

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

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORKSHOP
Class of 2002 Conference Room
Shrewsbury High School
64 Holden Street
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts**

Wednesday, August 22, 2018

Present: Mr. Jason Palitsch, Chairperson; Ms. Erin Canzano, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Sandra Fryc, Secretary; Dr. Dale Magee; Mr. Jon Wensky; Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Amy Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment; Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations; and Ms. Meg Belsito, Director of Special Education & Pupil Personnel Services

Workshop was opened by Mr. Palitsch at 3:05 pm.

Topic I

Dr. Sawyer updated the Committee on summer work by administration:

- 1) *Summer Institute (June 25-28)*: This was a professional development institute held at Shrewsbury High School in partnership with the Westborough Public Schools. Thirteen courses were offered, as well as three keynote lectures by presenters on the topics of personalized learning, universal design for learning (inclusive practice), and engaging diverse learners. These topics connect to the district's strategic priorities.
- 2) *School Leadership Team Summer Leadership Conference (July 24-26)*: The School Leadership Team (SLT), including Central Office administrators and principals, met for their annual leadership retreat. The team read the book *The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Effective Groups* by Daniel Coyle. The group discussed the book's themes and how they could apply to their work in strengthening the culture of the district and our schools.

The group completed its year-long participation in the DESE course on Inclusive Practice to build on best practices for including students with learning and other differences.

The group discussed the best process for moving forward with strategic priorities and district goals in the coming year, and how to communicate these priorities to various stakeholders in the district.

- 3) *District Leadership Workshop (August 21)*: The District Leadership Team (DLT), which consists of all administrators and curriculum leaders across the district met for their annual workshop. Ms. Clouter and Dr. Sawyer facilitated the agenda, which focused on how to build even stronger cultures in our schools and departments using the themes from *The Culture Code* as a framework. Dr. Sawyer asked the DLT members to use Twitter as a means for communication to emphasize the district's strategic vision and goals while also highlighting the excellent work of students and educators.

The group also discussed the DLT meeting structure and content for the upcoming year to best meet the needs of the team and provide district leadership with the opportunity to continuously build leadership capacity, as well as work together to advance the district's strategic priorities and goals.

During each of the summer leadership meetings the issue of stress was raised and discussed. There is consensus that a variety of factors are making work in public schools more stressful for educators, support staff and administrators. Attending to the culture of the district is an antidote to stress. The work over the past summer has been focused on determining ways to strengthen the culture of the district. SPS currently utilizes many of the approaches Coyle discussed in his book, but there is room for improvement and this will require action by the district.

Topic II

Dr. Sawyer provided the Committee with a memo listing the potential School Committee meeting topics for 2018-2019. The Committee provided the following guidance:

- Grouping of reports when covering similar topics
- Focus on concise presentations that leave more time for Q&A with Committee members
- Increased use of graphs and charts

The group also discussed that presentations made to the Committee are opportunities for the public to learn about topics or issues of importance in the district. The Committee members receive very detailed reports in their meeting packets and presentations to the Committee should not be so brief that the public is not provided with complete information.

Topic III

Mr. Collins provided the Committee with the FY18 Year End Fiscal Results. Due to fluctuations in FY18 Circuit Breaker Reimbursement that provided more funding to the district than originally projected, combined with favorable year-end balances in some accounts where expenses came in below projections, there is \$780,000 more in the Circuit Breaker funding account than projected at the district enters Fiscal Year 2019. This funding will allow the district to avoid the planned paraprofessional staff reductions totaling \$250,000 that were included in the

final FY19 budget reduction plan. This would provide a net of \$530,000 in additional funds if all other budget assumptions were to hold constant.

Mr. Collins and Ms. Belsito discussed with the group the unpredictable nature of some costs, including special education expenses, that might occur during the upcoming school year. The additional funds will help stabilize and insulate the district's operations from unexpected costs that might arise.

Topic IV

Without objections from the Committee, the minutes from the School Committee workshop meeting held on August 1, 2018 were approved to be distributed.

Topic V – Executive Session

Mr. Palitsch requested a motion to adjourn to executive session for the purpose of reviewing and approving Executive Session Minutes, and negotiations with the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association, where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body, and to reconvene to open session only for the purpose of adjournment for the evening. On a motion by Ms. Canzano, seconded by Mr. Wensky, on a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 4:18pm.

Adjournment

On a motion Ms. Canzano, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the meeting was adjourned at 4:32 pm. On a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Sandra Fryc, Secretary

Documents Referenced:

August 22, 2018 – Memo: Update on summer work by administration

Memo: Potential School Committee Meeting Topics 2018-219

August 21, 2018 – Memo: FY18 Year End Fiscal Results

August 1, 2018 School Committee Workshop Meeting Minutes