

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

December 21, 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 7:00 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

None.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer advised that he had visited Oak Middle School and observed a variety of active learning experiences including Team 7 Gold's Display Day, which showcased their learning over the course of the semester and provided an opportunity for parents to view students' work. Dr. Sawyer noted that he had been working with faculty and students at Shrewsbury High School (SHS) on the topic of substance abuse prevention and had an opportunity to address all SHS students via their morning announcement. Dr. Sawyer also encouraged meeting viewers to follow him Twitter for more information on this important topic.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A.Beijing Chinese Language School of Massachusetts (MassBCLS): Presentation & Vote to Accept Scholarship Donation

Dr. Weichu [Brian] Xu, MassBCLS School Principal; Sophia Peng, MassBCLS/SHS Student; and Jessica Peng, MassBCLS/SHS Student, gave a brief history of the MassBCLS. Jessica noted support the school had received from the University of Massachusetts, Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS), and the local Chinese Community, and acknowledged SPS as one of the first

districts in MA to offer Mandarin Chinese as a language option for students. Sophia noted that in honor of the long lasting relationship between SPS and MassBCLS, they were making a donation of \$5,000 so that one or two outstanding SPS students each year, for up to ten years, would be awarded a \$500 scholarship.

Dr. Xu acknowledged the efforts of former Superintendent Dr. Anthony Bent to establish the Mandarin Chinese language program at SPS, which gives all SPS students an opportunity to learn the language.

Committee members and Dr. Sawyer thanked Dr. Xu for the donation, noted the strong relationship between SPS and MassBCLS, and acknowledged the efforts of Dr. Bent to establish the Mandarin Chinese language program at SPS. Dr. Sawyer noted that SHS graduates have gone on to succeed in Asian studies and finance programs in college because of their knowledge of Mandarin Chinese, and recommended that the Committee accept the donation.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Samia, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a scholarship donation of \$5,000 from the Beijing Chinese Language School of Massachusetts and allow the Business Office to subsequently coordinate the annual scholarship with the High School Guidance Office.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

B. Shrewsbury High School American Studies Program: Presentation

Matthew Brown, Social Sciences Teacher, Shrewsbury High School; Kelly Yellin, English Teacher, Shrewsbury High School; John Aloisi, Teacher, Social Studies, Shrewsbury High School; Colleen Hall, English Teacher, Shrewsbury High School; Steven Pham, SHS American Studies Student; Grace Foley, SHS American Studies Student; Elizabeth Hight, SHS American Studies Student; Emily Brann, SHS American Studies Student; Noah Juairé (unable to attend), SHS American Studies Student gave a presentation on the “Royal Rumble” American Studies project at SHS. The teachers advised that this project-based course came about via planning they had done during a Professional Development session, requires collaboration between English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies (History) students, and encourages the use of these skills: communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

The students in attendance comprised the winning team, and they advised that they created a skit to present a traditionalist view of women’s rights in the 1920s. They noted that one challenge was having to present a viewpoint that they did not necessarily agree with. Several students also advised that they were initially concerned about the public speaking aspect of the project, but found that they became much more comfortable with time and experience.

Committee members commented on the critical thinking aspect of the project, and noted the importance of the process of the project in addition to the end result. Ms. Banios noted that innovative schools they have observed also balance so-called soft skills like collaboration with content. Dr. Sawyer advised that performing skits and presenting different viewpoints brings

learning to life, and that the knowledge gained would stay with participants. He congratulated students on winning the competition, and invited them up to be recognized by the Committee.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

C. Contract with Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A: Vote to Ratify

Mr. Wensky recused himself from the meeting due to a conflict of interest, and Town Manager Dan Morgado joined the meeting for the vote as by law the Town Manager may vote on collective bargaining agreements. Ms. Fryc and Mr. Samia represented the Committee in negotiations, and were recognized by other Committee members and Dr. Sawyer for working together with the Shrewsbury Education Association (SEA), Ms. Malone, and Mr. Collins to successfully negotiate a contract. Changes from the previous contract, including a 2.0% cost of living increase in each of the three years and the phasing out of sick leave buy-back, were noted, and Mr. Samia advised that the contract was in keeping with SPS' philosophy on attracting and retaining qualified personnel, offering fair compensation that is consistent with the marketplace, and being mindful of community resources. After the vote, Dr. Sawyer expressed his appreciation to all parties involved in the negotiations, and noted the SEA had ratified the contract the prior week by a substantial margin.

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the four Committee members and Mr. Morgado voted unanimously to ratify the contract with the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A per the terms outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

D. Shrewsbury Youth & Family Services Partnership: Report

Mr. Wensky re-entered the meeting. Mr. Morgado left the meeting.

Annamaria Chittim, M.Ed. L.M.H.C - Co-Executive Director, Clinical Services, Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services (SYFS); Justin Mussler - Co-Executive Director, Operations And Development, SYFS; and Thomas M. Kennedy, Chair of the Board, SYFS, addressed the Committee. Mr. Kennedy began by providing a brief overview and history of SYFS, and noted that they enjoy a strong partnership with SPS.

Ms. Chittim addressed the clinical side of SYFS and added that they are currently seeing an increase in the need for services to youth experiencing anxiety and depression. While SYFS has increased their outpatient services, they still have to occasionally ask people to wait for services. Ms. Chittim noted that SYFS enjoys a good relationship with SPS, has Master's level interns helping in schools, and has successfully offered programs at SPS summer school extension programs.

Mr. Mussler discussed the Youth Mental Health First Aid course that is available through SYFS free of charge, and noted that they can offer training to interested individuals in collaboration

with schools, parents, or wherever there is a need. The course teaches participants to recognize mental health issues that fall outside those of those that might be typically experienced in adolescence. Mr. Mussler noted that 200 adults have been trained so far.

Committee members commented on the positive impact of the work done by SYFS on limited resources and asked about how donations can be made to SYFS. Dr. Sawyer acknowledged alarming trends in youth mental health issues and substance abuse; noted that SYFS is a valued partner to our schools and community; and advised that SPS would continue to look for ways to partner with SYFS.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

None.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the School Committee meetings on September 8, 2016 (Workshop) and December 7, 2016.

XI. Executive Session

Ms. Fryc requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of acting on and/or discussing a student residency issue per Policy #621, negotiations related to collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B, and negotiations related to a grievance by the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body. On a motion by Mr. Samia, seconded by Ms. Canzano, 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 8:15 pm.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Samia, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 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. Memo on Beijing Chinese Language School of MA donation
2. SHS American Studies Project Directions
3. SHS American Studies Project Rubrics
4. Memorandum of Agreement for SEA Unit A
5. Memo on SEA Negotiations
6. Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services Annual Report 2015-16