

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, March 29, 2017**

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; Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools. Mr. John Samia joined the meeting at 7:39 pm.

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

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:01pm, who noted the passing of student Andrew Donovan and asked for a moment of silence. Andrew was a Shrewsbury student who attended Parker Road Preschool, Beal Early Childhood Center, and Spring Street School during his younger years, and then subsequently attended Perkins School in Watertown and Crotched Mountain School in New Hampshire due to his unique needs.

**I. Public Participation**

None.

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

None.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer noted a number of student accomplishments including:

- *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, the SHS musical. He offered congratulations to the cast, crew, and everyone involved in this spectacular production, and noted that the set, lighting, costumes, choreography, music, singing, and acting were all outstanding.
- Robotics was awarded the Engineering Inspiration award for second straight tournament.
- SHS competition play: On Saturday, March 18th the SHS Festival Play competed in the semi-final round of the METG Drama Festival. They received Excellence

in Set Design: Phoebe Berkeley-Guillion, Excellence in Acting: Sam Brownstein & Michaela Kelly. Although the group did not move on in the festival, the show was well received by students, directors and judges.

- Shrewsbury High School will have the honor of two seniors representing SHS school at the National Association of Music Educators All- East Honor Concert on April 5-8. Johanna Geremia and Akshay Alamuri will both sing in the All-East Honor Choir composed of members from 11 states, Washington DC, and American schools in Europe, and only happens every other year. Dr. Sawyer offered congratulations to Johanna and Akshay on their significant accomplishment.
- Massachusetts State Debate Finals at Acton-Boxborough RHS. Seth Mahowald (Team Captain) and Maya McCollum advanced to the final round of Varsity Public Forum Debate and on a split decision earned 2nd place in the state behind Newton South. The squad of ten, including five novices, also managed to earn the 4th Place Team Sweepstakes award.
- Boys hockey: The SHS Boys Ice Hockey Team won the State Championship after beating Old Rochester Regional 3-1 at the Boston TD Garden.

#### **IV. Time Scheduled Appointments**

##### **A. Student Recognition: SHS Athletics State Champions**

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, SHS Principal; Julia Schaefer, SHS Class of 2017; and Joseph Walton and James Abbott, Assistant Team Captains for the SHS Boys Ice Hockey Team, appeared before the Committee to be recognized as State Champions. Ms. Schaefer was recognized for winning the MIAA gymnastics state individual all-around title, as well as the state individual event titles in both floor exercise and uneven bars. Mr. Walton and Mr. Abbott represented the SHS Boys Ice Hockey Team, who finished the 2016-17 season with an undefeated record of 23-0-1, and won their fourth state Division 3 boys' hockey State Championship. Hockey team members were in attendance, with the exception of those who had conflicts with spring sports, including team captain Matt Ward.

The Committee and Dr. Sawyer congratulated the student athletes on their success, and invited the students to come up to be recognized by the Committee.

#### **V. Curriculum**

None.

#### **VI. Policy**

##### **A. School Choice for 2017-2018 School Year: Vote**

A public hearing was held on School Choice at the School Committee meeting on March 15, 2017. Ms. Fryc advised that there had been no feedback received in response to the public hearing. It was noted that one question was asked about School Choice being an option at a recent PTO meeting. Dr. Sawyer added that the District does get general inquiries about School Choice from interested parties. He reiterated his recommendation from the public hearing that the district refrain from opening any new seats for School Choice for the 2017-2018 school year.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to refrain from opening new seats for inter-district school choice for the 2017-2018 school year.

## **VII. Finance & Operations**

### **A. Fiscal Year 2016 Per Pupil Expenditures: Report**

Mr. Collins' report provided information on Shrewsbury's statistics for Fiscal Year 2016 and comparison data related to per pupil expenditures. The report included information on how the data was derived; who published the data, and when; what types of spending go into the calculations; and numerous data sets that showed how Shrewsbury compares to other communities relative to per pupil expenditures. Mr. Collins noted that Shrewsbury's per pupil spending is below the state average and the state median. Multiple subgroup analyses were provided showing Shrewsbury ranking below the state average in a variety of categories. Mr. Collins noted that Shrewsbury ranks #257 out of 314 school districts for per pupil spending, which is in the bottom 18th percentile, but that Shrewsbury ranks #72 out of 351 Commonwealth communities in income per capita, which is in the top 21st percentile. He concluded by noting that Shrewsbury Public Schools is a comparatively "cost-efficient" organization, and that if the district were spending at the state average per pupil, the budget would have to increase by \$13.4 million [6270.70 pupil FTE x \$2,139].

Mr. Samia entered the meeting at 7:39pm. Committee members noted that they appreciated the transparency of the report, and recommended that Mr. Collins share the presentation with other Town Committees. Dr. Sawyer thanked Mr. Collins for the report, which provided clarity regarding the facts related to our per pupil spending as a valid comparison to other school districts, and illustrates school spending in Shrewsbury relative to other communities based on various factors including financial means.

### **B. Fiscal Year 2018 Budget: Impact of Potential Reductions**

Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Principal, Calvin Coolidge School; Dr. Jane O. Lizotte, Principal, Sherwood Middle School; Dr. Ann M. Jones, Principal, Oak Middle School; Mr. Todd H. Bazydlo, Principal, Shrewsbury High School appeared before the Committee to discuss the impact of potential reductions to the FY18 Budget plan that were presented at the March 15, 2017, School Committee meeting.

Ms. Clouter noted how reductions at Tiers 3-5 would: negatively impact grade four music and health; result in less availability of instructional coaches due to them having to assume some teaching responsibilities; decrease support available for student learning; and increase class sizes. Dr. Lizotte and Dr. Jones addressed changes at the middle school level, noting: cuts to foreign language, music, and drama would negatively impact students' experience; and the loss of team teaching and core content planning time would reduce opportunities for collaborative approaches to planning team projects and events. Mr. Bazydlo advised that at the high school level, the potential reductions would result in increased class sizes, the loss of elective programming, and fewer resources for students' social/emotional health.

Committee members noted that: budget reductions are an ongoing issue, enrollment continues to grow, and it is difficult to bring back programs once they are removed. Dr. Sawyer summarized the budget process, noting that it begins with a proposal for a level-service budget, and evolves over time based on increasingly current fiscal data. He offered responses to two questions often asked about budget. The first is related to why the recent override didn't provide sufficient funding, to which the answer is that the additional funding from the override was allocated exactly as planned, which was mainly to hire teachers to reduce what were then very high class sizes; those teachers continue in the district, but the original override funding doesn't account for ongoing inflationary increases in the School Department budget. The second is related to the idea that money is "found" during the budget process, and the response is that the fiscal picture of the town's budget situation becomes more accurate over time as state and local revenue and cost projections are refined. Sometimes the financial landscape improves, sometimes it does not, particularly in volatile areas such as special education tuitions. The hope is that financial projections will change in a positive way over time.

### **C. Fiscal Year 2018 Budget: Public Hearing**

This public hearing was the second on the Fiscal Year 2018 Budget. Comments from community members, individually or on behalf of groups, included:

- Thanking SPS for being great stewards for students and achieving tremendous results despite being underfunded
- Citing the benefits of music and theater training on the cognitive abilities of students
- Expressing concern that removing the foreign language program at grade 6 sends the wrong message to students about the importance of learning a language
- Noting that cuts targeting theater and music would have a negative impact on students at SHS who thrive in those communities
- Advising that we have a revenue problem, not a spending problem, and that past budget cuts have resulted in "the new norm"
- Hoping the proposed fourth Assistant Principal position at SHS would be funded
- Suggesting structural changes were needed around regionalizing education and utilizing technology
- Noting all Town Department deserve level service funding, and commending all departments on their commitment to achieving great results

## **VIII. Old Business**

### **A. Superintendent's Goals: Vote to Approve**

The Superintendent's Performance Evaluation is based on the completion of a set of goals by the close of the calendar year, and to help refine the goals, Dr. Sawyer sought the Committee's guidance regarding areas of focus they felt would be most beneficial for the district at the meeting on March 15, 2017. Based on their feedback, Dr. Sawyer highlighted two proposed Goals:

1. Student Learning Goal  
By the end of 2017, at least 80% of students in the Class of 2018 will report that they have an improved understanding of how issues related to college financing and debt might affect them in the future.
2. Professional Practice Goal  
Coordinate the creation of a new set of strategic priorities for the school district that will be approved by the School Committee by the end of 2017.

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Superintendent's Goals for the 2017 calendar year.

## **IX. New Business**

None.

## **X. Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting on March 15, 2017.

## **XI. Executive Session**

None.

## **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. FY 2016 Average Per Pupil Expenditure Report
2. FY 2016 Average Per Pupil Expenditure Slide Presentation
3. Superintendent's Goals Memo
4. SHS Boys Ice Hockey Team Roster