**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**100 MAPLE AVENUE**

**SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2015**

Present: Mr. John Samia, Chairperson; Ms. Erin Canzano, Secretary; Dr. B. Dale Magee, and Mr. Jon Wensky; Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent; Ms. Barbara Malone, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

Not present: Ms. Sandra Fryc, Vice Chairperson

The meeting was convened at 7:01 PM by Mr. Samia

**I. Public Participation**

None

**II. Chairperson’s Report and Members’ Reports**

Dr. Magee informed the Committee about a seminar he attended on September 12, 2015 sponsored by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees regarding the opioid crisis in Massachusetts. He explained that it was very informative and recommended that the Committee address the issues related to the use of these drugs. He also informed them of an opportunity offered by the presenter, Sheriff Lewis Evangelidis, regarding educating parents and students about the facts.

Mr. Samia explained that the School Committee participated in a tri-board meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee to discuss various issues related to finance, stateaid and education.

**III. Superintendent’s Report**

Dr. Sawyer shared the news that the proposal of a Biotechnology Charter School discussed at the September 9 meeting, which resulted in the Committee sending a letter stating their opposition, was not moved forward by Commissioner Chester.

He also explained that he was very pleased to have had the opportunity, along with Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, Patrick Collins, and Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, Melissa Maguire, to meet with State Representatives Hannah Kane and Kim Ferguson from Holden to discuss Chapter 70 formula funding and funding for special education as it relates to Shrewsbury and how decisions made by the Foundation Budget Commission would affect our program.

Next, Dr. Sawyer shared that the MCAS test results for the district and individual schools would be released the next day. He explained that the traditional MCAS, English language arts, math and science, were held at the 10th grade level and the required science MCAS test was given to the 5th - 8th grade students. He also reminded the community that the Committee opted for all other grades to administer the PARCC exam. He said that only the state level computer based test scores taken by the 5th-8th grade students were available and the paper test results would be released later in the year for the 3rd and 4th grade students.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments**

**A. SHS Student Advisory Committee: Report**

Dr. Sawyer briefly explained that under the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, school districts are required to have a Student Advisory Committee (SAC) consisting of high school students who are elected by the student body. The SAC is required to meet with the School Committee during the year to review various issues of concern to the student body. He said that Mr. Jon Wensky is the School Committee liaison to the SAC for the 2015-2016 school year. SAC members Lindsay Mahowald, Class of 2015; Hari Kumar, Class of 2016; Vikram Pathalam, Class of 2017; Benjamin George, Class of 2018 and Maya McCollum, Class of 2018 presented the report to the School Committee. SAC members shared information and recent updates on SHS events.

Highlights of the presentation included the first day schedule overview, iPad distribution, technology at SHS, and Spirit Week. The SAC members indicated that the distribution of the iPads was flawless but the timing might benefit from a different time next year. They then discussed the transition process, the Student Innovation Team (SIT), successes, the use of Schoology and Notability apps, and areas that need improvement with the technology program rollout. Their presentation ended with a discussion of Spirit Week and the emphasis on building school culture and unity during these events.

Committee members asked SAC a variety of questions that focused on the implementation of iPads including changes in their daily schedule and workload, safety cases and the SIT program.

Dr. Sawyer and Committee members thanked the SAC students for presenting at the meeting.

**V. Curriculum**

None

**VI. Policy**

**A. Bullying Statistics: Annual Report**

Dr. Sawyer started with a brief overview of how the need for this annual report came about, laws and policies that have been established, and the specific definition of bullying, before presenting the annual report regarding the frequency of bullying incidents. Dr. Sawyer stated that for a district the size of Shrewsbury the incidences of bullying are very low. He shared details about the report with Committee members. Dr. Sawyer explained that he was curious that there have not been any reports of cyber bullying. While the district has a strong program for building a positive culture and educating students about digital citizenship, he indicated that he would be following up with administration regarding whether or not these instances are being reported by students.

Committee members asked Dr. Sawyer about reporting methods, and how students are being educated regarding that topic. Dr. Sawyer indicated that all staff members are trained on how to distinguish and handle situations and students are offered numerous opportunities to learn about appropriate behavior.

**VII. Finance and Operations**

**A. Grants: Report & Vote**

Mr. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, and Ms. Elizabeth Callahan, Executive Assistant for Business Services provided the Committee with an update on federal and state grants. They began by explaining the basics of how funding is determined. Ms. Callahan indicated that these “entitlement” or “allocation” grants have very specific requirements and they are typically based on student enrollment and demographic factors. Funds are typically targeted for specific programs, they are audited as part of the annual town and school budget, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requires an end-of-year report. Mr. Collins confirmed that the just over $2 million dollars the district receives in grants are strictly monitored, and feedback on the audits has been extremely favorable due to Ms. Callahan’s work. They shared that based on signals from the state, it is unlikely that the district will receive full day kindergarten grant funds in FY17, and the district will need to plan regarding how to absorb the loss of about $60,000.

Next, Mr. Collins and Ms. Callahan explained the grants in the categories of Special Education, Title I, Title IIA and Title III grants that the district receives and gave a five-year history of money received from these various grants.

Committee members and administration discussed the availability of other entitlement grants and commented about the volatility of Special Education grants. Dr. Sawyer expressed his appreciation for the great work that Ms. Callahan does in her critical role of handling the complexities of the grant process.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, the School Committee members voted unanimously to accept the grant funds allocated to the district for the fiscal year 2017.

**B. School Transportation: Report**

Mr. Collins and Mr. Stephen Rocco, Transportation Safety and Security Coordinator, gave a presentation about the district’s transportation program. Highlights included services offered, contracted providers, and the number of vehicles and routes. They also explained about the contract with AA Transportation, which included rates, driver qualifications and complexities of the job.

Next, Mr. Collins discussed details about the district’s fee based program, which included the registration process and the administrative effort required for registration approval. Mr. Collins noted the desire to move away from the current two-step system and adopt online payments. In support of that, he provided statistics that indicated the two-step process is problematic with many families not completing the second half of the process by submitting their fee in a timely manner. He stated that adopting an online solution would help to reduce the amount of administrative work.

Mr. Collins wrapped up their report with budget information including the district’s costs and state reimbursements with specific reference to the instability of state reimbursements.

Committee members asked a few clarifying questions about the time and cost-saving elements involved with adopting an online system.

**VII. Finance and Operations**

**B. Proposed Fiscal Year 2017 Priorities & Guidelines Report**

Subcommittee member, Ms. Erin Canzano, referred to the draft recommendation prepared by the Fiscal Guidelines subcommittee in regards to budget development for the 2017 fiscal year. She indicated the Priorities section would stay the same. Areas of change appear in the Assumptions section and these include: 1. Estimating level funding of federal and state grants going into the fiscal year, 2. Preparing for the loss of kindergarten funding, 3. Reviewing fee levels for all programs and adjusting as necessary, and 4. Modifying the budget document preparation to align with the best practices inherent in the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) Meritorious Budget Awards Program.

Ms. Canzano indicated that other changes, under the category of Strategic Priorities – Engaging and Challenging all Students, would be the creation of innovative programs that extend beyond the classroom and leveraging the expertise and proximity of higher education institutions and local business enterprises. She also indicated the adjustment of language to clarify the continuation of investments in technology.

Ms. Canzano requested feedback from Committee members and constituents in the community stating that this document would be made available to the public. The Committee would then review the feedback and discuss at the next meeting on October 7, 2015.

**VIII. Old Business**

None

**IX. New Business**

**A. Superintendent’s Goals for 2015-2016: Vote**

Dr. Sawyer presented his goals as superintendent for the 2015-2016 school year. He said that he would continue to work on the same student learning goal, specifically in the area of engaging and challenging all students. He explained that the professional practice goal was new and he commented that he wants to focus on building leadership capacity among the staff. He indicated he would be developing a concrete plan focusing on ways to do this.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the superintendent’s goals for the 2015-2016 school year.

**B. Superintendent’s Goals for 2015-2016: Vote**

**Appoint Representative to Assabet Valley Collaborative: Vote**

Dr. Sawyer shared that each year the School Committee must vote to appoint the district’s representative on the Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC) Board of Directors.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Sawyer, the School Committee voted unanimously to appoint Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer as the Shrewsbury Public Schools’ representative on the Assabet Valley Collaborative Board of Directors.

**X. Approval of Minutes: Vote**

Mr. Samia requested a motion to approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting on September 9, 2015 and the School Committee workshop on August 26, 2015. On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting on September 9, 2015 and the School Committee workshop on August 26, 2015.

**XI. Executive Session**

**A. For the purpose of discussing negotiations with the Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit A**

Mr. Samia requested a motion for the School Committee to adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, where discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body. On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, on a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 8:52pm.

**XII. Information Enclosures**

None

**XIII. Adjournment**

Mr. Samia requested a motion to adjourn the School Committee meeting for September 23, 2015. On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:23 PM. On a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Samia, yes

Respectfully submitted

Kimberlee Cantin, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Bullying Statistics Annual Report and Slide Presentation
2. Grants Report and Slide Presentation
3. School Transportation Report and Slide Presentation
4. Draft Fiscal Year 2017 Priorities & Guidelines
5. Superintendent’s Goals for 2015-2016