

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Present: Dr. Dale Magee, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Sandy Fryc, Secretary; Ms. Erin Canzano; Mr. Jason Palitsch; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, 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 Dr. Magee at 7:01 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Mr. Wensky congratulated students, faculty, and staff on a successful holiday concert at Shrewsbury High School (SHS) the previous evening.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer congratulated students, faculty, and staff on a successful holiday concert at Shrewsbury High School (SHS); noted the Lego Robotics Team recently hosted a successful middle school "MindStorm Mayhem" tournament; thanked the Shrewsbury Fire Department for visiting the Little Colonials Preschool to talk about fire safety; noted SPS students throughout the district participated in the "Hour of Code" national computer programming education initiative; and acknowledged the ongoing success of the Campaign for Shrewsbury Athletic Fields.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. Profile of a Graduate: Revised Draft for Review & Discussion

Dr. Sawyer began his presentation on *Portrait of a Graduate* - a vision of what the district wants students to be by the time they graduate that will inform where we are going as a district - with a history of the project dating back to January 2017. He advised that input was recently solicited on the initial working draft of *Portrait of a Graduate* (presented to the Committee in May 2017) through PTO meetings, an all school council meeting, and an online survey, and that the revised draft exhibited a strong level of agreement with the content in the working draft. Dr. Sawyer described the six categories - Global Citizenship & Engagement; Collaboration & Communication; Resilience & Focus; Innovation; Critical Thinking & Content Mastery; and Leadership - and noted the changes in language from the working to the updated draft, including the addition of verbiage around good decision making in the Critical Thinking category. He concluded by discussing next steps, noting the Committee would have an opportunity to formally adopt the draft at their meeting on December 20th.

Committee members thanked all participants in the process to develop *Portrait of a Graduate*, commended it for distilling a lot of important information to its essential elements, and noted that in addition to defining a vision for the district, it was an optimistic document that would assist in providing benchmarking going forward.

B. Five-Year Strategic Priorities & Goals: Draft for Review & Discussion

Dr. Sawyer began his presentation on proposed strategic priorities and goals for the district for the next five years (2018-2022) by noting they had been informed by the previous strategies, input and perspectives from multiple entities, and data from the Thoughtexchange online survey given to parents, community members, and staff. He went on to provide a detailed description of the four priorities being recommended that included details on the specific goals associated with each: Space & Resources to Support Effective Learning; Learning Environments Where Everyone's Success Matters; Enhanced Well-Being of All; and Connected Learning for a Complex World. Dr. Sawyer noted that next steps in the process included posting the information for review and getting feedback in advance of a vote by the Committee to adopt the Strategic Priorities and associated goals at their meeting on December 20th.

Committee members noted the draft was bold and ambitious, but still attainable; recognized the importance of community partnerships; addressed tuition-free, full-day kindergarten; was inclusive; and noted the importance of adequate space, with Dr. Magee adding that the current demand for vocational training was greater than the supply of available space and resources.

V. Curriculum

A. SHS Testing Results: Annual Report

Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Principal, and Ms. Nga Huynh, Director of School Counseling, Shrewsbury High School (SHS), provided information on the following standardized tests in their report: SAT (noting SHS students had higher combined mean scores than their state or national peers,

and had a 91% participation rate); Subject tests (SHS performed well versus state and national scores with Chemistry being an exception): PSAT/NMSQT; ACT (2017 saw higher scores and lower participation); and Advanced Placement - AP (97% of students taking the exams were in Grades 11 and 12; 92% of scores were 3 or better; SHS outperformed their state and national peers in Chemistry; overall scores trended very slightly down). They went on to discuss the information included in SHS's school profile that is provided to college admissions, and to advise regarding how SHS would work to maintain and improve student scores on the different tests going forward.

Committee members asked a number of clarifying questions about the various exams and the data associated with them, and noted the difference in student performance on the AP and SAT subject tests in Chemistry. Ms. Huynh responded that they are very different tests in terms of the level of information being looked at, and advised that it was a small population of students -14- that took the subject test. Dr. Sawyer cautioned against overinterpreting one year of data for a small subset of students (14) in a national pool of high-achieving students, and cited the high AP scores SHS students achieved in Chemistry. Dr. Sawyer later noted he felt the results for all the standardized tests indicate that the overall academic program at SHS is healthy.

B. State Testing: Annual Report

Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment began her presentation by noting that 2017 was a transition year, with some students taking "legacy" MCAS exams and some taking "Next-Generation" MCAS exams (newer, more rigorous assessments). Having been administered for the first time in the spring, this made 2017 a baseline year for the *Next-Generation* exams. Ms. Clouter described the new Achievement Level designations for the *Next-Generation* exams and the rationale for the changes. Ms. Clouter also noted the challenges of interpreting results in a year of transition. Prior to giving a very detailed district overview, Ms. Clouter described *achievement* versus *growth* and defined student growth percentiles (SGP), noting the state defines moderate (or expected) growth to be between the 40-60 percentile. In her overview, Ms. Clouter provided district testing results as applicable for Science and Technology/Engineering, English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics at different grade levels and for High Needs Subgroups. For *legacy* tests, data was provided to show how SPS students fared relative to other districts in 2017; how they compared within the district from 2016 to 2017; and the percentage of SPS students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Comparable District Comparisons. For *Next-Generation* tests, data was provided to illustrate how SPS students fared relative to other districts in 2017, and to show the percentage of SPS students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Comparable District Comparisons.

Ms. Clouter noted the challenges of comparing districts, and discussed how to use the data provided going forward. She added that with 2017 establishing a new baseline and since participation and graduation rates remained high in Shrewsbury last year, the current district accountability level is "No Level."

Committee members asked clarifying questions and noted challenges associated with establishing a new baseline, doing accurate comparisons, and tracking students who don't fall into easily identifiable subgroups. They felt the overall results presented were a good news story, citing elementary math as a standout category, and noted time would be needed to see year to year trends. Dr. Sawyer cautioned that regarding continuous improvements, it was critical to look at improvements in curriculum and overall practices in addition to test scores.

VI. Policy

None.

VII. Finance & Operations

None.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Approval of Minutes

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes of the School Committee meeting on November 29, 2017 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

None.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Portrait of a Graduate Updated Draft
2. Portrait of a Graduate Slides
3. Memo from Superintendent Re: Strategic Priorities Draft
4. Strategic Priorities: Definition & Checklist
5. Strategic Priorities Draft
6. Strategic Priorities Draft Slides
7. SHS Testing Report
8. SHS Testing Slides
9. State Testing Report
10. State Testing Slides
11. Set(s) of Minutes as Referenced Above
- 12.