

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**December 7, 2016**

Present: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Dr. Dale Magee, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Secretary; 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.

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

The meeting was convened by Ms. Fryc at 7:02 pm.

**I. Public Participation**

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

Dr. Magee reported that the Massachusetts Medical Society passed a resolution on Epi-pens that was co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Academy of Pediatricians and reflected the policy passed by the Shrewsbury School Committee earlier in 2016.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer noted that the Feasibility Study for the Beal Early Childhood Building Project was unanimously approved at the Special Town Meeting held on December 5, 2016, and noted that next steps include hiring a Project Manager and Designer. Dr. Sawyer congratulated the Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Football team on being the Division 2 state runners-up, noted that the Shrewsbury School Journal was delivered to homes the previous week, and encouraged students to follow him on Twitter, which he is using to promote increased awareness around substance abuse.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

**A. Shrewsbury High School Student Advisory Committee (SAC): Report**

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, presented to the Committee, and Mr. Andrew Smith, SHS Teacher and Faculty Advisor to the SAC; and Mr. Todd Bazydlo, SHS Principal, were in attendance.

The students provided information on a variety of issues that were brought up at the student Town Meeting, discussed the results of the SHS mock election, and talked about the work of the Technology Advisory Group. They also highlighted recent activities at SHS, including the Chinese Student Exchange Program, food drive, the Fall Play, and the phenomenal success enjoyed by all Fall sports teams at SHS.

The Committee and Dr. Sawyer thanked the SAC for their work and noted the importance of students having a voice in their community.

## **V. Curriculum**

### **A. Shrewsbury High School Testing: Annual Report**

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, Shrewsbury High School, and Ms. Nga Huynh, Director of School Counseling, Shrewsbury High School, gave a presentation on testing at SHS, and noted that the statistics to be discussed had already been shared with other members of the leadership team. Tests addressed included SATs, ACTs, Subject Tests, PSAT/NMSQT and Advanced Placement (AP). A tremendous amount of data was presented, including information on year to year results and gender differences on exams. It was noted that while mean SAT scores had dropped very slightly from the previous year, our students' scores still placed well above state and national averages.

Mr. Bazydlo advised that SHS would continue to offer affordable SAT prep courses to students, and would work to expand opportunities for AP courses, but noted that space would be a factor in determining the extent of any potential expansion. He added that student participation had increased on the ACT, and that a Redesigned SAT exam would be administered going forward.

The Committee asked clarifying questions on the growing nationwide trend of grade nine students taking AP courses, the availability of information to SHS students regarding which colleges and universities provide college credit for AP courses taken, what schools look for in students' portfolios when standardized test scores are not reported, and the accessibility of college classes to existing SHS seniors. Dr. Sawyer noted that a consortium of colleges was exploring the use electronic portfolios started in grade nine by students, and that the reception so far was mixed. He added that the Naviance software program used by students at SHS might offer information on AP credit at colleges, and Mr. Bazydlo advised that students were very cognizant of which schools provided credit.

Ms. Fryc asked about taking a deeper dive around information related to test scores. Mr. Bazydlo noted they would be looking at analysis from the College Board, and noted that new

metrics for the SAT would be utilized next year with the Redesigned SAT. He also advised that each class of students varies in terms of collective versus focused academic strength.

Dr. Sawyer thanked Mr. Bazydlo and Ms. Nguyen for the detailed report. He noted that the data would be used to strengthen any areas where there might be a need, was indicative of an overall strong performance, and offered assurance that students had access to an academic program needed to be successful.

## **V. Curriculum**

### **B. State Standardized Testing: Annual Report**

Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Michelle Dillon, Oak Middle Science Teacher; and Jennifer Dufault, Oak Middle Math Teacher gave a presentation on state testing that included information on the PARCC and MCAS exams. Principal Ann Jones was in attendance at the meeting but did not present.

Ms. Banios began the presentation by advising that state testing in Massachusetts is in a state of transition. She noted that different exams - PARCC, MCAS - are currently taken across the state, and added that no state averages or item analysis is available for the PARCC exam. Other variables include the testing mode (computer-based or paper-based) and different performance level designations between PARCC and MCAS.

Ms. Dillon provided information on PARCC English Language Arts (ELA) data, and Ms. Dufault reported PARCC Mathematics data; both provided an example of a Released Item. Ms. Banios provided information on MCAS ELA and Mathematics levels, and noted that different comparison districts were used for the PARCC and MCAS results because different school districts chose different exams during the state's transition period. Ms. Dillon presented information on MCAS science results and noted that students were stronger on complex questions than recall questions. When discussing growth scores in ELA and Mathematics, Ms. Banios noted that these are intended to show a student's change in growth from the beginning to the end of the school year. The report also included information on Spring 2017 testing, and changes for the 2018-19 school year.

The Committee asked questions about measuring growth, data accessibility, and the use of technology for online test taking. Ms. Banios noted that while state testing is in transition, we do have other test data and internal measures and assessments that can be utilized in the interim.

Dr. Sawyer noted that Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) has a strong curriculum, strong teachers, and engaged students, and represents a strong socio-economic demographic. He added that doing the right thing educationally doesn't necessarily improve test scores, such as focusing on deeper understanding of science concepts vs. drilling students on content recall to prepare for the Grade 8 science test. He also noted that on the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test, results of which had just been released, Massachusetts was considered as its own country and tied for first in the world in reading, tied for second in the world in

science, and had relatively strong results in math. He went on to say that given the PISA results, and the fact that SPS is among top performing districts in Massachusetts, this is evidence that our students are the beneficiaries of a world class education. Dr. Sawyer added that a recent initiative tasked with determining the skills and knowledge needed for high school students called “Portrait of a Graduate” had garnered over 50 applications from individuals who wanted to be on the working group. He closed by noting that as state testing protocol evolves, it may overlap more and more with SPS’s Strategic Priorities. Finally, he thanked the presenters for their report.

## **VI. Policy**

## **VII. Finance & Operations**

### **A. Enrollment Projections: Annual Report**

Mr. Collins noted that the purpose of the annual enrollment report was to provide information for the next school year so that staffing and classroom numbers can be determined, and to provide long-term information for space planning needs. Mr. Collins provided two sets of enrollment information representing different methodologies utilized by the Town Manager, and by the New England School Development Council (NESDEC), and noted that both show growth for next year. Mr. Collins also presented a third projection provided by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) on K-4 enrollment, and noted that SPS had agreed to use this data in order to continue with the Beal Early Childhood Building Project with MSBA. Mr. Collins advised that the MSBA projection included additional variables, and Dr. Sawyer added that the MSBA projection is conservative in that they set the design number below peak enrollment.

Mr. Collins presented historical information and future projections using the Town Manager and NESDEC data, and noted that actual enrollment for 2016-17 exceeded both predictions. He added that both projections indicate a K-12 enrollment increase for next year, with high school enrollment expected to exceed the design capacity of the building.

Mr. Samia noted that some previous projections of future enrollment decreases did not materialize, and that SPS actually experienced enrollment increases. Dr. Sawyer noted factors that contributed to this, including the changes in the district retaining a greater number of students entering Grade 6, where a previous trend was for many students to leave for charter schools, and this year fewer students leaving the district at the grade 8 to grade 9 transition. He stressed the importance of the Beal Early Childhood Building Project moving forward to address space and enrollment issues at the K-4 level and that the district would continue to be thoughtful in its use of space.

## **VIII. Old Business**

## **IX. New Business**

### **A. Assabet Valley Collaborative: Update**

Dr. Sawyer gave the first of four annual updates on the Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC). He provided a report prepared by AVC Executive Director Cathy Cummins, which contained multiple links to information on legislative updates, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) guidelines, FY16 accomplishments, and current priorities and challenges.

Dr. Sawyer noted that space continues to be an issue for AVC, and advised that relocation options are being investigated, and include the potential for purchase of additional building spaces. He also advised that the quality of programming keeps improving for the high-need students at AVC. There were no questions or comments from the Committee.

## **X. Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting on November 16, 2016, and the minutes of the School Committee meeting on November 9, 2016, **as amended** by replacing the verbiage *Dr. Magee thanked the group for the vast amount of information provided.* with the verbiage *Dr. Magee thanked the district staff for all of their work on the health and environmental report. He also stated that Gale Associates should have anticipated the need for information on the health and environmental effects of the turf fields and that they should consider providing this for their clients in the future.*

## **XI. Executive Session**

Ms. Fryc requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations related to collective bargaining with, and a grievance by, the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, and negotiations related to collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B, where deliberation in an open meeting 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: Mr. Samia, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes, the Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session at 9:03 pm.

## **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Dr. Magee, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Samia, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. NESDEC Enrollment Projection
2. Town Manager's Enrollment Projection
3. Assabet Valley Collaborative 1st School Committee Report
4. Enrollment Projection Presentation Slides
5. Enrollment Projection Report
6. Student Advisory Council Agenda
7. SHS Testing Report
8. SHS Testing Slide Presentation
9. State Testing Report
10. State Testing Slide Presentation