

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, March 28, 2018**

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**

**None.**

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer congratulated the Oak Middle School Select Choir and Select Band for winning Silver Medals for Excellence at the recent Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association Concert and Choral Festival, and thanked the Middle School PTO for sponsoring John Halligan's presentation of "Ryan's Story" (about his son's suicide due to bullying) for Grade 7 and 8 students at Oak Middle School. He provided a brief history of the *The Campaign for Shrewsbury Athletic Fields*, and announced a donation of \$250,000 in exchange for naming rights to the field from the Adams family in memory of David J. Adams. Mr. Adams was a Shrewsbury High School graduate who played football there and then at Nichols College, and who was a well known local businessman and Town Meeting member. He passed away in 2005. Dr. Sawyer thanked Michelle Biscotti and Kathleen Keohane, Co-Coordinator of Volunteer Activities and Development, the committee co-chairs, and community member Donald Green, who approached the Adams family about providing funding for this project which will provide great athletic opportunities for the community. He added that the donation will potentially allow

for installation of the field to begin this summer, and that a vote to accept the donation would be held at the next School Committee meeting.

#### **IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

##### **A. Student Recognition: SHS Athletics State Champions**

###### **a. SHS Boys Track 4x200 Relay Team: State & New England Champions**

Dr. Magee congratulated Shrewsbury High School students Joseph O'Brien, SHS Class of 2019; Joseph Young, SHS Class of 2018; Dasani Prideaux, SHS Class of 2018; Douglas Dias, SHS Class of 2018; and Christopher Matthews, SHS Class of 2019; on their recent State and New England Championship wins at the 4x200m relay. The student athletes appeared with Principal Todd Bazydlo, and Kurt Gustafson, Physical Education Teacher and Boys Indoor Track Coach, and talked about their goals and strategies for success. They thanked Coach Gustafson, the Boosters Association for their support, and track parent Mrs. Hopping, who provided uniforms to the team for the National Championships as they could not wear SHS uniforms since they were competing as a team from Shrewsbury and not as a school. Seniors on the the team described their plans to run track in college.

The Committee and Dr. Sawyer congratulated the athletes and Coach Gustafson, and invited the team to come up and be recognized by the Committee.

##### **A. Student Recognition: SHS Athletics State Champions**

###### **b. SHS Boys Hockey Team: State Champions**

Dr. Sawyer announced that the SHS Boys Hockey Team, who recently won the State Championship, would be recognized at future School Committee meeting.

#### **V. Curriculum**

**None.**

#### **VI. Policy**

##### **A. Updated Harassment Policy: Second Reading & Vote**

Dr. Magee advised that the first reading of an update to Policy 316: Harassment (currently titled "Sexual Harassment") was held at the School Committee meeting on March 14, 2018, and posted for public viewing and comment afterwards. Mr. Palitsch, Policy Subcommittee member, advised that no feedback was received. Ms. Fryc noted that this policy addresses employees and is located under policies for personnel, and proposed the addition of a separate policy for students and staff that addresses sexual harassment.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve updated Policy 316: Harassment.

## **VII. Finance & Operations**

### **A. Per Pupil Expenditure Data: Annual Report**

Mr. Collins began by noting that this annual report would demonstrate how Shrewsbury Public Schools' (SPS) per pupil expenditure data compares to other groups in a variety of ways. He described how the data was derived; who published the data and when; what items were included in the calculations; efficiency and value (SPS/state average); how SPS fares relative to various comparable communities; how SPS fares relative to the state median; provided data summaries in a variety of sub-categories; and noted Shrewsbury's average family tax bill was in the same relative place in 2017 as it was in 2004 and 1992. Mr. Collins noted that SPS ranks in the bottom 11th percentile of districts for spending, but in the top 20th percentile for income per capita, and concluded that different data sets all affirm that Shrewsbury Public Schools is a comparatively "cost-efficient" organization.

Mr. Palitsch described the disparity in spending versus per capita income as "disgraceful." Dr. Magee noted services can differ between districts, and year-to-year within districts, and asked about the difference in per pupil spending on Teachers versus Other Teachers. Mr. Collins advised that more in-depth study was required, but noted that keeping more students in district might necessitate the need for additional paraprofessional and other staff. Dr. Sawyer noted that while he was proud of the work being done, he feels there are not enough resources in the district. He added that the Strategic Priorities that were recently adopted utilizing feedback from the community illustrate what people want and value in the school system, but do not match the funding that is available. Noting the challenges around resources, he added that the district wants to avoid funding crises in the future.

### **B. Fiscal Year 2019 Budget: Recommendations for Reductions**

Dr. Sawyer noted that for his initial budget presented on January 31, he is tasked with bringing forward a budget that meets the guidelines and priorities outlined in the School Committee (level services, addressing enrollment increases, considering strategic priorities), while the Town Manager's initial budget presented in February is based on the revenue that the Manager sees being available to the community. Noting the resultant budget gap, Mr. Collins went on to describe adjustments made since the budget launch. Dr. Sawyer acknowledged the ongoing volatility around Special Education costs in the adjustments, and acknowledged the nine school principals in attendance at the meeting for their assistance in crafting the reduction recommendations. Noting that the reductions were presented in prioritized tiers, Dr. Sawyer went on to provide a line-by-line analysis of all three tiers. Acknowledging the importance of all of them, he added that Tier 3 cuts would be the most difficult to enact as they are all positional. Dr. Sawyer concluded with a description of the budget process going forward.

Committee members noted that the conversation around budget and reductions was familiar and frustrating; expressed concern about future trends and ongoing budget issues; noted that some reductions would simply defer to the following year to be addressed; noted the especially critical need for additional IT support; and acknowledged the challenges associated with a fluid budget process that unfolds over a period of time.

#### **C. Financial Reality Fair Grant: Vote to Accept**

Mr. Collins advised that this was the second year of a grant (year one provided \$5,000) from the State Treasurer's Financial Education Innovation Fund, adding that the \$2,500 received this year would be used to fund stipends for two staff members and to purchase supplies. The *Reality Check* literacy fair provides high school students with an opportunity to interact with (volunteer) professionals and community members who provide real-world data in order to help develop a personal budget. Ms. Canzano thanked Jean Marie Johnson, Director, Mathematics Department, who initially pursued the grant.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to accept a grant of \$2,500 from the State Treasurer's Financial Education Innovation Fund to support a "Credit for Life" fair.

### **VIII. Old Business**

None.

### **IX. New Business**

#### **A. Superintendent's Goals: Presentation & Vote**

Dr. Sawyer noted he is required by the state evaluation program to propose two goals which must be approved by the Committee. Dr. Sawyer described the goals in detail, noting the student learning goal was connected to investigating gaps between student groups around achievement, and the professional practice goal related to spreading awareness around the district's strategic priorities, and recommended that the Committee vote to approve them. Dr. Magee advised that these goals would be one part of the overall evaluation of the Superintendent that is done annually. Committee members advised that the student learning goal would generate valuable data, noted the goals were appropriate and achievable, and acknowledged the importance of good communication and educating the community.

On motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Ms. Canzano, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Superintendent's Goals for the 2018 calendar year.

### **X. Approval of Minutes**

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee meeting held on March 14, 2018, were accepted as distributed.

## **XI. Executive Session**

### **A. For the Purpose of Negotiations with the Shrewsbury Paraprofessionals Association**

### **B. For the Purpose of Reviewing and Approving Executive Session Minutes**

Dr. Magee requested a motion to adjourn into executive session for the purpose of negotiations 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 for the purpose of reviewing and approving executive session minutes, and to reconvene to open session only for the purpose of adjourning for the evening. On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, 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 8:40 pm.

## **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion from Mr. Wensky, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:19 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; and Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. SHS Boys Hockey Roster
2. Harassment Policy Draft
3. Per Pupil Expenditure Report Slides
4. FY19 Budget Reduction Slides
5. FY19 Budget Reduction Recommendations
6. Credit for Life Award Letter
7. Superintendent's 2018 Goals Memo
8. Set(s) of Minutes as Referenced Above