



SHAWSHEEN VALLEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL
100 Cook Street, Billerica, MA 01821
School Council

Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2023

In Attendance: Jessica Cook, Principal; John Bagni, Faculty; Kerry O'Brien, Faculty; James Kenney, Parent (2:33pm); Melissa Bates, Parent; Debbie Barnes, Parent; Brendan Driscoll, Community Representative; Michael Parent, Student; Alexa Strong, Student; Diane Cedorchuk, Recording Secretary.

Absent: Kari Sullivan Davis, Community Representative; Alyssa Costantiello, Student

Call to Order:

Ms. Cook called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Cook asked for a motion to accept the minutes of April 6, 2023. Mr. Driscoll motioned to accept the minutes of April 6, 2023. Mr. Bates seconded the motion. With a roll call vote, all in favor. Motion passes unanimously. Mr. Kenney was not in attendance for vote.

Updates from the Principal:

Ms. Cook gave an update on the following:

- SkillsUSA competition. Shawsheen had 66 students compete winning 8 gold, 15 silver and 7 bronze medals.
- Masonry/Hardscape contest. Shawsheen students placed 1st for grades 10, 11 and 12. In the Patio contest, Shawsheen students placed 3rd.
- Genocide awareness month. The "Courage to Remember" exhibit was open to faculty and students and was very meaningful.
- Seal of Biliteracy. 25 students took the Seal of Biliteracy exam for 9-10 different languages.
- Senior Prom. Prom was held in Salisbury and was a classy event.

Upcoming events include the production of Bye Bye Birdie, Junior prom, last day for seniors, graduation, all night grad party and Math and Science MCAS.

Old Business:

The School Committee unanimously voted to approve the School Improvement Plan. The School Committee appreciates the time the School Council members have put into the School Improvement Plan.

2023-2024 Student Handbook – Ms. Cook distributed a draft overview of proposed handbook changes. There was a discussion on dress code. Ms. Bates spoke about the importance of preparing students for the workforce and the appropriate dress for the professional world. Ms. Bates felt without a dress code you are not setting the right tone for learning and not good for your mental health. There was also discussion on eventually moving toward a uniform requirement, but this may pose financial hardship for some students. Ms. Cook told the group the lawyer is providing language to help with dress code enforcement.

The elimination of cell phone use was discussed briefly. Students should model staff not using their phones. Ms. Cook thanked the group for pushing the no cell phone policy. Ms. Bates spoke about parent push back; however parents always can email or call the school. Ms. O'Brien felt the no cell phone policy is a move in the right direction. The dependency students have for their cell phones is not healthy. Mr. Driscoll commented on the no cell phone policy should also prevent bullying.

New Business:

School Environment Policies

There was a discussion on students working for teachers. Ms. Bates asked if there were school policies to protect teachers and students. Ms. Bates felt a student could have a private conversation with his/her teacher and it would not get back to the parent and thought this crossed a boundary. Alexa Strong spoke and said kids need a comfortable person to talk to. Ms. Barnes spoke of relationships with shop teachers and suggested faculty does not hire students. This would prevent illegal activity. Ms. Bates stated the cause of lines crossed is because of lack of boundaries. Ms. O'Brien stated students have conversations with teachers as well as guidance and boundaries is something that has been addressed.

Co-op Data

Ms. Cook handed out the co-op data with the number of students out on co-op. Ms. Kenny asked why all seniors were not out on co-op. Ms. Cook explained the criteria for co-op – grades, discipline, attendance, and level of competency. Ms. Cook also stated some don't want to go out on co-op.

Ms. Cook thanked all the members for their time being members of the School Council.

Adjournment:

Kerry O'Brien motioned to adjourn. Ms. Bates seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carries unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 3:47pm.