

# J<sup>Apple</sup> Shrewsbury School Journal

Serving a community of continuous learners

Winter Edition 2013 • Vol XVII No. 2

## Superintendent's Corner A duty to support public education

DR. JOSEPH M. SAWYER  
SUPERINTENDENT

...(P)reservation of their rights and liberties... depend(s) on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education...(It) shall be the duty of legislators and magistrates in all future periods of this commonwealth to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences...especially (in) public schools, and grammar schools in the towns...  
~ John Adams, Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In this excerpt from our state constitution, John Adams outlines the duty to "cherish" (which in those times meant to "support") public education. Adams' constitutional mandate was affirmed in 1993 by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in a ruling that launched a successful education reform movement in Massachusetts, with substantial state financial support. Two decades later, our state's public education system is, by many measures, the best in the nation and among the best in the world.

We are now in the midst of a second wave of education reform that originated at the federal level, first through the No Child Left Behind legislation of 2001 and more recently through the Race to the Top program begun in 2009. This national emphasis

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**Shrewsbury Writing Project, PEP Grant Update, Professional Staff Recognition and Alumni Panel Discussion**

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**New Sherwood Opening, "Kids for a Cause" and Technology in Preschool**



Pictured above is Shrewsbury High School senior greeter Mr. Bob Lancey shaking hands with his neighbor, SHS junior Eric Leach. See full story, "The Shrewsbury Family," on page 3.

*"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."*

~ Benjamin Franklin ~

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Pictured above top left are Maggie Brown and Maeve Aherne checking out their new lockers on opening day. At top right are students on the 6 Yellow team in Mrs. Helen Lipkin's home-room. The bottom photo shows assistant principals Mrs. Michelle Melick and Mrs. Heather Gablaski, Sherwood principal Mrs. Jane Lizotte, and advanced math coach Mrs. Melissa McCann, and students holding a banner signed by all 989 students thanking the town for their support in bringing such an exemplary facility to fruition. This photograph was taken in the main lobby area of the new school. A grand opening and dedication ceremony will take place in the spring where tours will be offered for the general public. Please see story and additional photos on page 5.

## Budget challenges

ERIN CANZANO  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

This is a nail-biter of a budget season. With operational costs increasing due to the regular course of business, with pressures in the classroom due to increased class size, and with the pent-up demand as a result of deferred textbook purchases, professional development and curriculum, the district is stressed at every level. The School Committee tasked Dr. Sawyer and his team to develop a budget for FY 2014 that would not just carry the district forward with the same services from this year to next, but would also begin the important work of restoring positions cut in the past few years. The funding required to do that is an additional \$4.4 million; it is a large amount indeed, and would require a substantial investment from our town. For some, the budget request is too substantial, and requires too much sacrifice and is not mindful of the town's financial health. For others, the budget request is not enough

of an investment because it does not restore all the teachers needed to address the over-crowded classrooms and loss of programming. If approved, the request would restore 21 teachers to key areas in the system that are significantly overburdened; it would continue strategic investment in technology; and it would address curriculum and professional development so that the district can be in compliance with state requirements. In short, it would be the infusion of resources needed to begin the restoration of the district and head it back into the right direction.

However, the likelihood of a fully funded request is slim, and the challenge for the School Committee and the other town boards will be to decide to what level of priority will be placed on public education. For the reality is that every dollar requested has a specific and necessary purpose, and those purposes, whether it is reducing class size, providing mental health support, aligning outdated curriculum or addressing school safety concerns, impact students in meaningful and measurable ways. The years

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# Professional status staff recognized

BARBARA A. MALONE  
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

On Monday, October 15, 2012 the district recognized twenty-eight educators for their attainment of Professional Status with the Shrewsbury Public Schools. Professional Status is awarded to teachers who have demonstrated excellence in their work and commitment to students. According to Massachusetts state law an educator receives professional status after having completed three successful years of employment. This status is a particularly significant accomplishment in Shrewsbury, where the district employs rigorous hiring and supervision/evaluation practices during the probationary period. Most years principals, directors and central office administrators make difficult, but necessary, decisions not to renew the contract of a small number of educators, and these decisions contribute to Shrewsbury Public Schools' stature as a high performing school district.

While professional status can be attained throughout all public schools in Massachusetts, Shrewsbury Public Schools is among a small group of districts in the state that recognize this important accomplishment through a formal reception. This year's reception was held at Cyprian Keyes Golf Club in Boylston.

We would like to thank the district's PTO groups and the Shrewsbury Education Association for cosponsoring the event with the district. Each person receiving professional status was individually recognized and received a small

gift as a memento of the occasion. The reception was attended by over seventy people, including building principals and assistant principals, department directors, central office administrators, all members of the School Committee, and PTO representatives from the schools, as well as the honorees and their guests. We also thank Danielson Florists in Shrewsbury for providing the beautiful floral centerpieces for each table.

The educators recognized this year, along with their teaching area, are:

**Shrewsbury High School:**  
**English:** Heather Penfield

**Health Education:** Beth Morin

**Physical Education:** Matthew Wheeler

**Spanish:** Rosa Montalvo

**Oak Middle School:**

**Mandarin Chinese:** ChinHuei Yeh

**Media:** Nancy Bedard

**Science:** Elin Dolan

**Special Education:** Leigh Augusto

**Speech Pathology:** Lorraine Arnold

**Sherwood Middle School:**

**English Language Arts/**

**Social Studies:** Christina Bielunis, Paula Bradley

**ESL:** Elizabeth McGandy

**Math/Science:** Ryan Middlesworth

**Coolidge School:**

**ESL:** Cheryl Barron

**Floral Street School:**

**Special Education:** Julie Withers, Ashley Walker

**Walter J. Paton School:**

**Grade 2:** Jillian Ward Symonds

**Spring Street School:**

**Grade 3:** Kristin Toloczko

**Beal Early Childhood Center:**

**ELL:** Rima Hanna

**Parker Street Pre-School:**

**Preschool:** Keriann Kimball

**Occupational Therapist:** Laureen McGourty

**Psychologist:** Debra Cushman

**District:**

**Assistive Technology:** Colleen Gorman

**Special Education:** Elliott Nerland

Although administrators are not eligible for professional status, the district does recognize those individuals who have completed three years of quality work in their leadership position:

**Sherwood Middle School**

**Special Education Director:** Eric Bloomstein

**Title I Reading Director:** Maureen Henry

**Shrewsbury High School**

**Special Education Director:** Catherine LaRoche

**Middle School Science Curriculum Coordinator:** Pamela Poitras

# Budget

CONTINUED from front page

of deferring purchases, of waiting for better financial times, have created a backlog of urgent and important demands which can no longer be delayed, and the stakes are higher than ever in deciding what is funded and what is not. The amount received at the end of this budget process will ultimately determine whether the district can continue to provide the very high quality of education our community expects, or have to cope with worsening circumstances. Clearly, the School Committee is committed to working tirelessly to find a way to sustain the excellence of our schools, and we welcome your feedback, suggestions, and constructive criticism in the upcoming months as these decisions are being made.

## District News

**Shrewsbury Food Services** has been mixing it up with recipe contests, ticket purchase discount promotions, and giveaways at all the schools. If you haven't seen their new newsletter, please check it out on our website main page under the "Departments - Food Services" pull down menu.

**The last day of school for 2012-2013** as of this printing is June 18, 2013. There have been three snow days to date. Any changes regarding the last day of school will be posted on our website.

The 2013-2014 School Calendar has been approved and the first day for students is Tuesday, August 27, 2013. Check our website under "QuickLINKS" for the full calendar.

### Important public event dates -

- We welcome and encourage you to attend or watch the **School Committee meetings**. The meeting dates are as follows - February 27, March 13 & 27, April 10 & 24, May 8 & 29 and June 5. All meetings are held at 7:00pm in the Selectmen's room at the Town Hall, 100 Maple Ave. They are televised live on channel 29 (SETV) or you can access recordings on the Shrewsbury Media Connections Online Library on the town's website.
- On Sunday, April 7, at 12 noon, the sixth Annual Shrewsbury Road Scholars 5k & Fun Run** will be held at Oak Middle School to raise money for Shrewsbury Public Schools' Citizens for Education Fund (CEF). Participants can run a 5k route or run/walk a 1 mile course. Pre-registrations received by April 3 include a t-shirt and are \$15 for the 5k and \$10 for the 1 mile fun run. Race day registration opens at 10:00am and the cost is \$20 for the 5k and \$10 for the fun run, and does not include a t-shirt. Registration forms and more information are available online at [shrewsburyroadscholars.org](http://shrewsburyroadscholars.org) or at the Shrewsbury Parks & Recreation Department or contact Race Coordinator Beth McCollum at (508) 841-8400 or [emccollum@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:emccollum@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us)
- The **Drama department** invites the community to the upcoming performance: of **"Legally Blonde"** which will be performed at Shrewsbury High School on **April 4-6 at 7pm and April 7 at 2pm**. Look for ticket information on the website or in email communications.
- Curriculum Night for Parents of Incoming Freshmen, February 28** - Parents of incoming freshmen are invited to attend our annual Curriculum Night. The evening will begin with a review of our program of studies and then parents will have the opportunity to hear presentations from Department Directors. The program will be held in the high school auditorium beginning at 6:30pm.

# The Shrewsbury family

SHRIYA JAMAKANDRI  
SHS JUNIOR

In 1952, groups of high school students marveled at the imposing stone steps of Beal Memorial High School. In 2002, a similar group of adolescents marveled at the imposing large pillars at the entrance of a newly-constructed building at 64 Holden Street. For more than half a century, Shrewsbury graduates have one thing in common: an innate sense of giving back to their community—and the SHS Greeters are no exception.

This group of dedicated role models can be found cheerfully greeting and helping visitors sign in. These cavaliers still grace our school with wisdom, laughter, and heartfelt kindness. They genuinely want to help others; there are no two ways about it. As waves of students flood the corridor, the SHS Greeters will often smile, exchange a few words, and brighten

up a day or a moment that could have easily been lost to the whirl of exams, homework, and extracurricular activities.

When asked about his favorite part about coming to Shrewsbury

High School, one of the greeters, Mr. Manuel Simonian, replied that he enjoyed "meeting people and helping them out when they need help." He regularly volunteers once a

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Pictured above from left to right are Mr. Gerorge DeCoteau and Mr. Bob Lancey, two of the nearly 30 senior greeter volunteers in the district.

## Superintendent's Corner

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- existing levels of personnel support for students' social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs have not been able to keep pace with increases in demand; and

- funding from external sources such as PTOs and booster organizations has been used increasingly as substitute funding for fundamental program needs, rather than for uses that enrich the educational program (even with this external funding and additional funding through fees, our athletics program faces a structural deficit).

It must be noted that these challenging circumstances have taken a toll on our staff. There is no question in my mind that staff morale is at its lowest point during my fifteen-plus years in Shrewsbury, and this is of great concern to me. To be clear, this is not a "woe is us" dynamic, but rather a sense of stress and frustration that has arisen among educators who have too many demands and not enough time or resources to meet them. The pace of change is fast due to various mandates and initiatives, and many of our practitioners have class sizes or caseloads that are larger than ever before, which makes even the routine elements of the program more difficult to implement.

In addition to the challenges outlined above, it is important to note that the cost of doing business continues to rise, as inflationary pressures affect operational costs in areas such as specialized special education placements outside the district, transportation for in-district and out of district students, athletics, etc. Additionally, costs for existing personnel will increase modestly due to contractual obligations for represented employees and similar treatment for non-represented employees. On top of this, the issue of school security has emerged as a priority in the aftermath of the Newtown, Connecticut tragedy and addressing this will require an investment in both physical and human resources.

During the fall and the winter of the current year, the feedback I have received from educators and parents indicates that our system is stressed beyond its capacity in too many ways. In the short term, we are coping with ongoing resource limitations as well as current situations designed to be temporary, such as the shared principal model between Beal Early Childhood Center and Paton School this year and the hiatus of the Director of Foreign Language position after a retirement in November. It is my professional opinion that our organization cannot continue with this reduced level of support and service for a sustained period of time without compromising the quality of education in Shrewsbury. High class sizes, lack of curriculum materials and support, outdated and lack of technology, and insufficient student support services are eroding the foundation of the excellent educational program that has been built up over time. Over the next few budget cycles, it will be crucial to repair short-term damage and invest resources to avoid long-term negative consequences for our schools and our community.

John Adams urged that "the opportunities and advantages of education" be spread throughout the Commonwealth in order to protect the values we hold dear. While I am cognizant of the fiscal challenges that our community faces, it is my sincere hope that enough of our town's resources can be allocated to the School Department in FY14 to stop the deterioration of our educational program and begin the recovery that will be necessary to preserve the excellence of our schools.

# Alumni host panel discussion

ALYSSA KNIGHT  
SHS SENIOR

As high schoolers are overwhelmed with balancing classes, extracurriculars, jobs, family and health, seniors must add the confusion of college to the mix. In just about a year from when the Class of 2013 began their last year of high school, most will be parting with the only lives they've ever known to venture into the world of college.

Applying to college causes a large array of emotions throughout the process: Overwhelming at the start, relief once they are turned in, and anxiety when waiting to hear back. It all comes down to choosing just one college to attend in the fall of 2013. So how do I decide where I want to go based on just what I've read or seen in tours? Real students are the answer.

Seniors gathered in the Anthony J. Bent Presentation Room to listen to a panel of seven students reflect on their college experiences. The discussion occurred in two sessions on Thursday, December 20, one during A lunch at 11:30 and the other during seventh period at 1:00pm.

Most of the panelists were members of the Class of 2012 at Shrewsbury High School, so they were fresh into the college atmosphere and able to provide seniors with an accurate portrayal

of the transition.

The discussion was led by Mrs. Nga Huynh, Director of Guidance. Mrs. Huynh started off by asking questions to the panelists and each had the opportunity to answer if they chose to do so.

Topics included dorms, roommates, friendships, size of colleges, food, commuting, classes, professors, homework, majors, the "freshman 15", sports, extracurriculars, homesickness, and time management. Other questions were about decision-making and how the individual knew that college was right for him or her.

As I came out of the discussion, I had various opinions about what I had learned during the

past 50 minutes. As my sister, Sabrina Knight, is a member of Shrewsbury High School's Class of 2012 and just finished her first semester as a freshman at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York, I recently have heard a lot about adjusting to college life through the stories from her. Being able to compare her experiences to those of other college students is helpful to me in decisions I make about college applications and decisions. It was nice to hear about different perspectives from people that go to different types of schools, whether it be location, size, or emphasis. The panelists helped me realize there is a lot that goes into deciding which college is best for me.



Pictured above standing from left-right are Stephen Trudeau, Zach Besaw, and Kailey Filiere, Class of 2012, talking to seniors from the class of 2013. Seated from left to right are Stephen Munzer, Rana Dabbagh and Avneet Soin.

## PEP in their steps

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the recommended benchmark when averaging the four data collections through out the year. On average more students in grade K-4 (42%) are meeting this benchmark than students in grades 5 - 12 (21%).

Now some good news. A significant majority of students reached the benchmark of running the minimum number of 20 meter laps based on age and gender during the baseline data collection and 76% of students reached the benchmark when averaging the four data collections through out the year. This testing element has been part of our curriculum for many years and is included in the FITNESSGRAM Reports that are sent home to families each year. Students have practiced and show acceptable levels of proficiency with the cardiovascular fitness levels.

A major curricular shift is taking place. Two additional courses, Lifetime II and Personal Fitness and Condition-

ing, for junior and senior students have been added to the high school course of study. The high school health curriculum has also been adjusted to add a tenth grade class with a major unit in nutrition. Most noticeably in our elementary and middle school buildings we now have new adventure elements including horizontal climbing walls, and many challenge course element that enable all students across the district to participate in experiential adventure classes. We are having a high ropes and low ropes course installed at the high school and will train teachers this spring and incorporate the new elements in our Adventure, and Lifetime II classes. In addition to the course improvements the physical education program has benefitted by updating and expanding our equipment and instructional opportunities across the district. Mountain biking, ice skating, and other lifelong activities are now offered to students with the

goal to promote daily physical activity.

Outside of our school programs we have been able to offer many extracurricular activities. Family Adventures

**"Family Adventures have been offered at each building ranging from orienteering, frisbee golf, learn to dance, whammy ball, basketball, walk the Rail Trail, fitness stations, yoga and many others. Our attendance has numbered in the hundreds at many of the events."**

have been offered at each building ranging from orienteering, frisbee golf, learn to dance, whammy ball, basketball, walk the Rail Trail, fitness stations, yoga and many others. Our attendance has numbered in the hundreds at many of the events. Parents, children and even extended family members have joined together and enjoyed various recreational activities all with the goal of increasing physical activity and having fun for lifelong wellness.

In the next few months we will be introducing a new campaign called 5210 from the Lets Go.org foundation. We will be sending information home via the School Department listserve, incorporating the information into our health and PE classes, facilitating student activities and spreading the message town wide. Be on the lookout and I encourage everyone to join us in The Get Fit Adventure!



Pictured above is Physical Education teacher Paula Toti with students from a high school gym class exercising on mountain bikes in the new Lifetime II course.

# The new Sherwood opening

Jane O. Lizotte  
SHERWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL  
PRINCIPAL

*Coming together is a beginning.  
Keeping together is progress.  
Working together is success.*  
~ Henry Ford ~

The new Sherwood Middle School is open – seven months early and over six million dollars under budget! From start to finish, this building project has proven successful due to the trust, dedication, foresight, and collaborative efforts of the many teams of individuals involved. Words cannot express my gratitude to the people who spent countless hours of their time to ensure that this project was successful. I would like to send a special thanks to the Shrewsbury School Committee, Board of Selectmen, and Finance Committee; the Community Supporters for Sherwood; the Sherwood Building Committee; the Town Manager’s Office; the Public Buildings Department; the Sherwood Middle School Faculty; Lamoureux Pagano Associates, architects; PMA Consultants, owner’s project manager; Gilbane Building Company, construction manager; Blue Line Designs,

design consultants; and the Massachusetts State Building Authority for working together to exceed all expectations for this project. I am grateful to all those involved in this worthwhile project for their dedication and continued diligence to ensure that all spaces were structured to foster an effective learning environment for our students today and for decades to come. Members of the Gilbane team and PMA Consultants will continue to remain on site through the demolition and field construction phases of the project. Their responsiveness to our questions and ideas continues to be outstanding. Operations are running incredibly well and I am confident that this pattern will continue.

I am particularly indebted to Sherwood Middle School Assistant Principals, Mrs. Heather Gablaski and Mrs. Michelle Melick, each of whom significantly contributed to this project. Among other tasks, Mrs. Gablaski coordinated all of the Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FFE) purchases and associated activities, while Mrs. Melick coordinated the physical move from the old SMS to the new SMS. They closely collaborated with all faculty regarding large-scale efforts including the design and location of the learning spaces throughout the building, while making more subtle decisions

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## Shrewsbury family

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week. “I was a 1950 Shrewsbury High School graduate,” he said. Mr. Simonian’s classmate, Mr. Donny Green, has lived in Shrewsbury for the past seventy-nine years and greets at SHS as well. He regularly “see[s] the kids come and go.” In his free time, he has also helped out with baseball.

Coming in late from doctor’s appointments, dazed students have wandered over to the congenial greeters behind the blue-tiled island across from the main office. Students are kindly directed to the attendance office, and they proceed to check-in. At other times, it is not uncommon to see parents rushing in

**“As waves of students flood the corridor, the SHS Greeters will often smile, exchange a few words, and brighten up a day or a moment that could have easily been lost to the whirl of exams, homework, and extracurricular activities.”**

and stopping for directions. This group of volunteers makes sure that everyone safely and happily ends up where he or she belongs at the moment. On other occasions, the greeters have gone out of their way to venture into a gym class and fetch students who must be located for dismissal. It is this dedication and optimistic attitude that continues to inspire Shrewsbury students to become the positive pioneers of society that they are today.

Fellow greeters Mr. Ronald Sanguinet and George DeCoteau have both described SHS in one word: awesome. Mr. DeCoteau enjoys just “being in the school [and] meeting all these people.” He has been coming to SHS since September 2002, “Since the same day [that] it opened,” he said.

Busy with challenging course loads, piles of homework and projects, and worn thin from the flurry of honor societies, theatre productions, sports, newspapers and literary magazines, and many of the diverse and varied clubs at Shrewsbury High School, students barely have time to reflect on all that surrounds them. “[It’s] inspiring... [and] good to see all the opportunities,” said Mr. Simonian.

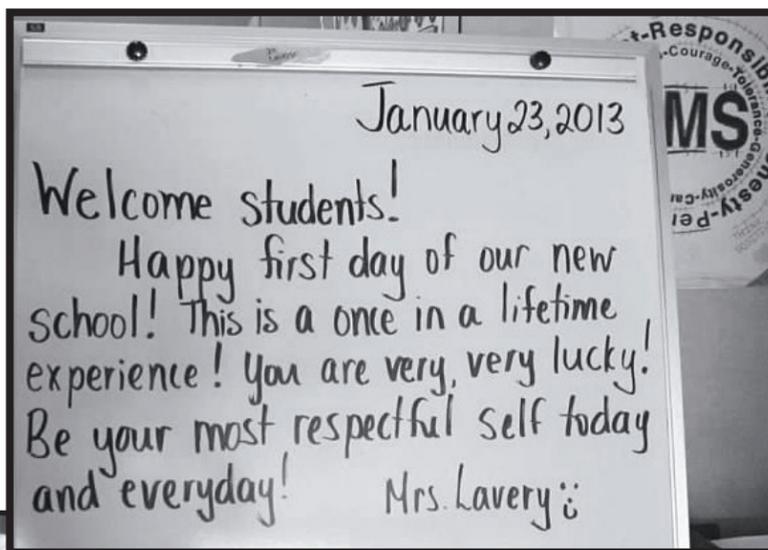
“[It’s] fantastic,” said Mr. Green. He re-

**“...that family would certainly not be complete without the passionate alumni who continue to extend their generous service to the Shrewsbury family.”**

members a time when our beloved Beal School served as a high school. “We had three fire trucks for the whole town,” he said. Looking back, he is overjoyed by the town that Shrewsbury has become. He loves to see the “world we live in today...to come here and see...one big happy family.” Well, that family would certainly not be complete without the passionate alumni who continue to extend their generous service to the Shrewsbury family.

Inspiring, fantastic and awesome have been just a few of the words describing the environment at Shrewsbury High School. However, these same words reveal the character of those who smile from behind the friendly visitor’s desk in sunshine, clouds, rain, or snow.

Students and staff both agree that a little sunshine goes a long way. As Henry David Thoreau eloquently phrased it, “One must maintain a little bit of summer even in the winter.” It is this drop of sunshine that continues to brighten the days of all SHS visitors. The SHS Greeters are more than greeters: they are fellow Colonials, members of the warm Shrewsbury family, and most of all, they are a source of inspiration to the students that pass through those glass doors every single day.



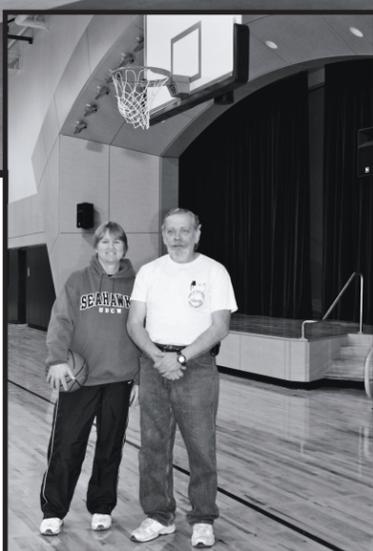
*Pictured above is a welcome message from fifth grade teacher Mrs. Diane Lavery.*

*Pictured at left are some of the nearly 1,000 students entering the new building for the first time on January 23, 2013 after their formal procession from the old school to the new.*



*Pictured above is a “neighborhood” that can be found at the end of each of the classroom hallways. A small widening of the hallway creates a large space that is used as a gathering spot for multiple classes to meet. This uniquely designed space has four whiteboards, as well as a screen that lowers from the ceiling for large group instruction.*

*Pictured at left are Physical Education teacher Kathy Burke and school custodian Bernie Witkowski standing in the combination gymnasium/auditorium. Visible in the background is the stage area which is equipped with a sound proof sliding door for simultaneous use as a chorus classroom on the other side while physical education takes place in the gym. This is one example of the efficient use of instructional space that kept the overall cost below budget.*



## New Sherwood

CONTINUED from page 5

including the size and shape of student and teacher desks and chairs. Additionally, Mrs. Gablaski and Mrs. Melick closely communicated with the designers, architects, building company representatives, and both town and school district personnel throughout this process. All of this



Pictured above are students holding a large banner to use for display at their new school.

work was accomplished in addition to the myriad responsibilities that they assume on a daily basis.

Though only ten school days have passed since we moved into our new school, it feels as though we have been here for several weeks. The faculty spent time after school setting up their learning spaces during the weeks prior to the move, and were grateful to have an additional day following the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday to unpack their final boxes and meet with their "new neighbors" in their classroom neighborhoods. This preparation clearly paid off as the learning spaces have proven to be warm and welcoming. The students have settled into their new environment without skipping a beat! With each passing day, students and faculty have become increasingly

**"Words cannot express my gratitude to the people who spent countless hours of their time to ensure that this project was successful."**

familiar with members of their new neighborhood communities and with all of the learning features the building has to offer.

Faculty are in the process of learning and discovering meaningful ways in which to optimize the use of the new technology and other building features in our school. Students' natural curiosity and ability to apply their skills while using these technology tools lend themselves to shared leading and learning. It is not uncommon to observe students presenting grade level content to their classmates and teachers in purposeful and engaging ways, as they provide information using a variety of new and familiar learning tools. The confidence with which students facilitate this learning is exciting to witness. Traditional tools, including paper and pencil, continue to serve an important purpose in our classrooms. Each of the resources available to us provides students and teachers with the support they need to access, organize, and communicate information effectively.

We look forward to sharing our learning with you over the coming weeks and months.

## "Kids for a Cause"

NICOLE BEAUREGARD  
SHS JUNIOR

Students from Shrewsbury High School have started up a new program called 'Kids for a Cause.' It is a club where any student at the high school can sign up to volunteer at certain events. Students can sign up for a few or many events. The choice is up to them. The club was created to give students a chance to give back on their own time at fun and interesting volunteer sites.

Our first volunteering opportunity was at Kids' Cafe in Worcester (part of the Boys and Girls Club of Worcester). Victoria Hogan, Grade 11, said, "I learned that the little things mean the most to the kids. Just talking to them made their day." The high schoolers would help set up for snack and then socialize with the kids for an hour before they all went home. The children seemed very eager to tell the high schoolers about the things they did that day at school and their interests. Micaela Beando, a senior at Shrewsbury High, said "we were able to be role models for them. We have a chance to be good people for them to look up to."

My experience at Kids' Cafe was a great one. The kids were all very eager to talk to the students and vice versa. When I looked around the room, I saw all of my peers laughing and smiling with the children. When we first walked in we were all a little nervous and didn't really know what to expect. After getting a tour of the building, I saw eyes lighting up. It's such a good environment for the children and my classmates were amazed by the different kinds of activities they provided. Swimming, boxing, a music studio, dance, gym activities, a

learning center - anything you can possibly imagine is provided at the Boys and Girls Club. Usually, all of us would arrive around 4:30 and hang out for an hour before setting up snack. If any of the activities interested you, you would have the opportunity to go to the area and spend time with the kids. It's so cool!

Some of the classmates that went with me were astonished by all of the activities. It was great to see the children and the students bonding over their likes and dislikes and to be able to spend an hour learning from the children and watching them grow is amazing. The kids there were so proud to show off their talents and were eager to see how we felt. During the tour, we all went into the music studio and the kids performed a song for us. They played "Girl on Fire" by Alicia Keys. Some of the high school students got up and sang with the band as they played. The kids were amazing! The kids' faces lit up when they saw how much we enjoyed their music, and seeing them thrive in something

they enjoyed lit up our faces!

It was such a great experience for all of us who attended and we hope to get many new people to sign up and join us. It's nice to know that we are able to become good role models for them. The kids loved that we wanted to hear what they had to say and that we cared about what was going on in their lives. Almost all of the high schoolers told me that they wished we could go more than just once a month because they had that much fun. We loved the experience as much as the kids did, and we all can't wait to go back again.

Kids For a Cause volunteers at Kids' Cafe the second Wednesday of every month from 4:30-6:30, and at Saint Anne's Human Services in Shrewsbury the last Thursday of every month from 4:00-6:00. We would be thrilled to welcome anyone who would like to join. Not only is it a great experience for yourself and everyone involved, but it looks great on college applications as well. Everything about the experience is fun and enjoyable to all.



Pictured above back row from left to right are: Suzanne Solat (parent volunteer), SHS Assistant Principal Mr. P.J. O'Connell, and SHS students Ryan Qualey, Victoria Hogan, Seth Colcord, Adam Suits. In the front row from left to right are SHS students Jaime Matys, Hannah Hopkins, Natalie Caccialino, Micaela Beando, Rachel DiVerdi, Nikki Beauregard, and Victoria Rutigliano.

## Speaker makes impact

JESS MORANA  
AND SEAN TEEBAGY  
SHS SENIORS



Pictured above is Chris Herren, speaker and founder of The Herren Project.

was named to the 1994 McDonald's All American team. He was recruited by the top Division 1 programs in the

country. Herren decided to play college ball at Fresno State University where the point guard led the nation in both steals and assists. Herren's stellar play earned him a spot on the 1999 Denver Nuggets. From 1999 to 2006 Herren played for many professional teams both in the United States and overseas.

**"Many students found Herren's presentation not only moving but also extremely impactful."**

Throughout his basketball career Herren struggled with drug and alcohol abuse. Alcohol and drug-free since August 1, 2008 Chris has reinforced his life to put his sobriety and his family above all else. On November 26th, Chris Herren came to Shrewsbury High School to share his story with the students in hopes

of changing one person's life.

Many students found Herren's presentation not only moving but also extremely impactful. Senior Morgan McCarthy thought that, "It was amazing that all 1600 students remained silent, it showed the importance of his message and how it impacted the audience." Shivani Kumar added, "Chris Herren made the students think about how their choices make them who they are, and showed that we can turn around those bad choices and make them better."

To support his vision, Chris founded The Herren Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing assistance to families affected by addiction. The Herren Project led to the launching of Project Purple, an anti-substance abuse campaign encouraging people of all ages to stand up to drugs and alcohol. We are very grateful to have had the privilege to hear his truly inspirational story.

# A “little” technology

KERIANN KIMBALL

PRESCHOOL TEACHER

ARLENA BOYLE,

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST

Technology at Parker Road Preschool takes many forms and serves students and teachers in multiple ways. We are preparing our students for the 21st century, for a society and workforce where “literacy” includes being technologically literate. When walking through our school, one would notice iPads in student hands as well as in the hands of teachers projecting onto a large display for whole group instruction, or one-on-one and small group differentiated instruction. One would also notice children using interactive files designed by the teachers on the interactive whiteboards, and students using iPads to augment communication or as a behavioral incentive.

During a walk through of our school, one would also see our students engaged in finger painting with real paint and real fingers! You would hear joyful young voices talking and laughing. Children are problem solving with wooden puzzles and practicing early engineering skills with traditional wood blocks and Lego® blocks. You would observe children drawing and writing with colored pencils and crayons on paper, and using play dough and putty to strengthen their fine motor muscles. Students enjoy holding books in their hands and turning paper pages.

Through funds from a grant specifically for preschool, Parker Road was outfitted with interactive whiteboards in each classroom in the spring of 2011. The teachers are able to use these boards for a variety of instructional purposes. Morning meeting can be organized through this system in conjunction with the Boardmaker® program. The children are able to click on a picture to start a song or an instructional video clip. Calendar dates and patterns can be observed, manipulated and discussed. Students graph the weather using this technology, and weather patterns can be visualized. Teachers are able to create customized interactive boards, that allow children to practice skills such as sorting, counting, letter/sound match, classification, science topics, etc. The possibilities are nearly endless.

This winter, Parker students were able to observe live black bears inside their caves in Minnesota via the live den cams

at [www.bear.org](http://www.bear.org). This is the next best thing – and the safer choice by far – than actually poking our heads into a bear cave! The children could hear the sounds of the cubs, and the Mommy bear soothing them. As they watched, children made observations and asked thoughtful questions, “Is she singing them a lullaby?”; “I noticed the bears always start to move at snack time.” At dramatic play, children acted like bears in the bear cave, mimicking the sounds and movements they observed.

All Parker classrooms and therapy spaces now have one iPad, thanks to the combination of grant monies and our PTO. Children use iPads to practice skills such as letter/sound matching and letter formation through fun interactive games

meets to address continuing educational needs related to technology for our staff. The committee also discusses troubleshooting technology glitches as well as future plans for ongoing growth with the implementation of technology in the classroom. Tech labs are offered weekly to support the staff in adapting curriculum to include technology when appropriate.

When the interactive whiteboards and iPads first came to Parker, some teachers asked, “What do I do with this?” Like all change, there was some trepidation regarding keeping to tradition and worry about what this technology may replace in the preschool classroom. None of the critical hands-on, multisensory experiences have been nor should be replaced by the technology. The technology is used



*Pictured above are Jamal Farah and Diya Anwin in the background using an interactive iPad app to learn proper letter formation in their classroom at Parker Road Preschool.*

such as Letter School and My Name. We are able to reinforce our Handwriting Curriculum by accessing the Handwriting Without Tears (HWT) app, “Wet Dry Try”. Teachers also use the HWT interactive software on the interactive boards to teach letter formation. Children use the interactive pen to write giant letters on the big board while friends follow along on small white boards with good old-fashioned wipe-off markers.

Given the recent advancement in technology, a Parker Road Technology Committee has been established to enhance the use and growth of technology within the preschool classrooms. This committee

in ways that extend learning and assist instruction. Today, teachers at Parker would tell you they are glad to have this technology and that it enhances the wonderful experience for students at Parker Road Preschool. It does not replace hands-on learning because nothing could or should at this age, but it does expand our limits and adds more opportunities to engage and challenge preschoolers. Our skillful faculty know that “teachable moments” are not always technology-based, however, preschoolers are certainly growing up in a very technological world and appropriate exposure within this environment is healthy and exciting!

## Writing Project

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four learning strands. One option was The Power of Persuasion. During this strand, teachers work together planning ways to encourage students to think critically and support their opinions clearly with strong evidence. By looking at teaching practices from across the country, student exemplars, and ways to tie reading and writing together, teachers are learning how to enhance their practices in this genre and enable students to become more powerful persuaders and critical thinkers. A second strand tied to the Shrewsbury Writing Project is Supporting Elementary Researchers. Participants have the opportunity to work in grade level teams to plan, implement, and reflect on learning experiences, which will help young students gather evidence and synthesize information using a variety of media. About 60 elementary staff are enrolled in these two strands which take place on our professional development days and early release days in April. These staff members will share their work from the PD sessions with the rest of their school based staff.

### Middle Level

The current school year began by training 5th and 6th grade ELA teachers in the Common Core State Standards for reading and writing, and their grade-specific Persuasive Writing Curriculum. The training for the content area pilot teachers (math, science, social studies) also began, and included learning both the expectations of the Common Core State standards in writing as well as the expository and persuasive writing curriculums at their grade-level. All training was completed with seven small-groups of teachers in a total of eleven school days.

As a result of this training all 5th and 6th grade ELA teachers are implementing persuasive units this year, and 5th and 6th content area pilot teachers are also working to implement components of the writing program in their classrooms. Seventh-grade teachers, already familiar with persuasive writing, implemented a persuasive writing unit in the fall of this year, which was fully aligned with the Common Core State Standards and their grade-level expectations. Eighth-grade teachers will be fully trained in persuasive writing (specifically around the expectations for the incorporation of text as outlined by the Common Core) and students will complete one piece later in the year.

By the end of this school year, the Expository and Persuasive writing curriculums will be fully implemented in ELA classrooms in grades 5-8.

Oak Middle School has also implemented a research curriculum. Nancy Bedard, the media specialist, has created a program for all seventh and eighth grade students that addresses the research standards outlined in the Common Core. Throughout each year, students apply different aspects of the curriculum in each of their content classes. This ensures that each student receives a comprehensive and cohesive research curriculum, and embeds media literacy throughout the content areas.

### High School

Given that SHS is currently involved in its accreditation review, which happens once every 10 years, 2012-2013 is a planning year for the Shrewsbury Writing Project. Once the school has completed the extensive self study that is required by the accreditation process, greater focus will be given to aligning writing curriculum in all content areas to the new Common Core Standards.

## Writing Project

CONTINUED from page 2

into two sections, one focusing on ELA, and the other focusing on history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. This

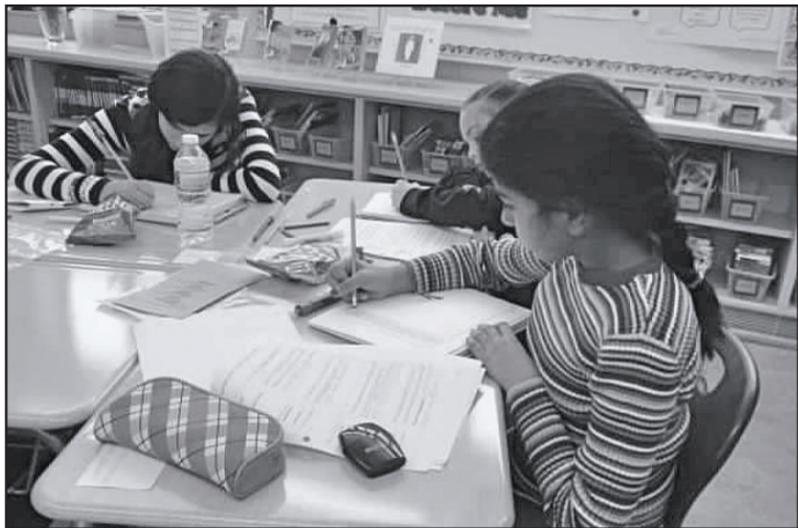
division reflects the role both ELA teachers and content area teachers are now required to play in developing the literacy

skills students need for success in college and career. Ten separate reading and writing standards are now integrated into all discipline specific classrooms.

### The Shrewsbury Writing Project Responds to New Curriculum Changes

#### Elementary Level

After spending a year in development, standardized grade level writing planning charts are in place for grades Pre-K to grade 4. These planning charts remain a work in progress and efforts are being made to be sure that these charts reflect the need to balance narrative, persuasive, and expository writing. This year, with the addition of professional development (PD) sessions, teachers had a choice of



*Pictured in order from the back left are Gabriela Lopes, Madison McCluskey and Shivali Mani diligently working on writing pieces in their English language arts class at Sherwood Middle School.*

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**Shrewsbury Road Scholars**  
5k/1m Fun Run

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45 Oak Street  
Shrewsbury

REGISTRATION: 10:00-11:30 am  
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All proceeds to benefit the Shrewsbury Public Schools Citizens for Education Fund.

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