

**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SHREWSBURY HIGH SCHOOL - 64 HOLDEN STREET
SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS**

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Dr. Dale Magee, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Erin Canzano; Mr. John Samia; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools. Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary, was not in attendance.

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 thanked Shrewsbury Media Connection and Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) staff for their assistance in broadcasting the meeting from Shrewsbury High School (SHS) on short notice due to a construction incident at the Shrewsbury Town Hall. He noted having attended a project by the 6 Gold Team at Sherwood Middle School that entailed students creating a new menu item to be featured at the Rail Trail Flatbread Co. restaurant in Hudson, MA. Dr. Sawyer congratulated the SHS Speech and Debate Team on their success at the recent Newton South Winter Tournament. Finally he thanked contributors to the Colonial Fund - including Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union who contributed \$5,000 and matched another \$5,000 in donations -and noted that the SHS Educational TV studio was a recent beneficiary of the Colonial Fund, having installed upgraded studio equipment.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Superintendent's State of the District Report

In his annual State of the District Presentation, Dr. Sawyer began by noting how students at SPS are actively engaged in learning (with 88% of students, parents, and educators agreeing on a recent survey that learning experience at SPS is engaging) and are enjoying co-curricular success in areas including Robotics, Speech and Debate, Performing Arts, and Athletics. He went on to address how society's complexity and pace create challenges regarding technology, stress, substance abuse and safety. Dr. Sawyer noted that SPS educators – whom he believes are among the best anywhere – are motivated and student-centered, and this year have had more choice regarding the topics of their own professional development (for which he acknowledged the leadership of Ms. Banios and the Professional Development Committee regarding the offering of an expanded range of Professional Development programs). Regarding facilities, Dr. Sawyer noted that infrastructure is strong overall and that work on the Beal Early Childhood Building project was progressing well, but noted space constraints at the middle and high school levels, as well as space needs across the district for servicing special student populations, namely special education and English language learning programming. Finally, Dr. Sawyer noted that rapidly evolving changes in public education present great opportunities due to the ubiquitous availability of information and diversity of the student population, but added that funding to meet these changes is not keeping pace with the associated costs. Dr. Sawyer closed by acknowledging the hard work done by staff on behalf of students at SPS - much of which is not done in the public eye - and that as a result the evidence indicates that our students continue to enjoy a “world class education.”

Committee members thanked Dr. Sawyer for the report; noted the complexity around mandates, school budgets, and the items that fall under the “umbrella” of education; advised that “performance” and “budget” are not coupled in the realm of education; and noted that the complete State of the District report would be available online at the SPS website.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

A. Student Activity Account Policy Updates: First Reading

Ms. Canzano, Policy Subcommittee Member, noted that School Committee Policies 941- Management of High School Student Activity Account Funds - and 942 - Management of Student Activity Funds (Pre-K-8) - were being recommended for updates in order to align with Massachusetts regulations. Mr. Collins added that Student Activity Funds are comprised of money students pay to participate in school-related activities, and that the policies were being updated to reflect recommendations resulting from an external audit of the Student Activity Funds last fall. Mr. Collins noted that changes to both were in parallel and denoted in red text, and that they addressed issues around interest income and maximum account thresholds.

Dr. Magee noted that he would like verbiage added to the policies noting that they would be reviewed within five years of their last revision, and Dr. Sawyer advised that the language would be added to the policy drafts.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Financial Projections Subcommittee: Report & Discussion

Committee Members Dr. Magee and Mr. Samia are members of the Financial Projections Subcommittee. Dr. Magee gave the presentation, which focused on funding of the School Department Budget. Dr. Magee noted that there are multiple budgets - Town Meeting, Foundation, and Overall Operational - containing some, but not all, overlapping content. He addressed the factors determining State Aid (Chapter 70), noted that it is subject to appropriation by the state of Massachusetts, and advised that it is not keeping up with inflation because the state's formula, updated in 2007 to reflect local community income and property value, deems that Shrewsbury has been receiving more funding towards its foundation budget than it should. Dr. Magee addressed grants, which have been flat for a decade; fees, which have doubled in the last decade; property tax, which is tied to population and commercial growth; limits imposed by Massachusetts' Proposition 2 ½; and noted that most inflationary pressure shifts to the town appropriated budget.

Committee members thanked Dr. Magee for an excellent report, noted its clarity, and commented on how he distilled very complex material into a presentation that was concise and comprehensible. Dr. Sawyer expressed his thanks to Dr. Magee for the presentation, and to the Subcommittee for its work on budget related issues. Mr. Collins noted the importance of long term financial stewardship by the Committee, and acknowledged their willingness to face budget concerns with honest discussion.

VII. Finance & Operations

B. Student Pay Rate for Information Technology Support: Vote

Ms. Malone advised that the current student rate for casual work of \$11.06/hour was not adequate to attract students who have an IT skill set. She asked the Committee to set a rate of \$15.00, which was based on general market rates and would better reflect their skill set and help SPS recruit qualified candidates.

In response to questioning from the Committee, Ms. Malone noted that job opportunities might include doing inventory of technology equipment, or providing additional technology support when staff need to be deployed to multiple sites for things like state testing. Dr. Sawyer recommended a vote to approve the new rate.

On motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to set a pay rate of \$15.00 per hour for college students performing occasional Information Technology-related work for the Shrewsbury Public Schools. Such work could include, but

would not be limited to, assisting with inventory, technical support, organization, labeling, configuration, network tasks, and audio/visual-related tasks.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

A. Performance Evaluation of the Superintendent: Report & Vote

Ms. Fryc began by noting that the timetable for the Superintendent's Performance Evaluation had changed recently so that it would be done at the end of the calendar year going forward, and advised that the current evaluation was for the time period of June -December 2016.

Ms. Fryc advised that Dr. Sawyer achieved "Significant Progress" on his goals:

1. Professional Practice Goal - with 112 school visits; considerable interaction with teachers, staff, and students; and a District Leadership Team survey providing positive data regarding Dr. Sawyer's visibility in schools

2. Student Learning Goal - to increase awareness around the risks associated with substance abuse, Dr. Sawyer met with students and staff, utilized social media for communication, and addressed all SHS students via Morning Announcements, and 70% of students indicated they had an increased understanding.

3. District Improvement - Ms. Fryc noted that complete data would not be available until spring, but based on the information they had, Dr. Sawyer was on track to meeting his goal.

For Instructional Leadership, Standard I, Dr. Sawyer received an overall rating of "Proficient", but earned "Exemplary" ratings in the the *Assessment* and *Data-Informed Decision Making* subcategories. For Management and Operations, Standard II, Dr. Sawyer received an overall rating of "Proficient", with an "Exemplary" rating in the *Fiscal Systems* subcategory. For Family and Community Engagement, Standard III, Dr. Sawyer received an overall rating of "Proficient", with an "Exemplary" rating in the *Communication* subcategory. For Professional Culture, Standard IV, Dr. Sawyer received an overall rating of "Proficient", with "Exemplary" ratings in the *Commitment to High Standards* and *Managing Conflict* subcategories.

Suggestions for ongoing opportunities for improvement include prioritization of needs, continued classroom visits, regular policy subcommittee meetings, and communication protocol.

The Committee expressed its appreciation for all of Dr. Sawyer's work on behalf of the district, and thought it was appropriate to pair his State of the District Report with the Summative Evaluation at one meeting. Members commented on his "grace and professionalism," and noted that we "have the right person" for the position of Superintendent. They noted that while

Shrewsbury is a high-performing district, it is always growing and changing, and as a team reflects the goals and positive tone set by Dr. Sawyer. The written report noted:

The Town of Shrewsbury is fortunate to have Dr. Sawyer as its school superintendent. The district is very successful due to his vision and leadership. Students in Shrewsbury receive an outstanding education; one that is progressive and engaging so that they graduate with the skills needed to be successful. On behalf of the school committee, I would like to thank Dr. Sawyer for his tireless effort and forward thinking vision. The role of superintendent is not an easy job, but one that Dr. Sawyer does extremely well.

In response to the evaluation, Dr. Sawyer acknowledged the work of his Administrative, District Leadership, and Central Office Teams; all SPS staff; the School Committee; other Town department heads; and the parent community, in contributing to the success of SPS. He thanked the Committee, and advised he would take their suggestions under advisement, continue to promote innovation in the district, and work on goals for the next evaluation.

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the performance evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools.

X. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting on December 21, 2016.

XI. Executive Session

Ms. Fryc requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of review, approval, and/or release of executive session minutes. On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Canzano, on a roll call vote: Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes, the Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:27 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Samia, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. State of the District Report
2. State of the District Slide Presentation
3. School Committee Policy 941 Draft
4. School Committee Policy 942 Draft
5. Financial Projections Subcommittee Slide Presentation
6. Student IT Pay Rate Memo
7. Performance Evaluation of the Superintendent Report