

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

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, October 25, 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 7:00 pm.

I. Public Participation

None.

II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports

Mr. Wensky thanked all parties responsible for bringing nationally recognized motivational speaker Chad Hymas to Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS), and thanked donors to the Colonial Fund, which provided funding for his visit. He also congratulated Shrewsbury High School's (SHS) Speech and Debate Team for placing first at the recent tournament in Revere, MA.

Mr. Palitsch noted that SCAPE (Shrewsbury Coalition for Addiction Prevention and Education) is hosting, and State Representative Hannah Kane is sponsoring, a presentation by Dr. Ruth Potee on Thursday, November 16th at 7pm in the Shrewsbury High School auditorium. Dr. Potee will address adolescent brain development and its impact on teen risk taking, including alcohol and substance abuse.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Sawyer advised that: the Colonial Fund allows funding for opportunities that fall outside of the operating budget, such as Mr. Hymas's presentations, and he acknowledged Ms. Clouter's work in securing Mr. Hymas's visit to SPS; the Unified Basketball Team at SHS has its last game on November 6 at SHS; the School Committee and SPS leadership team would host a

public forum on Wednesday, November 1, at 7 pm at Shrewsbury High School to discuss what priorities our schools should focus on over the next five years; approximately 40 SPS staff attended a local conference on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL); and the Massachusetts Computer Using Educators Technology Conference was taking place this week, with both SPS students and staff making presentations there.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:

A. SHS Student Advisory Committee: Report

Benjamin George, Student, Class of 2018, SAC Chair; Maya McCollum, Student, Class of 2018; Erica Hanlon, Student, Class of 2019; Paulina Hruskoci, Student, Class of 2019; and Prisha Singh, Student, Class of 2019 (Mr. Andrew Smith, SHS Teacher and Faculty Advisor to the SAC was in attendance; Mr. Wensky is the School Committee liaison) gave the presentation. They addressed a growing student population and some resultant challenges, new opportunities at SHS (like the Colonial Way Experience held prior to a football game), and recent events held to promote school spirit.

In response to questioning from the Committee, SAC advised that Zaahah software functions similarly to Schoology, but provides a platform for just extracurricular activities. While there have been issues with iPad use, and Zaahah requires students to request/be accepted by a club, overall response has been positive. Regarding crowding, Mr. Todd Bazydlo, SHS Principal, advised that physically, SHS was experiencing its largest historical enrollment, with 1832 students attending a school designed for a student body of 1475. Regarding students' inability to take a second science course, which was due in part to software technical issues, Mr. Bazydlo noted that this was being addressed by manually slotting students who had a study period into a second science class if available in the fall.

B. Beal Early Childhood Center Building Project: Grade Configuration Recommendation & Vote

Dr. Sawyer began with a brief summary to-date of the Beal Building Project, noting it must incorporate one of two different types of grade configurations: a Kindergarten and Grade 1 school designed for 750 students, or a Kindergarten through Grade 4 school designed for 790 students. Advising that the project would have to address long term needs, and that a School Committee vote on a recommended grade configuration was necessary to advance the project, Dr. Sawyer made his recommendation:

That the School Committee vote to establish a Kindergarten through Grade 4 grade configuration for all elementary schools in the Shrewsbury Public Schools, to take effect if and when sufficient space is made available through construction of additional classrooms through the Beal building project.

Dr. Sawyer went on to summarize themes from feedback provided on surveys and at two public forums, and provided a detailed rationale for his grade configuration recommendation. Ms. Clouter addressed educational considerations for the choice, noting research does not show any grade configuration to be superior to others regarding educational outcomes, but that research indicates that transitions between schools can compromise student achievement. Mr. Collins addressed transportation considerations, noting data strongly suggests that the Kindergarten-Grade 4 model would be significantly more cost effective, and would lead to shorter rides times for students and more efficient use of bus assets.

All School Committee members voiced their support for Dr. Sawyer's recommendation, citing the thoroughness of the process, feedback received from the community, supportive educational research, and logistical and transportation considerations.

On a motion by Mr Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to establish a Kindergarten through Grade 4 grade configuration for all elementary schools in the Shrewsbury Public Schools, to take effect if and when sufficient space is made available through construction of additional classrooms through the Beal building project.

C. SHS Class of 2017 Future Plans: Report

Mr. Bazydlo and Ms. Nga Huynh, Director of School Counseling, Shrewsbury High School, gave a report on the future plans of the SHS Class of 2017 that included information on public and private 2- and 4-year matriculations (86% attended 4-year colleges), future plans by gender (210 females; 188 males), a geographic breakdown (84% attended colleges and universities in New England), selectivity (40% attended schools rated "Competitive"), statistics for students receiving special education services (47% attended 4-year and 47% attended 2-year), and highlights from the 2017 Exit Survey with information (students noted the importance of individual meetings with school counselors, and of location in determining where they would go to school).

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Huynh addressed capacity and timing considerations for scheduling Application Boot Camp sections at SHS, noted taking a gap year was not a trend at SHS, advised that a list of colleges still accepting students was available in June to the 4% of students who were "Undecided" in the spring, and advised that college preparation starts for students in the spring of Junior year at SHS. Dr. Magee expressed a desire for information tracking outcomes for students after two or more years, and asked about opportunities for vocational students. Mr. Bazydlo advised that SHS offers a speaker series for students that features alumni and community members talking about their work in various areas including food service and construction.

D. Student Enrollment & Class Sizes: Report

Mr. Bazydlo and Mr. Gregory Nevader, Assistant Principal, Shrewsbury High School, presented a report on class size at SHS noting: overall enrollment was at an all time high of 1832 (adding

this is the largest single town enrollment in Worcester County); 88 students registered during the summer; diversity at SHS; illustrating building capacity (average use is 96% of available rooms/total rooms in that hallway); percent of teachers in two or more classrooms (25-83%); student-teacher ratios; pre- and post-override teacher caseloads and class enrollments; percent of academic sections with 27 or more students (6%); and counselor caseloads. Mr. Bazydlo added that overall student-teacher ratios were stable because of 3.0 FTEs added last year (except in math courses); counselor cases were trending upward post-override; and two physical spaces (labs) at SHS had been reallocated to allow for additional classroom teaching.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Bazydlo advised that: online options are limited for allowing students to take a second science course because of difficulty around replicating labs; students who elect to take a course at a non-SPS entity will have that course added to their packet separate from the SHS transcript; there is no additional space to repurpose at SHS even if enrollment continues to increase; and some SHS students are dual enrolled at Quinsigamond Community College, but pay for those classes themselves. Dr. Sawyer added that there are currently no plans to add space or modular units at SHS, and that SHS and the middle schools share some staff.

Next, Dr. Sawyer presented data on Preschool – Grade 12 enrollment and Preschool – Grade 8 class sizes to the Committee. He provided information on: key data points (student enrollment of 6218 is an all time high); enrollment history and grade level population; increase from Kindergarten to Grade 1 (9%); Grade 1 enrollment history by school; percentage of Full Day Kindergarten students (61% vs. 95% for all of MA - Full Day is preferred by parents but availability is down due to space limitations); class size guidelines; enrollment history by school; Special Education out of district placement; and vocational enrollment (down due to lower availability at Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School).

In response to questions from the Committee, Dr. Sawyer advised that: newer/ more sophisticated software is available to look at zoning maps and to manage and target growth and fluctuations in population; and students who move to the district are evaluated in different ways, with an age requirement for Kindergarten and Grade 1 students, and chronological data and previous education information used to assess older students.

V. Curriculum

None.

VI. Policy

A. Revised Policy on Rental & Use of School Facilities: First Reading

Mr. Palitsch and Ms. Canzano are members of the Policy Subcommittee, and Policy 851 addresses Rental & Use of School Facilities. Ms. Canzano noted that the proposed changes to Policy 851 include updating the regulations to reflect use of synthetic turf fields, establishing a

separate account for funds related to the rental of synthetic turf fields, and adding verbiage advising the that the policy will be reviewed within five years.

In response to a question from Dr. Magee regarding facility rental fees, Mr. Collins advised that the account established for the synthetic turf fields would be a separate account used exclusively for turf field rental and expenses, adding that since the Town of Shrewsbury pays for maintenance of existing fields, expenses for the Parks and Recreation Department would decrease as a result of the new fund paying for maintenance of the synthetic turf fields that will replace those existing fields.

VII. Finance & Operations

A. Fiscal Year 2019 Fiscal Priorities & Guidelines: Vote

Mr. Collins presented a draft of Fiscal Priorities & Guidelines for the Fiscal Year 2019 at the School Committee meeting on October 11, 2017, and Dr. Sawyer noted that there had been no follow up comments.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Priorities & Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Development document as presented.

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 October 11, 2017 were accepted as distributed.

XI. Executive Session

None.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Fiscal Priorities & Guidelines for the Fiscal Year 2019
2. Student Advisory Committee (SAC) Agenda
3. Beal Grade Configuration Transportation Report
4. Beal Grade Configuration Educational Report
5. Superintendent's Beal Grade Configuration Recommendation Memo
6. Superintendent's Beal Grade Configuration Recommendation Slides
7. PreK-12 Enrollment/PreK-8 Class Size Report
8. Enrollment Presentation Slides
9. SHS Future Plans Report
10. SHS Future Plans Slide Presentation
11. SHS Class Size Report (May be several pieces)
12. SHS Class Size Slide Presentation
13. SC Policy 851 Revision Draft - Philosophy of After-Hours Use
14. Set(s) of minutes as referenced above