



Superintendent's Update

April 13, 2016

Dear Shrewsbury Families,

Spring seems to finally be arriving, and our schools are extraordinarily busy as we head into the final phase of the school year. I am pleased and proud that there are many student and staff successes to share with you in this update. Please read on to learn about them, as well as for important information regarding next year's budget and other informational items.

While the state championships and many other honors that are listed below are evidence of excellent performance, our schools also pride themselves on developing our students' character in cultures of respect and caring. **An example of this that has captured significant media attention occurred at last Saturday evening's "Oak's Got Talent" show. See [this link to WCVB](#), [this link to WHDH](#), or [this link to ABC News](#) for touching news reports about how our 7th and 8th grade students helped a peer with autism who was performing in the show and forgot his song's lyrics.** This was an excellent example of inclusion, appreciation, and support that demonstrated that we have students who are not only talented, but who are also kind. As a community, we can be proud that our families and our schools are emphasizing these values and that our students are demonstrating them.

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1) Student successes:

A) **Several state champions!:**

Shrewsbury students have earned several state championships in recent academic and athletic competitions. Congratulations to the following teams and individuals on their tremendous success!

- **The SHS Speech team won its first ever team state championship! Additionally, three members won individual state championships:** Hari Kumar in Impromptu Speaking; Declan Quinn and Taha Saeed in Duo Interpretation; and Prisha Singh in Declamation. Congratulations to head coach Marc Rischitelli and to the entire team, and good luck to the many team members who will now go on to nationals!
- **An elementary Destination Imagination team from Floral Street School won the state championship in the “structural challenge” category!** Destination Imagination is an academic competition that requires teams to use imagination and innovation to solve problems. Congratulations to Shivani Gupta, Shifali Maheshguru, Aashi Gupta, Laasya Gattu, Medha Rakesh and parent managers Anil Gupta, Mukesh Gupta, and Vandana Gupta! Congratulations are also in order for an Oak Middle School team who placed second in the “service challenge” category: Sneha Ramesh, Saanvi Sood, Aabia Hasan, Anusha Chatterjee, Shalini Ambady and parent managers Amber Khan and Urmi Chatterjee. Both teams are now qualified to attend the Destination Imagination world championships in Nashville later this month.
- Teams from Oak Middle School and Shrewsbury High School recently competed in the state **Science Olympiad academic competition, and the following students earned state championships in their events:** From Oak Middle School, Kava Mani and Shawn Noronha won first place in the Green Generation competition, while Arimita Padam, Supriyo Rana and Toyesh Jayaswal won first place in the Experimental Design category. From Shrewsbury High School, Andrea Williams and Mounith Madadi won the gold medal in the Wright Stuff category. Congratulations to these students and to the teams, including several other students who earned top honors in these science challenges!
- **SHS Senior gymnast, Maddie Konz, won the state championship in the uneven parallel bars for the second year in a row.** Way to go, Maddie!

B) **Gold Medalist Choir:**

- **The Oak Middle School Select Choir won its first ever gold medal at the regional competition** sponsored by the Massachusetts Instrumental & Choral Conductors Association, and as a result were able to perform in the state gold medalist festival held this past Saturday at Mechanics Hall in Worcester. Congratulations to conductor, Bryant Clark, and the 7th and 8th grade vocalists on their winning performance! The Oak Select Band, conducted by Tony Uglialoro, won silver medal honors at the MICCA festival as well.

C) **Robotics Team success:**

- **The SHS Robotics team won the Chairman’s Award at the recent competition in Boston.** This is the second year in a row they received the Chairman’s Award, which is US FIRST Robotics’ most prestigious honor, as it is given to the team which “that best represents a model for other teams to emulate and best embodies the purpose and goals of *FIRST*.” This award qualified the team to attend the New England Regional competition in Hartford, Connecticut. Go Colonials!

D) Sportsmanship awards:

- **Both the Girls and Boys SHS Ice Hockey teams won the John Coughlin Sportsmanship Award** presented by the Hockey Officials of Central MA to teams that “most exemplify good sportsmanship.” We are proud of the way our student-athletes conducted themselves on the ice to make their teams deserving of these awards.

2) Staff successes:

A) Cafeteria State Manager of the Year:

- **Congratulations to Coolidge School Cafeteria Manager, Charlene Campbell, who was recently named the Massachusetts Cafeteria Manager of the Year** by the School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts. This award is considered the highest honor a school nutrition manager can earn, for exceptional performance related to the creation of a positive cafeteria environment, management and development of staff, and school and community outreach. Superb work, Charlene!

B) Oak teacher selected as innovation leader for state:

- **Oak Middle School Grade 8 science teacher, Michelle Read, was recently selected as the Lead PBS LearningMedia Digital Innovator for Massachusetts.** Michelle was selected for this prestigious honor based upon a competitive application process. Click [here](#) to see Michelle’s profile as well as those of the winning educators from other states. Outstanding job, Michelle!

3) Budget Update and Monday, April 25 Budget Hearing:

- On April 6, I presented the School Committee with a revised recommendation for the Fiscal Year 2017 School Department Budget. This recommendation reduced the proposed budget by \$1.77 million through a combination of approaches, including recommendations for increased revenue through a) increased fees and limited acceptance of school choice students, b) reductions in equipment and materials budgets, c) reductions of almost ten staff positions, most through attrition but some through layoffs, and d) reductions of the weekly hours or work year of a majority of paraprofessional staff. **The School Committee is holding a second public budget hearing on Monday, April 25 at 7:00pm in the Bent Presentation Room at Shrewsbury High School to receive feedback on the revised plan, including the proposed reductions and the possibility of receiving students through school choice.** To see the presentation slides and revised budget documents, please click [here](#) and [here](#).

4) Draft policy on medication:

- On April 6, the School Committee’s Policy Subcommittee presented a draft of an updated medication policy, which includes updates on the provision of emergency medications, including epinephrine pens for those with life threatening allergies. Click [here](#) to see the draft policy. If you wish to provide feedback to the School Committee in advance of their vote on April 27, please contact them at schoolcommittee@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us.

5) Thank you for your support:

A) Recent community forums and events:

- There has been excellent attendance at several recent community events. Thanks to all of those who have turned out for the panel discussion on the opioid crisis, which was sponsored by the Shrewsbury Coalition for Addiction Prevention & Education (SCAPE); for the discussions of how our schools may need to adapt to the rapidly changing world through the screening of the film *Most Likely to Succeed* and the talk by education author Will Richardson, both sponsored in part by the Colonial Fund; and for the [9th Annual Road Scholars 5K and Fun Run](#), which provided an opportunity for exercise while raising money for innovative practices in our schools through the [Colonial Fund](#). It is gratifying to see so many families and community members engaged with issues that affect our schools and town.

B) Town Meeting approval of school capital maintenance and a building committee for Beal:

- I also want to thank the Town Meeting members for supporting the funding of two critical heating system replacements at Paton and Spring Street Schools, projects which will now be completed this summer, as well as the approval to form an official building committee to explore options for renovating, expanding, or replacing the Beal Early Childhood Center in conjunction with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

I wish all of our students and their families a safe and enjoyable April school vacation next week. If I can be of assistance to you, please contact me at 508-841-8400 or at jsawyer@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us.

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