

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

**Wednesday, September 21, 2016**

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Dr. Dale Magee, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary; Ms. Erin Canzano; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

Not present: Mr. John Samia, Committee Member; Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources.

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:01 pm.

**I. Public Participation**

None.

**II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports**

None.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Earlier in the day, Dr. Sawyer attended the dedication ceremony of the Shrewsbury Public Library (SPL) and congratulated library staff, the library Board of Trustees, and the SPL Building Committee on the successful opening of the new building. He added that he looked forward to future collaboration between SPL and Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS).

Dr. Sawyer noted that Shrewsbury Public Schools enjoyed a smooth opening to the 2016-17 school year.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

**A. SHS Student Advisory Committee (SAC): Report**

Mr. Andrew Smith, SHS Teacher and Faculty Advisor to the SAC, and Mr. Todd Bazydlo, SHS Principal, were in attendance. Benjamin George, Student, Class of 2018, SAC Chair; Vikram Pathalam, Student, Class of 2017; Mark Bray, Student, Class of 2017; Maya McCollum, Student, Class of 2018; and Prisha Singh, Student, Class of 2019, gave a presentation to the Committee on the school year kickoff, onboarding new and transfer students, and upcoming events at Shrewsbury High School (SHS). SAC members noted that the Mentor Volunteer Program (MVP) and New Entrance Assistance Team (NEAT) did a great job assisting new and transfer students (there were 82 transfer students as of September 20, 2016) at SHS. SAC members noted while these students seemed to be transitioning easily to SHS, the rising student

population has lent itself to busy halls and stairways, a full cafeteria, and some larger class sizes for honors and AP courses.

Dr. Sawyer advised that overall enrollment at SHS was 1,790 students, while the school was built for a student body of 1,700 students, and added that administrators will look at section numbers to assess balance. Dr. Sawyer thanked students for their report, and expressed appreciation to all existing SHS students for creating a culture that makes new and transfer students feel welcome at the school.

### **B. SHS Reporting of Class Rank to Colleges & Universities: Report**

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, Shrewsbury High School; Nga Huynh, Director of School Counseling; and Michael Carpentier, Social Science Teacher, summarized a report from the class rank study group that included information on past and current class rank reporting at SHS, issues with reporting class rank, college admission office use of class rank and views on the importance of class rank, comparable high schools' practice for reporting or not reporting class rank, and student/staff/parent/community perception and understanding on the use of class rank and the benefits of reporting vs. not reporting.

The study group examined a number of reports from the National Association of College Admissions Counseling (NACAC) to reveal national trends, and the overwhelming trend in college admissions was revealed to be the decreasing importance of class rank as an important factor. Based on feedback from students and the Shrewsbury community, the SHS School Council concurred that eliminating class rank would help students. The study group's work illustrated that by eliminating the possibility of class rank being used against students as a cutoff in certain colleges' admissions processes, this should lead to increased opportunities for acceptance to colleges and universities, or to honors or specialized programs within certain colleges and universities, while at the same time showing that not reporting class rank has no negative effects on students' chances of admission.

The team advised that after reviewing current trends in class rank reporting throughout Massachusetts high schools, examining acceptance guidelines at private and public colleges and universities, and gathering student and community feedback, Shrewsbury High School should eliminate the practice of reporting class rank to colleges and universities beginning in the 2016-17 school year. They recommended no change to the current policy of determining the class valedictorian and salutatorian. It was not decided at the present time if SHS would continue to recognize the top 10 students for each class.

Mr. Bazydlo communicated that, as a result of the study group's recommendations and feedback from stakeholders, the decision was made to no longer report class rank to colleges and universities. He noted that reporting class rank did a disservice to students, and that the benefits of not reporting ranking greatly outweighed any associated with the historical precedent of reporting the ranking students. Ms. Fryc noted she thought the change would be beneficial to SHS students. In response to questioning, Mr. Bazydlo noted that information on the policy would be available online.

Dr. Sawyer thanked the group for their research, appreciated the consensus around the conclusions made by the team, and concurred with the school's decision. Dr. Sawyer concurred that the new practice would provide benefits to students without being detrimental.

### **C. Grant from State Treasurer's Financial Education Innovation Fund: Vote**

SHS recently received confirmation of a \$5,000 grant from the Massachusetts State Treasurer's Office to support financial literacy. A grant proposal was submitted by teachers Jean-Marie Johnson and Rebecca Moisan to the Financial Innovation Grant Fund to host an event called "Credit for Life" to better educate high school students on personal finance matters. Mr. Bazydlo advised that the program would roll out to 200 seniors who would receive a "salary" and a list of expenses to work with.

Committee members advised they were glad to see this opportunity being made available to students, and asked clarifying questions on how the funding would be utilized and how the event would be established. Dr. Sawyer noted that this was one example of an opportunity to teach financial literacy to students and recommended a vote to accept the funds.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a \$5,000 grant from the Massachusetts State Treasurer's Office to support financial literacy.

## **V. Curriculum**

### **VI. Policy**

#### **A. Statewide Ballot Question on Charter School Expansion: Discussion**

Dr. Sawyer noted that on November 8, the voters of the Commonwealth will decide whether to approve a citizens' petition, commonly known as a state ballot question, which would enable the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to approve up to 12 additional so-called Commonwealth Charter Schools per year, beyond the limitations that are currently in effect. He advised that there are a variety of viewpoints on the issue and noted that approval of the ballot question would create significant financial risk for Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS).

Dr. Sawyer noted that charter schools have traditionally had a negative financial impact on SPS, and that Question 2 does not change the charter school funding formula, which fails to correct for issues related to overhead costs versus costs associated with individual students. He also advised that if the number of proposed charter schools is less than 12 in a single year, the performance of school districts where charter schools is proposed will not be taken into consideration. As such, while the focus might have been intended initially for underperforming districts, market saturation could lead to fewer charter schools being proposed, which would impact high performing districts like SPS.

Dr. Sawyer noted that there are a number of philosophical arguments - both pro and con - for charter schools, and offered some examples. Dr. Sawyer added that while he is not personally opposed to the concept of charter schools, the financial system poses a risk to SPS if more charter schools are made available, and as such recommended that the Committee vote to oppose Ballot Question 2 at its next meeting.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Collins advised that in FY2016 SPS paid \$923,221 in tuition to Commonwealth Charter Schools for 73 students, at a net cost of \$860,011 after factoring in Charter Tuition Reimbursements and Facilities Aid.

The Committee expressed concern with the funding formula not being addressed or changed in the Question 2, and with the potential for promises around innovation associated with charter schools not being met. It was noted that the public would have two weeks to provide feedback to the Committee in advance of a vote at the School Committee meeting on October 5, 2016.

## **VII. Finance & Operations**

### **A. Transportation: Annual Report**

Mr. Collins and Mr. Stephen Rocco, Transportation, Safety & Security Coordinator, gave a report on transportation that included information on services and contracted providers, vehicles and routes, contract and rates, changes for 2016-17, ridership, state reimbursements, the FY 2017 budget, and future considerations. Changes for 2016-17 included an online payment option, a later registration deadline (June 30 versus June 1), and a fee increase from \$250 to \$275. The online payment option was well-received by parents and Mr. Collins noted that Mr. Eric Bauer, Data Specialist, was recognized recently with a Superintendent's Award for, among other things, his skillful work in setting up the online payment option. Mr. Collins also noted that ridership had increased by 151 students which indicated that there was no price sensitivity regarding the decision making to increase the bus fee. It was also noted that the average cost to transport a student is \$656, which is significantly higher than the \$275 fee charged for ridership. In response to a question from Ms. Fryc, it was noted that while credit cards and checks are accepted for payment, e-checks are not accepted at the present time.

A report that detailed registrations by month noted a spike in registrations in August, which is due to a number of late registrations but is also due to the large number of families who move to Shrewsbury during the summer. Dr. Sawyer advised that it might be helpful to work with local apartment complexes (which have the potential for many families to move in/out) in the summer months to encourage new residents to enroll as soon as they move to Shrewsbury. Dr. Sawyer also thanked Mr. Collins for his work regarding online payment as a way to enhance customer experience; Mr. Rocco for managing the workflow around transportation, AA Transportation, and the bus drivers.

### **B. Video Surveillance Expansion: Vote**

Mr. Collins and Mr. Rocco gave a presentation on video surveillance that included a history of video surveillance at SPS, the current status of equipment and software, recent developments, a

proposed expansion plan, rationale, budget, funding mechanism plans, and an implementation timeline. Shrewsbury High School, Oak and Sherwood Middle Schools, and Parker Road Preschool currently have cameras, and new software was recently purchased that allows formerly stand-alone systems to be consolidated on a common backbone.

The proposed expansion and modernization plan would expand video surveillance to all schools except the Beal Early Childhood Center (which is currently undergoing a Building Committee Review) to deter crime, provide real-time access, and standardize equipment across schools. Two funding plans were described: one option includes a potential up-front purchase through SELCO with a three-year payback, and a second option includes a three-year phased implementation paid directly by the district. For both options, the facility rental revolving fund would pay for secondary school equipment and the Extended School Care revolving fund would pay for elementary school equipment.

Mr. Collins recommended that the School Committee vote to approve the video surveillance expansion and modernization plan and allocate up to a total \$180,000 from the Facility Rental Fund and \$120,000 from the Extended School Care Program to be paid over the next three-years to fund the project. Committee members acknowledged the need for enhanced security in schools. Dr. Sawyer thanked Mr. Collins and Mr. Rocco for their ongoing work on safety and security, and recommended approval of the plan.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the video surveillance expansion and modernization plan and allocate up to a total \$180,000 from the Facility Rental Fund and \$120,000 from the Extended School Care Program to be paid over the next three-years to fund the project.

## **VIII. Old Business**

### **IX. New Business**

#### **A. Superintendent's Interim Goals: Vote**

By mutual agreement, the evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools will change to encompassing the calendar year. In order to make this shift, the evaluation to be done in December 2016 will take into account the time period from June 2016 through December 2016. Dr. Sawyer will presented two interim goals that will go through December:

1. Student Learning Goal -By mid-December 2016, the superintendent will provide evidence that at least 80% of students at Shrewsbury High School will report having an increased understanding of the risks associated with substance abuse.
2. Professional Practice Goal - By mid-December 2016, the superintendent will provide evidence that he has made 100 or more classroom visits to observe teaching and learning.

To meet and measure Goal Two, Dr. Sawyer would try to make an average of ten school visits per week from now through December with principals, and to follow up on these visits with feedback via email. To meet and measure Goal One, Dr. Sawyer would work in concert with

other groups that are focused on this issue, and do an online assessment in December to see if students have a better understanding of the risks associated with substance abuse.

In response to clarifying questions from the Committee, Dr. Sawyer advised that he would get group feedback from the District Leadership Team members regarding his presence in the field as a way to measure value related to the second goal, and that his goals for 2017 evaluation cycle would be presented in January 2017.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Superintendent's interim goals.

#### **X. Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting on September 14, 2016.

#### **XI. Executive Session**

#### **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Student Advisory Report
2. SHS Class Rank Report
3. Class Rank Study Group Slides
4. MA Treasurer Innovation Fund Grant Report
5. Charter School Question 2 Memo
6. Charter School Enrollment & Tuition Report
7. Transportation Report Presentation
8. Video Security Report Presentation
9. Superintendent's Goals Report