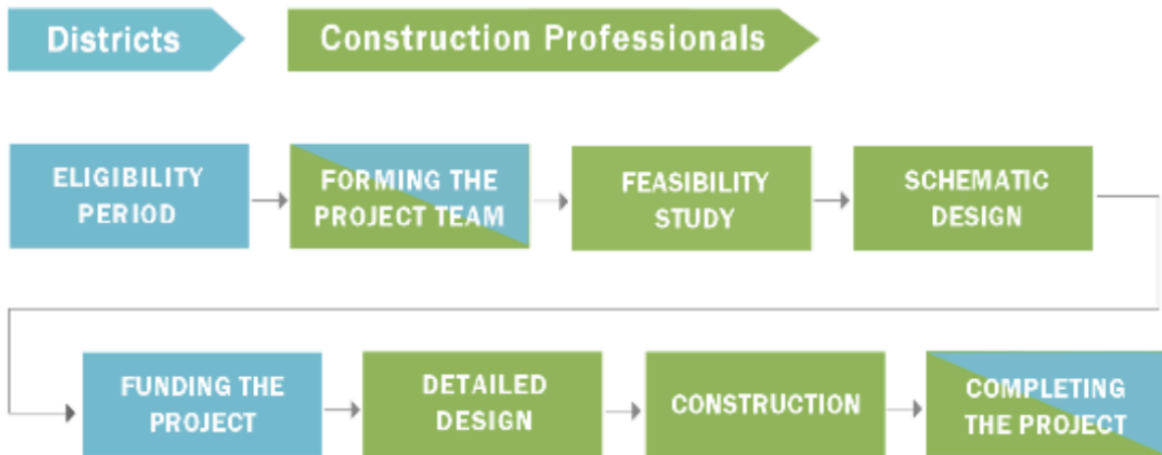
Working with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to Secure Grant Funding

The Massachusetts School Building Authority was formed in 2008 as a result of legislation to provide standardization, industry specialization, construction oversight, and partial funding for public schools. Most schools seek MSBA financial support in their school construction/renovation projects as their grants can cover a significant portion of the costs and lessen the tax burden on the local community.

Working with the MSBA is a highly-regulated process that typically ranges about six years from start to finish for a new school or major renovation or addition. The MSBA building process is outlined in the graph below.

MSBA Building Process

Steps primarily for:



Application Process

The application process begins with a [Statement of Interest \(SOI\)](#) submission. The deadline for districts to submit an SOI for 2024 is **April 12, 2024**.

Applications for funding typically far exceed the MSBA funding capacity so it can take years of repeated applications before being accepted into their pipeline. In 2023, MSBA received 63 Statements of Interest. In December of 2023, MSBA invited 19 projects into the Eligibility Phase of the building process. Shrewsbury High School was one of the 63 projects submitted to MSBA. SHS was one of 30 projects to receive a Senior Study, which included a tour of the facility by MSBA officials and interview with the Shrewsbury Team in October 2023. **For your reference, I encourage you to review the information packet we provided to the MSBA Senior Study team who visited in October by clicking [HERE](#).**

In December 2023, the town received notice from the MSBA that the SHS project had not been recommended as one of the 19 projects to receive an invitation into the Eligibility Period during that cycle. The MSBA did reference that many of the projects that were invited had been submitted for one or more years previously.

The rationale that made Shrewsbury High School the highest priority for potential capital investment according to the LPA|A Capital Inventory and Improvement Study has not changed since a year ago, when both the School Committee and Select Board voted unanimously to submit an SOI. If anything, the pressures related to overcrowding have increased, as the school population this year at the October 1 benchmark was 44 students greater than projected, in large part due to the ongoing issue of incoming 9th graders not having access to Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School as they did in the past (click [HERE](#) for the SHS enrollment report for 2023-2024). The long-term projections illustrated above do not include accounting for the lack of access to vocational technical high school, which in recent history prior to the enrollment policy change for Assabet accounted for 120 to 130 students who were not attending SHS. If added to the 2031 demographer’s projection for 1,749 students, this would result in a projection of 1,869 to 1,879 students at that point, very similar to the current enrollment.

Shrewsbury High School Enrollment Projected vs. Actual for 2023-2024

	Projected 10/1/23	Actual 10/1/23	Difference vs. Projected
Grade 9	468	492	+24
Grade 10	486	508	+22
Grade 11	445	438	-7
Grade 12	430	435	+5
Total	1,829	1,873	+44

Given that severe overcrowding is expected looking forward far into the future, it is recommended that School Committee vote to submit a Statement of Interest to the MSBA again in 2024 for Shrewsbury High School, using the three following priorities:

- **Priority #2:** Severe and persistent overcrowding
- **Priority #5:** Replacement/ modernization of the roof and HVAC systems nearing end-of-life and incorporating new, energy efficient systems
- **Priority #7:** Addition to the building to provide a full range of programs to potentially include some Chapter 74 vocational/ technical programs and/or Innovation Pathways Programs

It should be noted that these priorities **must be considered in order of importance by the MSBA** when making decisions about which projects to invite into their pipeline, according to the

statute that established the MSBA. Other than the structural safety of a building, severe and persistent overcrowding is the greatest priority for their consideration.

If the School Department votes to submit a Statement of Interest, then the following steps would need to occur to complete the process:

- A majority vote of the Select Board to support submitting a Statement of Interest
- Completion of the Statement of Interest application submitted to MSBA by April 12, 2024

*If the School Committee and Select Board choose to submit a Statement of interest, we would not receive a decision from the MSBA as to whether Shrewsbury is invited into the process until December 2024. To view a *potential* project timeline as to when various elements of a project process might take place for an expansion of Shrewsbury High School, click [HERE](#).

Required Votes and Vote Language

The MSBA legal team requires very specific vote language be used in order for each community to submit with their application. Both the School Committee and Select Board must each have majority votes in order to proceed with an application. The recommended vote language for the School Committee is printed below.

Resolved:

Having convened in an open meeting on March 13, 2024, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the School Committee of Shrewsbury Public Schools [Town of Shrewsbury, MA], in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 2024 for Shrewsbury High School located at 75 Cypress Avenue, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future to alleviate persistent severe overcrowding [Priority#2]; to replace and modernize the schools roof and HVAC systems which are near end of life and install new, energy-efficient systems [Priority#5]; to provide an addition to the school so that a full range of programs including technical training via Innovation Pathways Programs and/or Chapter 74 vocational/technical programs [Priority#7]; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town of Shrewsbury to file an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **VIII. Old Business**

MEETING DATE: **03/13/24**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

MEMBERS/STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **IX. New Business**

MEETING DATE: **03/13/24**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

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

MEETING DATE: **03/13/24**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on February 28, 2024, are enclosed.

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee accept the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on February 28, 2024.

STAFF AVAILABLE FOR PRESENTATION:

Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson

Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Present: Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson; Ms. Erin Boucher, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan; Ms. Rachel Sharifipour; Mr. Christian Girardi, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

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

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

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer expressed appreciation to all staff who contributed to the successful execution of the February Vacation Enrichment Program, noted sign ups for the April Vacation Enrichment Program would begin soon, and advised Summer Program sign ups were already open.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Staff Wellness Initiatives: Report

Noting the district's Strategic Commitment to *Enhanced Well-Being of All* and its Strategic Priority to *Promote Student and Staff Wellness*, Dr. Lizotte shared examples of ways Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) is addressing this priority and goal. Her report included information on defining *well-being*, creating a culture of caring in schools, and acknowledging unprecedented levels of stress for educators. Dr. Lizotte detailed recommended action steps for building a systemic and sustainable culture of care; summarized data from staff wellness surveys conducted in June 2023 and January 2024; noted classes offered this winter that are "For Staff, by Staff"; detailed next steps around building and supporting a culture of staff wellness across the district; and noted upcoming offerings that include a workshop for all staff being presented by Sherwood Middle School Assistant Principal Karen Gutekanst in collaboration with Associate Professor of Practice, Human Services & Rehab Studies at Assumption University, Ms. Lea Christo.

In response to questions from the Committee, Dr. Lizotte advised that town-wide partnership programs include a mindfulness and meditation drop-in class on Tuesdays at Town Hall, a Spring Wellness Retreat at Shrewsbury High School, and a Well-Being Challenge from Jessica Gifford at Project Connect in Northampton (funded by West Suburban Health Group). Committee members and Dr. Sawyer

acknowledged the importance of finding ways to include outside groups (e.g. Ms. Christo, PTOs) in conversations around staff stress.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

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

Dr. Sawyer presented a draft of the 2024-2025 School Calendar, noting it took a similar approach to calendars in recent years which are based on recommendations from the 2016 Calendar Committee. Dr. Sawyer addressed aspects of the draft relative to: the start of the school year; a Parent Conference/Professional Development Day on Election Day in November; the return of Kindergarten screening days; religious holidays; “No Homework” dates; the Juneteenth holiday; and the Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples’ Day holiday. Dr. Sawyer advised that the draft calendar would be posted for public viewing/comment in advance of a vote by the Committee in two weeks.

Ms. Heffernan noted she felt there is room for growth around communication to families about religious holidays and “No Homework” dates, and was provided with information on how interested parties can receive calendar updates from the SPS website by subscribing under the *Upcoming Events* section on the homepage.

VII. Finance & Operations

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

Ms. Clouter’s report included information on key areas of budget responsibility; Fiscal Year 2024 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment (CIA) staffing data; fall to winter comparisons of students designated for reading support (based on Star Reading assessment data) by level for Grades K - 8; connecting the budget to the district’s Strategic Priorities, including the Priority to *Ensure High-Quality Teaching and Learning* (e.g. Professional Development over time relative to PreK- Grade 6 Literacy); CIA budget trends over time; the Fiscal Year 2025 proposed budget by category; federal grant funding (FY24); and optimization of other resources (e.g. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education-sponsored partnerships, community support).

Ms. Clouter provided additional information in response to questions from the Committee on Title III Grant Funds (expected to stay level; unsure if they will increase); teacher stipends (for curriculum development, leading Professional Development, and mentoring - 1:1; building-based; and self-paced); and complexities around the pairing of digital and hard copy curriculum resources and the associated pricing.

B. Fiscal Year 2025 Information Technology Budget: Report

In his report, Director of Information Technology Mr. Brian L’Heureux: noted that technology use remains high and cybersecurity demands are increasing, time-sensitive, and complex; described current FY24 Information Technology (IT) staffing and detailed additional personnel being requested (IT Project Manager and IT Network Manager); and described ongoing needs for refreshed technology while noting the gap between his FY25 non-personnel budget request for IT operations (\$2.7M) and the Superintendent’s Initial FY25 Budget Recommendation (\$1.5M). Committee members shared their perspectives in turn and expressed support for the personnel additions. In response to a question from Ms Sharifipour, Mr. L’Heureux shared examples of what might happen on a day in the district if there was no ability to use technology (including disruptions to student absence tracking and general and emergency communications).

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Workshop held on January 31, 2024, and the School Committee Meeting held on February 7, 2024, were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

Ms. Fryc requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session:

A. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) “[t]o comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements” (“Purpose 7”), Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(f), (g) – for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes;

B. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares” (“Purpose 3”) - the Shrewsbury Education Association Units A and/or B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, and/or the Cafeteria Workers Association; and

C. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(2) “to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel” – non-union clerical and support staff and/or administrators. (“Purpose 2”), where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body; and return to Open Session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening. On a motion by Ms. Heffernan, seconded by Ms. Sharifipour, on a roll call vote: Ms. Sharifipour, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Boucher, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:51 pm.

XII. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

Staff Wellness Initiatives Report

Staff Wellness Initiatives Slide Presentation

Memo: Draft 2024-2025 School District Calendar

Draft 2024-2025 School District Calendar
FY25 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment Budget Report
FY25 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment Budget Slide Presentation
FY25 Information Technology Budget Report
FY25 Information Technology Budget Slide Presentation
Set(s) of minutes as referenced above



**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

ITEM NO: **XI. Executive Session**

MEETING DATE: **03/13/24**

- 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**