



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Joseph M. Sawyer, Ed.D.
Superintendent

May 15, 2019

To: School Committee
From: Joe Sawyer
Re: Recommendation for Appointment of Dr. Jane O. Lizotte as Assistant
Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being

At the February 27 meeting of the School Committee, I presented a proposed agreement between the school district and Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union that would fund a new district leadership position, titled Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being. At your meeting on April 10, you voted to establish this new position, to approve the job description this new role, and to approve the memorandum of understanding with Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union that will provide full funding for the position in its first year while significantly subsidizing the cost in years two through four.

Once the position was approved, the district moved forward with the hiring process. The position was initially posted internally as, given the nature of the role, we are looking for a candidate who meets the qualifications and who also has strong ties to both the Shrewsbury Public Schools and the Shrewsbury community. Dr. Jane O. Lizotte, the current principal of Sherwood Middle School, was the sole internal applicant. In keeping with long established practice, Dr. Lizotte's candidacy was vetted as follows:

- 1) Dr. Lizotte's application materials, qualifications, and licensure status were reviewed by the Director of Human Resources, and then by me.
- 2) Dr. Lizotte participated in a formal interview with scripted questions conducted by a team of representatives of the following stakeholders: parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, principals, and Central Office administrators (see last page for a list of the interview team members).
- 3) Dr. Lizotte met with the combined District Faculty Advisory Committee and District Paraprofessional Advisory Committee, for an unscripted, forum-style interview. These also included officers from the Shrewsbury Education Association and the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association.
- 4) Dr. Lizotte met with the PTO Presidents/Parent Leaders group, also for an unscripted, forum-style interview.
- 5) Dr. Lizotte met with the District Leadership team (principals, assistant principals, department directors, curriculum leaders, Central Office administrators), also for an unscripted, forum-style interview.
- 6) Dr. Lizotte met with the School Committee, also for an unscripted, forum-style interview.

The feedback from these various interviews with stakeholders was extremely positive regarding Dr. Lizotte's suitability for this important new leadership role:

- The feedback from the 17-member interview team during our debrief, both collectively and individually, was very positive regarding Dr. Lizotte's fit for the position. This team included four individuals who would be direct reports.
- Of the 18 teacher representatives on the Faculty Advisory Council, 15 rated her fit for the role as "very favorable" and three "favorable," while all of the six paraprofessional representatives from the Paraprofessional Advisory Council gave a rating of "very favorable."
- All eight of the parent leaders gave Dr. Lizotte a rating of "very favorable."
- Of the 29 district leaders, 26 perceived Dr. Lizotte's candidacy for this role as "very favorable," two as "favorable," and one gave no rating (but comments on the form were positive).
- The feedback forms from the forum interviews also contained a wealth of comments that indicated that there are strong perceptions that Dr. Lizotte's leadership experience and skill set make her an excellent match for this role. Some representative examples are:

- *(Dr. Lizotte's strengths) include her proven track record at Sherwood and as a community member, she cares about Shrewsbury residents, students, and parents, her connections, and her passion for how she would like students to feel and learn.... She is perfect for the position! (Parent leader)*
- *(Dr. Lizotte) has committed herself – educationally, professionally, and personally – to the whole notion of a student's well-being.... Perfect choice! No doubts that she will set a very high standard for this position. (Parent leader)*
- *Dr. Lizotte comes with a wealth of knowledge and background that I feel will help her to be successful in this role. She has many connections and relationships that will be beneficial in this role. (Paraprofessional)*
- *Dr. Lizotte has a strong understanding of staff and students and their needs for focusing on their well-being. She has very strong connections with Shrewsbury community members which is extremely valuable in this position. I have always been so impressed with Dr. Lizotte's leadership and dedication to Shrewsbury Schools and community. She has so many experiences that will positively impact her work in this position. (Teacher)*
- *(Dr. Lizotte is) experienced, committed to the district and its continuous improvement, willing to volunteer innovative ideas, has a passion for social-emotional learning, and is dedicated to students' academic, social, and emotional growth. (Teacher)*
- *Dr. Lizotte has a great variety of experiences and I think her biggest strength is in her capacity to build relationships with ALL people. This is necessary given this new position. She is a great listener and passionate about everyone's well-being – students and staff. (District Leadership Team member)*
- *Dr. Lizotte is anchored in and connected to the Shrewsbury community. She is an experienced and respected leader whose thoughtfulness and caring comes through in her work with students and staff. She has leveraged community connections to benefit Sherwood Middle School....*

Dr. Lizotte is superbly qualified for this role and I believe she will be successful! (District Leadership Team member)

Under [Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 59](#), an appointment of an individual to an assistant superintendent position is by the vote of the School Committee on a candidate recommended by the Superintendent. **I recommend that you vote to appoint Dr. Jane O. Lizotte as Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being effective July 1, 2019**, for the following reasons:

- Dr. Lizotte has served the Shrewsbury Public Schools with great distinction as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal at the elementary and middle school levels for 23 years, and she has a deep knowledge of the district's culture.
- As a leader, Dr. Lizotte has been particularly effective at building a positive culture among students, parents, and staff, with particular attention to the health and well-being of all. In recent years, she has been a leader at the district level with regard to our social and emotional learning initiative and the training of staff in mindfulness-based stress reduction.
- Dr. Lizotte has a strong track record of creating partnerships with businesses and individuals with varied work experiences to provide engaging learning experiences to Sherwood Middle School students.
- Dr. Lizotte's ability to communicate effectively and positively influence the public's perspective were evident in her leadership related to gaining approval for the new Sherwood Middle School building project; further, her leadership from the design stage to the opening of the new Sherwood Middle School demonstrated her ability to successfully lead a major project from concept to implementation.
- Dr. Lizotte was raised in Shrewsbury, is an alumna of Shrewsbury High School, and is a longtime resident of Shrewsbury. The relationships she has built, not only through her work as a school leader, but also through her community leadership, such as founding and leading the highly successful Turkey Trot for the Memory event, will facilitate her work in this role to build community partnerships and cultivate a strong alumni network.
- Dr. Lizotte's commitment to distributed leadership, which she researched for her doctoral dissertation, will be an excellent fit for this new role, as it will be critical to build trust and work through others to accomplish the district's strategic goals for connected learning and the health and well-being of all.
- The hiring process has produced evidence that Dr. Lizotte has extremely strong support to be appointed to this assistant superintendent role from from representatives of parents, teachers, and paraprofessionals, as well as from department directors, curriculum leaders, principals, and Central Office administrators, as noted above. Dr. Lizotte also has outstanding references from four sources from outside the district who specifically address her excellent suitability for this particular leadership role.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation. I am highly confident that Dr. Lizotte will be a highly effective leader in this new district leadership role.

The formal interview team was (in alphabetical order):

Todd Bazydlo, Principal, Shrewsbury High School

Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

Michelle Biscotti, Coordinator of Development & Volunteer Activities

Amy Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Maria Chacharone, Parent, Shrewsbury High School & Oak Middle School

Karen Isaacson, Director of Extended Learning

Christine Jasinski, Parent, Coolidge School

Kathleen Keohane, Coordinator of Development & Volunteer Activities

Jeff Lane, Director of Health, Physical Education, & Family Consumer Sciences

Jeff LaRose, Physical Education Teacher, Oak Middle School

David Lowy, Paraprofessional, Floral Street School & Vice President, Shrewsbury
Paraprofessional Association

Bryan Mabie, Principal, Spring Street School

Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources

Victoria McCarthy, Teacher, Sherwood Middle School & Vice President, Shrewsbury
Education Association

Beth Morin, Health Teacher, Shrewsbury High School

Joe Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools

Mary Simone, General Manager, AC Hotel by Marriott & Chair, Corridor 9/495 Regional
Chamber of Commerce