

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

Present: 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. Barb Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.
Not present: Ms. Sandra Fryc, Chairperson.

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

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

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Ms. Heffernan reported attending Sherwood Middle school's Curriculum Night and expressed appreciation to all parties for their work to make Curriculum Nights an opportunity to learn more about schools in the district.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer expressed appreciation to all contributors associated with the recently held Spirit of Shrewsbury celebration, including students in the Shrewsbury Public Schools RISE Program who hosted a successful booth with merchandise for sale at the Oak Middle School Expo.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Homeless Student Update: Report

In his report on Emergency Homeless Shelter students in the district, Dr. Sawyer provided updates on: current enrollment; additional resources necessary to support students' evolving needs and the associated costs; staffing challenges; estimated state funding; potential targeted programming to support incoming high-needs students; and transportation of some students (currently four) to their District of Origin. Committee members noted the importance of planning for anticipated student needs and of working closely with the state around their commitments to these students, and expressed appreciation for the district's partnership with Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services -SYFS- (one Full-Time Equivalent mental and behavioral health counselor will be contracted through SYFS).

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Transportation Services: Report

Mr. Girardi provided details on: the district's contract with AA Transportation; different transportation services in the district and the associated providers; impacts from start and end time changes at the middle school and high school levels; ridership; average cost versus the bus fee charged; bus registrations by month; and late bus service. The Committee asked about the August bus registration reminder to families (Mr. Girardi acknowledged it yielded success) and suggested beginning work now to establish criteria for determining whether to continue late bus service when federal funding for the service is no longer available.

AA Transportation Division Manager Mr. Robert Chevalier shared his perspective as a vendor with the Committee, noted that AA is making driving opportunities available to drivers at an attractive pay rate, and currently has only two open bus routes. Assistant Finance and Operations Manager Ms. April Yu expressed appreciation for the close working relationship the district enjoys with AA Transportation.

B. Food Services & Student Meal Price: Report & Vote

Ms. Boucher noted that this agenda item would be moved to the October 11, 2023 School Committee meeting.

C. Fiscal Year 2024 Personnel: Report

Ms. Malone summarized talent acquisition goals for the 2023-2024 school year; described efforts to fill Professional Roles and noted the roles that have been difficult to fill; expressed an ongoing need for Day-to-Day Substitutes, ABA Technicians, and Child Specific Assistants; noted new District Leaders for 2023-2024; and provided data on on diversity hires, ratios of new hires/job applicants, and searches conducted and filled to date.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Malone and Dr. Sawyer presented additional information on unlicensed candidates (including utilization of emergency licensure, provisional licensure, and waivers), noted an awareness at the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) on seeking balance relative to staffing diversity and COVID and post-COVID state statutes and protocols, and advised that more flexible protocols around licensure have contributed to diversification of the workforce pipeline.

D. Warehouse Rental Closeout Plan: Update

Noting Shrewsbury Public Schools rented warehouse space for furniture storage during COVID, Mr. Girardi reported the district is creating a plan to end the lease and to dispose of the remaining unwanted stored furniture through a combination of public sale, donations, and trash disposal, per School Committee policy and state law relative to publicly-purchased materials. He provided a proposed timeline for the process going forward that includes a vote by the School Committee at an October meeting on disposal of any remaining items.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

A. Strategic Plan: Update

Noting the district's five-year Strategic Plan comprises three commitments and underlying associated priorities, Dr. Sawyer presented a timeline for work on the Strategic Plan in the current year (year one) for the Committee's review and highlighted some of the action steps proposed for 2023-2024. Committee members expressed support for the timeline, plan, and future work with the *Focused Schools* consultant group. In response to a question from Ms. Heffernan, Dr. Sawyer advised that metrics/goals would be established for the action steps proposed for the current year.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee Meeting held on September 6, 2023, were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

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

For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) "[t]o comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements" ("Purpose 7"), Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(f), (g) – for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes, and for the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) "to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares" ("Purpose 3") - the Shrewsbury Education Association Units A and/or B, the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, and/or the Cafeteria Workers Association. On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Sharifipour, on a roll call vote: Ms. Sharifipour, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; and Ms. Boucher, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:34 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Sharifipour, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Boucher, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

Homeless Student Update Report

Homeless Student Update Slide Presentation

Transportation Services Report

Transportation Services Slide Presentation

FY24 Personnel Report Memo

FY24 Personnel Report Slide Presentation

Warehouse Rental Closeout Plan Report
Strategic Plan Update Memo
Set(s) of minutes as referenced above