

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, December 20, 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**

Dr. Magee noted that a new episode of School Talk was recently made available online for viewing which features Ms. Meg Belsito, Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer noted that The Shrewsbury High School Performing Arts Department sponsored an event featuring Shrewsbury High (SHS) school alumnus and Broadway performer Catherine Brunell on December 16th to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the SHS musical. Ms. Brunell performed with students in this spring's SHS production of *All Shook Up*. He also congratulated the SHS Speech and Debate team on their First Place finish at the Holly Festival in Natick, noting team member Maya McCollum was the first participant to ever win all five events in the Pentathlon competition.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

### **A. Campaign for Shrewsbury Athletic Fields: Vote to Accept Gifts**

Dr. Magee noted that in accordance with School Committee Policy 912: Sponsorship & Advertising, sponsorships involving an amount greater than \$5,000 must be approved by the School Committee, then listed the names of donors and the amount of their gifts. Mr. Collins advised that The Campaign for Shrewsbury Athletic Fields has already raised over \$1 million which is a great accomplishment for a public school fundraising campaign, and listed ways that interested individuals can contribute to the campaign going forward.

The Committee thanked donors for their contributions. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a \$5,000 gift from John Duquette, a \$5,000 gift from Matt and Laurie Hogan, a \$5,000 gift from Matthew O'Connor, a \$5,000 gift from Greg Steinberg and Kristin Koe, a \$10,000 gift from Avidia Bank, a \$10,000 gift from Richard and Alison Ricker, and a \$50,000 gift from the Shrewsbury High School Boosters, for the athletic field project at Shrewsbury High School.

### **B. Sidewalk Math Program at Coolidge School: Student Presentation**

Ms. Amy B. Clouter; Mrs. Patricia Broszeit, Teacher, Calvin Coolidge School; Mrs. Katherine Mills, Teacher, Calvin Coolidge School; Mrs. Tiffany Ostrander, Interim Principal, Calvin Coolidge School; and Calvin Coolidge students Jaxson Decoff, Jack Perna, Sofia Singh, Donald Chen, Arjun Rajan, and Abigail Thompson, gave a presentation to the Committee on the Sidewalk Math program by demonstrating how students use colorful rugs to explore number relationships in a “hands on” way.

Ms. Clouter gave thanks to Professor Martha Barry McKenna (a Shrewsbury resident who was in attendance at the meeting), whose outreach gave students and teachers at Coolidge School the opportunity to join Lesley University's Sidewalk Math Collaborative Inquiry Project, a joint initiative involving 20 Kindergarten teachers across Massachusetts that studies creative approaches to developing students' number sense and counting skills. The Committee asked clarifying questions, and were advised that because students enjoyed the activities, they were more engaged with the process and wanted to participate. The students were invited up to be recognized by the Committee and were presented with certificates.

### **C. Thoughtexchange Survey Data: Report**

Dr. Sawyer described how feedback from the online Thoughtexchange survey (by way of two exchanges - student and district-wide) was used to inform the *Portrait of a Shrewsbury*

*Graduate* and the Five-Year Strategic Priorities & Goals drafts being voted on later in the meeting, and introduced Kyle Empringham, Service Team Lead, Thoughtexchange, who presented data from the survey to the Committee via live video conference.

Mr. Empringham gave a high-level presentation which began with an overview of the project that noted participation, participation demographics, the steps involved, and the four questions comprising both exchanges. Mr. Empringham described how thoughts provided in response to the four questions were sorted into themes and sub-themes, and noted how they related to the proposed *Portrait of a Shrewsbury Graduate* and the Five-Year Strategic Priorities & Goals as well as the district's past (2012-2016) Strategic Priorities.

In response to questioning from the Committee, Dr. Sawyer advised that raw data from the survey could be looked at in detail by individual schools, by theme. It was noted that Thoughtexchange would be putting the data on a public facing website that could be accessed via the SPS website. The Committee noted strong participation in the survey relative to other opportunities for community input (public forums, for example), and both Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Empringham noted the high quality of the commentary from students, adding that very few flags were needed for inappropriate content.

## **V. Curriculum**

None.

## **VI. Policy**

### **A. Portrait of a Shrewsbury Graduate: Discussion & Vote**

Dr. Magee provided a brief history of the process used to develop the *Portrait of a Graduate* (the characteristics and skills SPS would like students to develop during their preschool through high school experience), noting that an updated draft was presented to the School Committee meeting held on December 6, 2017. He added that one small change was made with the addition of the words "Demonstrate curiosity" to a bullet in the *Critical Thinking & Content Mastery* section:

- *Demonstrate curiosity and identify, define, and solve authentic problems and essential questions*

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the attached draft of the *Portrait of a Shrewsbury Graduate*.

### **B. Five-Year Strategic Priorities & Goals: Discussion & Vote**

Dr. Magee noted that some modifications had been made to the Five-Year Strategic Priorities & Goals draft that was presented to the Committee at their meeting on December 6, 2017, with the additions of **(in bold)**:

- Secure the necessary resources for a high quality educational program:
  - **Further educate the community regarding the costs and benefits of a high performance school system**

Connected learning for a complex world

- **Provide opportunities that help students develop independence after graduation, including exposure to career choices and development of skills in financial literacy**

Committee members advised that the document was comprehensive but flexible; provided a roadmap for the future; was active (not passive); and reflects the district's commitment to high standards even when resources are spare. It was noted that goals around financial literacy were relevant to decision-making in the district as well, and that cost/benefit analyses would come into play when looking at potential future initiatives like free Full-Day Kindergarten for all students in the district.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the draft of the 2018-2022 Strategic Priorities & Goals as presented.

## **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 December 6, 2017 were accepted as distributed.

## **XI. Executive Session**

### **A. For the purpose of discussing collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury Paraprofessionals Association**

Dr. Magee requested a motion to adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining with the Shrewsbury Paraprofessionals Association where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body, and

to review Executive Session minutes, noting the Committee would reconvene to open session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening. On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, on a roll call vote: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Dr. Magee, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 8:16 pm.

## **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Jason Palitsch, seconded by Erin Canzano, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Slides for Gifts
2. Sidewalk Math Report
3. Sidewalk Math Slides
4. Thoughtexchange Background Information Presentation
5. Portrait of a Graduate Final Draft
6. Strategic Priorities & Goals Final Draft
7. Set(s) of Minutes Referenced Above