

## Superintendent's Corner

### Important work

DR. JOSEPH M. SAWYER  
SUPERINTENDENT

The work of our schools has never been more important.

Many of our students are anxious and worried about lots of things. Some are problems we face as a society, like mass shootings, climate change, and a toxic political environment. Others are normal parts of growing up, such as feeling accepted, fitting in, and dealing with peer pressure toward risky behavior – but new dynamics such as the omnipresence and distortions of social media, the rise of vaping, and legalization of marijuana have made things more complicated.

Some of our students face discrimination and rejection because of how they look, where they are from, or whom they are attracted to. Some face the challenges of poverty, while others have financial means but are impoverished emotionally. Many perceive that their self-worth is tied to meeting expectations that they believe their families, their school, and society hold for them – i.e., getting good grades, performing well on the field or on the stage, getting into a “good” college, etc. – and live in fear of rejection if they don't measure up. Others perceive that they are less worthy because a learning or physical disability hinders success as it is traditionally defined. Still others have experienced significant trauma, sometimes known to us and often unknown.

If we are to successfully educate *all* of our students, including those with challenges both visible and invisible, we certainly must attend to our duty of implementing the most effective technical elements of

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- Students learn about, and practice, good citizenship
- Transitions at Sherwood Middle School
- September 11 day of service

“ Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it. - Marian Wright Edelman ”



Students at Oak and Sherwood Middle Schools participated in the Massachusetts STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Week Challenge (October 21st-October 25th) sponsored by Project Lead The Way and Mass STEM Hub. The challenges centered on problems surrounding the theme of zero waste. Left to right, 5th grade students Rowen Bukow and Jeffrey Zheng (5 Grey) tackle the problem of energy waste by building accessories run on solar power.

### Redistricting is important and challenging work

MS. SANDRA FRYC  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR

The new Beal School project is moving forward. Recently concrete foundation work was started and the vision for our school district's new elementary school is becoming a reality. However, the physical building of the school is one piece of this important project. The School Committee recently began the second important part of the project - redistricting of elementary attendance zones.

When the new Beal Elementary School opens in the fall of 2021, the district will provide universal full-day and tuition-free Kindergarten for all students, and all elementary schools in Shrewsbury will have a Kindergarten through Grade 4 configuration. The goal of the redistricting project is to reduce enrollment at existing elementary schools and provide equitable space for all students to continue to receive a high-quality education that meets their academic needs. Redistricting will understandably cause concern for many families and students, but the outcome of the project will have a positive impact on education and how the district is able to deliver educational services to elementary students.

On September 18, 2019 the School Committee voted to form an ad hoc committee to assist with the redistricting process. This committee is charged with examining information, reviewing options and making rec-

ommendations to the School Committee so they can make a well-informed decision on the new attendance boundaries for elementary schools. The Elementary School Redistricting Committee will be comprised of two members of the School Committee, myself and Jon Wensky; Superintendent, Dr. Joseph Sawyer; Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, Patrick Collins; two elementary school principals; and five parents – one from each of the five elementary schools, Beal, Coolidge, Floral, Paton, and Spring.

On October 2, 2019 the School Committee approved the following guidelines for the Redistricting Committee to use as they develop multiple redistricting plans for consideration:

• **Student educational needs will be met regardless of school assignment.** As all Shrewsbury Public Schools elementary schools follow the same state and district curriculum and assessment standards, employ best instructional practices, and have highly qualified educators who are hired using a rigorous district-coordinated process, students will receive a high-quality educational experience regardless of which elementary school they attend. Therefore, it is assumed that students' educational needs will be met in any of our schools and this should not be a factor considered when making assignments.

• **Student population must be distributed so that each school has sufficient, appropriate, dedicated instructional space.** The opening of the new Beal School is intended to provide equity

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teaching. However, while strong curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices are necessary, they are not sufficient to truly meet our kids’ needs and fulfill our mission. All of our students first need to be:

**accepted**, unconditionally, for who they are;

**respected** by being treated with dignity and empathy;

**included** in the learning in our classrooms and the life of our schools; and

**empowered** through our belief in their abilities.

Accepted. Respected. Included. Empowered. We adults want to feel these things. So do our students. When they do, the impact of our schools is profound.

I am proud that our schools are focused on finding ways for all students to be meaningfully included in order to succeed in the classroom and beyond. One shining example is that our Shrewsbury High School Unified Sports program recently earned national recognition from the Special Olympics for its success, where “athletes with and without intellectual disabilities train alongside each other as teammates to promote inclusion, acceptance, and respect.”

I am also proud that our schools are focusing on ways to address all of our students’ needs by strengthening our approach to social and emotional learning. The research is clear that students whose social and emotional needs are met not only are happier, they also learn better, behave better, manage stress better, and make better decisions. We are becoming more intentional and comprehensive about teaching the skills and competencies of social emotional learning, and this will pay off for our students.

While we are making progress, we have much work to do in order to ensure that every student in our schools is accepted, respected, included, and empowered. In the coming months, we will be undergoing an “equity audit” to examine how our current practices and opportunities for students match our aspirations. It is our responsibility to determine areas of improvement, seek evidence-based best practices that match our needs, and implement them so that our students benefit.

This work is difficult. But, I am optimistic because I know our educators’ skill and dedication has and will continue to make a positive difference, and because they are work-

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Welcome to our new staff members

BARBARA A. MALONE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Shrewsbury Public Schools has successfully completed the hiring process to fill key positions within the District. These people were hired to replace educators who had retired or resigned, or positions open due to changing organizational needs, including mental health resources needed to ensure progress towards our strategic goal, “Enhanced Well-being of All”. We also continue to fill long-term substitute positions available due to maternity and paternity leaves or staff illnesses.

We have appointed 56 staff to professional positions, including internal transfers, promotions, and the return of outstanding staff. We have appointed 44 staff to paraprofessional positions. We have appointed 2 staff to office positions, which support the district as a whole. In total, we have hired 102 people for the upcoming school year.

**New Hiring – Professional Staff**  
The 56 professional staff includes one hire at the district level (Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being), 16 hires for the high school (including Meghan de Leon, Director of High School Special Education), 15 hires for the middle level (including Jonathan Kelly, Principal of Sherwood Middle School), and 24 hires for the pre-school/elementary level (including Jacqueline Marcello, Director of Preschool-Fourth Grade Special Education and Lindsay Morse, Instructional Coach and Curriculum Coordinator for Floral Street School).

The teacher selection process in Shrewsbury is rigorous, and through the hard work of our District Leadership Team, as well as educators, parents and students who volunteered to be part of selection meetings or demonstration lessons, we have adhered to our high standards.

The process includes interviews with principals, department directors, curriculum coordinators/instructional coaches, teachers, parents and central office administrators. At the high school level, students also serve on the interview teams.

All teaching positions require a demonstration lesson in the classroom, which is a key ingredient in the selection and hiring process. All professional-level candidates recommended for hire are also required to interview with the Executive Director of Human Resources and the

Superintendent of Schools as the final step in the selection process, where the district’s strategic priorities, *Portrait of a Shrewsbury Graduate*, and mission and core values are discussed individually with each finalist. A thorough reference check is conducted on each new hire, including the “CORI” (Massachusetts background check) and the “SAFIS” (national fingerprint-based FBI background check).

We continue to use [www.schoolspring.com](http://www.schoolspring.com) as our primary sourcing tool, which netted 2598 applicants to our professional positions, including those ultimately filled by our own transfers or promotions. This means that 2.16% of those who applied to our professional positions ultimately received a position with us this year (FY 20). Last year, for FY 19, it was 1.6%; in FY 18 it was 1%; in FY 17 it was 1.46%; in FY16 it was 3.8%.

Principals, Directors, and selection committees reviewed these application packets. Some applicants were selected for phone interviews, and then an even smaller number invited for face-to-face interviews with search committees and teaching demonstration lessons. References were contacted, which resulted in the finalist recommendations.

Our new professional educators completed two days of orientation on August 22 and August 23. Each educator has a mentor assigned for the upcoming school year and will also receive mentorship in their second and third years of employment, in addition to support from the evaluator.

**New Hiring – Paraprofessional Staff**  
As of August 26, 2019 we had hired 44 paraprofessional positions. These positions netted 497 applicants. This means we hired 8.85% of those who applied to our paraprofessional positions, compared to 7% in FY 19, 8% in FY18, 6.2% in FY17, and 4.3% in FY16. These applicants also underwent a rigorous selection process, which included applicant packet screening, phone and face-to-face interviews, reference checks, and the CORI and SAFIS background checks.

We also hired 2 office support positions: Registrar, and Central Office Administrative Assistant, which netted 213 applicants, for a percentage hire of less than 1% in this category.

**Conclusion**  
We continue our long-standing excellent reputation as a collaborative and desirable district in which to work.

**New Educators**

**District**  
Jane O. Lizotte, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being (promotion)  
*Doctor of Education, Northeastern University*  
*Master’s in Elementary Education, Lesley University*  
*Bachelor of Arts in English, Providence College*

**Shrewsbury High School**  
Meghan de Leon, Director of High School Special Education (transfer and promotion)  
*Special Education Leadership, Collaborative for Educational Services/Fitchburg State University*  
*Master of Education, American International College*  
*Bachelor of Arts in Elementary and Special Education, Providence College*

Allison Berkeley, English as a Second Language  
*Bachelor of Arts, Smith College*

Patricia Busso, Mathematics (re-hire)  
*Master of Education, Worcester State University*  
*Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics, College of the Holy Cross*

Gina Campo, Family Consumer Science  
*Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Management, Newbury College*

Jordan Flores, English  
*Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education in English, Framingham State University*

Maura Geoghegan, English  
*Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education in English, Assumption College*

Jennifer Keeler, French  
*Master of Arts in French Literature and Culture, Boston College*  
*Bachelor of Arts in French, University of Massachusetts at Amherst*

Michelle LeMay, School Psychologist (transfer)  
*Educational Specialist in School Psychology, University of Massachusetts at Boston*  
*Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology, Framingham State University*  
*Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, University of Massachusetts at Amherst*

Brian McCauley, Biology  
*Bachelor of Science in Biology, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth*  
*Master of Arts in Teaching, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth*

Marcia Ray, Special Education  
*Master of Education in Special Education, American Interna-*

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# Sherwood welcomes new principal, Mr. Jonathan Kelly

ISHA GOPAL  
SHREWSBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
CLASS OF 2022

Dr. Jane Lizotte's late spring appointment as the Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Well-Being left big shoes to fill at Sherwood Middle School. The next principal would have to be a special person who could both carry on her good work, and develop his own vision for Shrewsbury's fifth and sixth grade population. Dr. Sawyer and the interview committee found that person in a perhaps unlikely spot: in the Assistant Principal's office at Grafton High School.

This July, Jonathan Kelly was appointed as the Principal of Sherwood Middle School. Mr. Kelly, an educator for nineteen years, and a Shrewsbury resident for thirteen, knew the opportunity to serve in a leadership position in the Shrewsbury Public Schools was one he had to pursue. As he reminisces about getting the phone call from Dr. Sawyer to come in for an interview, you can almost see his eyes sparkle; a smile fills his face. He is genuinely excited to be here! I had the opportunity to sit down with Mr. Kelly to discuss his background in education, current position, and goals for Sherwood Middle School. Most importantly, we discussed his family.

Mr. Kelly, a graduate of Assumption College who would go on to earn master's degrees at both UMASS Boston and Worces-



Isha Gopal, Shrewsbury High School Student, grade 10 (left) with new Sherwood Middle School Principal, Jonathan Kelly (right).

ter State University, began his career in education as a history teacher at Xaverian Brothers High School in Westwood. He applied to Xaverian because his brother, an English teacher at the school, encouraged him to do so. This wasn't the first time a family member's commitment to education influenced Mr. Kelly. Though he initially went to Assumption to pursue business, following in the footsteps of his father, it was the path of his mother, a career teacher, that he chose. While an undergraduate, Mr. Kelly student taught at Forest Grove Middle School in Worcester, before seeking jobs at the high school level after graduation. After thirteen years at Xaverian where he taught history, coached, and ultimately served as a department head, Mr. Kelly sought a new challenge. Having recently lost his mother to cancer, Mr. Kelly knew he wanted his work to be impactful on a larger scale; he moved on to Grafton High School where he served as Assistant Principal.

Though Mr. Kelly enjoyed his

six years in Grafton, and all nineteen years at the high school level, he has found the transition to the younger grades to be a smooth one. To him, it feels natural to be working at the fifth and sixth grade level, as he is a self-proclaimed kid at heart. Mr. Kelly believes that this is a fun age for students, and while being their principal is a big responsibility, it is also an exciting one. "I have the chance to shape kids every day," Kelly says. "I want them to feel happy to be here, to know they are welcome just as they are, and for them to feel understood." As I spoke with Mr. Kelly, I learned that his main goal as a principal is to leave an impact on the students he interacts with. Whether it be through a simple high-five or helping a student through a difficult situation, Mr. Kelly wants to leave Sherwood in a better place than it was the day before. He strives to have warm relationships with the students, and to maintain the respectful and kind environment at Sherwood Middle School. It is

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## Redistricting

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of student access to instructional spaces across all five elementary schools. Redistricting of attendance zones must balance enrollment across the five schools so that each school has sufficient, appropriate, dedicated space for instruction in music and art, special education services, English language instruction, etc.

- **School assignments will be determined by drawing attendance zone boundaries and should emphasize a "neighborhood school" approach by prioritizing geographic proximity of home to school for walkability and efficient transportation, while keeping geographic entities intact.** Attendance zones will maximize the ability for students to walk safely to and from school, minimize vehicle travel time to and from school, and avoid splitting clearly segmented or defined neighborhoods, subdivisions, apartment complexes, etc. A "school choice" model where students are enrolled in a certain school by preference, lottery, so called "buffer zones," etc. will not be used.

- **Student demographics should be taken into account when redistricting school attendance zones.** The demographic diversity of a school's student population should reflect the overall demographic diversity of our town to the greatest extent possible.

- **Future population growth should be considered** when establishing attendance zones. It is highly desirable that new school assignment boundaries remain intact for as long as possible.

- **Changes of school assignments for existing students should be minimized to the greatest extent possible within the context of the other priorities.** It is understood that many students will need to change schools when the new Beal School opens in order to achieve the redistribution of students and for balancing school populations, but the redistricting plan should avoid changing school assignments where other priorities can be achieved. However, "grandfathering" some students by allowing them to finish their elementary school experience at their current school when their address is being assigned to a different school zone will not be part of any redistricting plan, due to the logistical issues that would make other principles difficult or impossible to achieve.

- **The redistricting process should work in concert with other district initiatives where possible.** Resources and efforts that will support redistricting may help achieve other district goals, such as the consideration of changing school start times, and these efforts should be coordinated wherever possible.

The redistricting project will also involve the hiring of outside consultants to assist in enrollment and growth studies, including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) expertise. Work will require analysis of current student data, current total town census/demographic data, as well as assessment of new Shrewsbury housing projects in the permitting/planning pipeline.

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## Beal project update: *Just the Facts*

PATRICK C. COLLINS  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
FOR FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

### Groundbreaking: July

On July 22, 2019 we officially broke ground in a ceremony with many state and local elected and appointed officials. Trailers for the construction company and the town's project management company were positioned onto the property for on site supervision and coordination purposes. The main effort included the razing of all existing buildings, and sorting of materials into different piles for either recycling or disposal.

### Demolition and Sitework: July-September

The ongoing demolition also included the former barn structures on the east side of Lake Street for-



Installation of concrete forms for the Beal project began in early October.

merly used by the Glavin Center operation. Sitework preparations included securing the construction areas with perimeter fencing, project signage, and silt management systems to protect the adjacent properties and land areas. Additionally, a fleet of earthmoving equipment was busy shaping the site in a way that best situates the new school on the property.

### Lake Street Closure: September-December

Anyone who has driven Lake Street on the part adjacent to the

former Glavin Center knows well that the narrow and sharp turns and changes in elevation added up to poor sight lines and inadequate passage for the expected increase in bus and passenger traffic when the Beal School opens. So, the project plan and cost included a re-alignment of just that portion of Lake Street that abuts the new school property. To reduce the overall cost and shorten the reconstruction timeline, it was decided to close the road just past Hawkridge all the way to the parking area for the soccer fields. That section of the road was closed on September 3rd and should re-open in mid to late December 2019.

### Concrete and Steel Commence: October-December

Installation of concrete forms, as seen in the above picture, began

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ing together to use best practices and increased supports to serve all of our students. To do this work well is indeed challenging, but it is surely gratifying, because it changes our students' lives for the better and makes our community a better place.

And it has never been more important.

Principal Kelly

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an environment he describes as “family.”

In some ways, Sherwood Middle School is a family for Mr. Kelly. His oldest son, Cameron, a sixth grader at Sherwood was around from day one to show dad the lay of the land. His second son, Griffin, and daughter, Jenna, both at Spring Street School, will join their dad at Sherwood before he knows it. Mr. Kelly and his wife, Kerri, moved to Shrewsbury thirteen years ago while planning a family. They came for the schools, and settled in the Paton district. Recently they moved into a larger house that could accommodate the family of five, and their dog, Tuukka. The Kellys love Shrewsbury, the schools, and the community; they have no plans to leave.

Before saying “goodbye,” I asked Mr. Kelly about his hopes for Sherwood Middle School and for its students. “I just hope every kid can come here and be excited to learn. I want them to see their learning celebrated in our hallways, display cases, and through social media. I want to support teachers in their classrooms, and help them build strong relationships with their kids. I want us all to remember what’s important.” And what is that? According to Kelly, “to do something you are passionate about. To know that it does not matter how much money you make, or where you go to pursue the career. In the end, it is important to simply live a happy life.” Mr. Kelly says he was fortunate to have people in his life to teach him this. His advice for students is to “take a deep breath and know it’s going to be okay.”

Shrewsbury School Journal

The non-profit Shrewsbury School Journal is published three times a year and reaches every household in the diverse and growing town of Shrewsbury. It is published by the central office of the Shrewsbury Public Schools with the help and expertise of many individuals. The mission of the Shrewsbury School Journal is to provide an accurate source of information about our school system and the town in which we live. We hope to foster a community of continuous learners.

Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer  
Superintendent

Elizabeth McCollum  
Project Coordinator

Cristina Luther  
Designer

Shrewsbury High School French students travel to Martinique

HEATHER LEGER  
FRENCH TEACHER,  
SHREWSBURY HIGH SCHOOL

In June of 2019, thirteen Shrewsbury High School (SHS) students traveled with French teachers, Mme. Heather Leger and M. Bobby Sullivan to the beautiful French overseas territory of Martinique to practice their French skills. The 7-night, 8-day trip was a linguistic, educational, cultural, and absolutely spectacular experience!

*It was linguistic and educational.*

Students interacted with teachers and students at a local school, learning about their education system and about the Martinique music. They spoke with local fishermen, learning about the Conch and its use as a means of communication among slave villages. Through their interactions with our tour guides, they honed their French language skills and learned some Créole as well.

*It was cultural.*

Students explored the Banana Museum, the capital, Fort-de-France, as well as the Bibliothèque Schoelcher, home to a visiting art exhibition. They learned about the origins and daily life of slaves at the Slave Village (Village des Esclaves) and visited Cap 110, a memorial to the abolition of slavery. While at Cap 110, the group heard a group playing the Conch shells and actually met the artist who created the memorial. How lucky! And if that wasn’t amazing enough, there was an assistant professor from the University of Michigan who was filming a documentary on slavery and colonialism in Martinique. She invited the students to share their impressions of Martinique and Cap 110 on camera and has promised to screen the film here at SHS once it is completed.



In the town of Gros-Morne with Renaud Bonard, preparing a typical Martinique lunch. Renaud is a purveyor of authentic Martinique culture, dance, history, food, and more. Left side, front to back: Elizabeth Hardy, Kendall Bortle, Michael Ayisi, Yana Djotova, Maeve Aherne, Max Evers, Erin Flynn. Right side, front to back: Gabrielle Constantine, Renaud Bonard, Victor Verma, Diana Cherniack.

The highlight of our trip was probably the day we spent in Gros-Morne with Renaud Bonard, a charismatic Martiniquais who shared his love and knowledge of his culture with us. He had us preparing and cooking both lunch and dinner, opening and tasting coconuts, participating in traditional dancing, playing slave games, and singing, all in French. It was an amazing day. Students were so moved by Renaud’s warmth and generosity of spirit that it was hard to say goodbye at the end of the night.

Other cultural activities included being guests of a well-known Martiniquaise chef at her home where students were taught how to make some local dishes and then we all enjoyed eating the fruits of their labor at lunch. We lunched and swam at *la Plage des Salines* (a well-known white sand beach) with an adjacent mangrove pond (*Étang des Salines*), saw *Le Rocher du Diamant* (a huge volcanic rock), walked around the village of Saint Pierre (with a beach of magnetic black sand),

saw a distant view of *La Montagne Pelée* (an extinct volcano), bathed under the waterfall at *Saut Gendarme*, and saw many tropical flowers and trees at *le Jardin de Balata* (a botanical garden). Our last day was spent at Anses d’Arlet on a beautiful tropical beach, taking in the sun and reflecting on our whirlwind trip and the amazing experiences we had there.

Along the way, we had a lot of laughs, gained confidence in our language skills, learned a lot about this overseas French territory, and made several new friends. I know that this trip has helped the students gain an appreciation for a new culture and a different way of life. I hope that they will be more culturally aware and sensitive when they meet new people, and that they will use this newly gained perspective to make a positive impact on the world in which they live.

A heartfelt thanks go out to the parents and families of these students who trusted them to go on this trip and me to take them. I am sure that this will be a memory that they will keep forever. A special thanks to the people of Martinique, our travel agent Teach By Travel, and especially to our tour manager, bus driver, and Thierry, our amazing tour director, for their knowledge, passion, generosity of spirit, and of course, friendship. *Vous nous manquez.*

Students who attended: Angelo Ritacco, Elizabeth Hardy, Maeve Aherne, Kalley Hou, Kendall Bortle, Michael Ayisi, Max Evers, Gabrielle Constantine, Erin Flynn, Diana Cherniack, Sarah Li, Yana Djotova, Victor Verma



Cap 110 is a memorial erected in memory of slavery. It was built at Anse Caffard during the sesquicentennial of the abolition of slavery in 1998 by Laurent Valere, a painter and sculptor of Martinique. Laurent Valere himself is at the head of the triangular memorial. Our gaze is directed towards Africa where the slaves originated.



# Our students, our legacy

DR. JANE LIZOTTE  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
FOR COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS  
AND WELL-BEING

On Friday morning, August 30th, the district’s first professional development day of the school year commenced when 14 current and former students of the Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) shared their perspectives regarding positive schooling experiences (i.e. people, events, sports, clubs and activities) that contributed to the people they are today, while offering insight into how our schools can strengthen what we do for all students. The goal of the event was to strengthen educator understanding of the ways in which our collective and individual professional practice impacts the students with whom we work each day. The diverse group represented five current seniors at Shrewsbury High School (SHS), and nine graduates of SHS, many of whom attended two or four year colleges and universities, and one graduate who chose to pursue a career, eventually returning to work for the town of Shrewsbury and welcoming his first child. Students and alumni included Jim Heald, class of 1989; David Chapin, class of 2002; Ruby Lee, class of 2009; Sarah Hopkins, M.S., class of 2010; Vinay Maliakal and Anthony Qualey, class of 2012; Hannah Hopkins, class of 2014; Michael West, class of 2015; Marlie Atlabachew, class of 2018; and T.J. Morgera, Jack Foley, twins Sophia and Jessica Peng, and John West – all from the class of 2020. Ruby Lee and Marlie Atlabachew sent video of themselves, as they were unable to attend in person.

The program, entitled *Our Students, Our Legacy*, consisted of brief vignettes shared by each individual, and focused on positive and challenging experiences of education in Shrewsbury, from preschool through graduation from high school. Each presenter communicated the powerful impact that relationships had on how they perceived themselves, challenged themselves, became more resilient, and gained perspective of the world around them. The students and graduates offered insight into ways in which our schools can strengthen what we do for all of our students. Some of their suggestions included offering “life skills” courses that focus on budgeting, time management, basic auto mechanics, and mindfulness. Others suggested that middle school students engage in mentorship programs with high school students, and high school students be partnered with adults involved in careers and trades in which they are interested in

pursuing. The presentation was well received by those in attendance and will set the stage for the work in which we will individually and collectively engage this year. We look forward to continuing to share the stories and wisdom of alumni through mentorship, internships, and interviews using video and cable television programming.

SPS educators, members of the Shrewsbury School Committee, and visiting guests were reminded why we engage in this important work and how our work impacts the lives of our students, from preschool through high school. Feedback from the faculty surveys completed following the presentation included the following:

- “*Our Students, Our Legacy* was amazing. It left us all feeling a sense of accomplishment and excitement heading into this year. I loved seeing old faces and having a chance to reconnect with old students. Hearing the impact their teachers have had on their lives was inspiring and a great message to all.”
- “Hearing from past students was great! An important reminder about teaching from the heart!”
- “The alumni speeches were informative and inspiring.”
- “I especially enjoyed the range of alumni and hearing about the

different paths that they have all taken.”

- “Let’s hear more from students who went into trades, military and the workforce straight from high school. Let’s share success stories beyond college and advanced degrees...”
  - “Basic life skills/classes should be offered to all students.”
  - “Learned a lot from the alumni suggestions which I will try to implement into my curriculum.”
  - “I came away with some ideas about inclusive practice from the suggestions given by the guest speakers. For example, videotaping lectures for students to view at a later time when they may be able to focus better.”
  - “Helped to establish the “why” for our work. I enjoyed hearing the feedback for improvements from the presenters.”
  - “As a new teacher to Shrewsbury, it gave me a great feeling to hear all of these amazing people talk about their experiences going to Shrewsbury schools!”
- The video for this presentation can be found online at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTaEpyLiyLA>
- We are grateful to Ms. Amy Kotsopoulos for creating the program, Curry Printing for copying the program at no cost, and to members of our technology, sound, and television team, including Mr. Greg Marceau and Ms. Maggie Korab.



Shrewsbury Public Schools students and alumni who shared their perspectives: front - Anthony Qualey (2012); 2nd row left to right - Sophia Peng (2020), Jessica Peng (2020), Sarah Hopkins (2010), Hannah Hopkins (2014); 3rd row left to right - Jim Heald (1989), David Chapin (2002), Michael West (2015), John West (2020), Thomas Morgera (2020), Jack Foley (2020), and Vinay Maliakal (2012). Not pictured: Ruby Lee (2009) and Marlie Atlabachew (2018).

## Beal

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appearing in early October. This will set frame of the foundation for concrete pours to commence and continue in late October through November.

### Budget and Timeline: On Budget/On Schedule

The total project budget for construction, land purchase and road realignment, furniture and equipment, project managers/related professionals, and architectural services is \$92.8M. We have a commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority to receive up to \$34M in project reimbursement with the balance funded by the town.

Given the scale and timing of the project, it has been organized into phases of work with several rounds of bidding and procurement. Thus far, with demolition, site work, and concrete and steel procured, we remain on budget.

Project managers have done a good job at planning work in concert with our seasonal weather conditions. The project is on schedule to date and with concrete hopefully completed before very cold winter conditions, the steel work can continue throughout the winter season.

In summary, the Beal Project is proceeding as planned from all dimensions!

## Redistricting

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The Elementary Schools Redistricting Project will require a significant amount of work including detailed planning, growth projections, and frequent communication with the community. The School Committee is committed to a transparent process with regular communication intervals so that our community, especially elementary school parents, remains informed.

The estimated redistricting project timeline has a completion date of January 2021. The Elementary School Redistricting Project Committee will provide the School Committee with their recommendations based on the guiding principles and data. After a thorough analysis of options, the School Committee will vote on the new redistricting plan for all elementary schools and our decision will be communicated to our school district so families can begin to plan for the start of the new school year in August 2021 when the new Beal School opens.

The School Committee recognizes that the redistricting of elementary attendance zones will cause concern and anxiety for elementary school families. Change can be difficult, but even more so when our children are involved. Our hope is to reach an outcome with the least disruption possible; however, we know that many children will be assigned to a new school. This is my twelfth year serving as a School Committee member, and in my opinion, the redistricting of elementary attendance zones is some of the most challenging and important work I’ve undertaken during my tenure. This is why we are starting the redistricting project early and we will be involving the opinions of parents, educators, Central Office staff and School Committee members as the work progresses.

The last time our school district conducted an elementary school redistricting project was in 1996-1997 due to the opening of the Floral Elementary School. Since 1997 our student enrollment population has grown significantly. The new Beal School will provide much needed space at the elementary level and the process to assess attendance zones is important work that needs to be thoughtfully and carefully completed in order to best serve our elementary students now and for the years to come.

I am confident that the redistricting project will be successful for our school district and students and staff will adapt to necessary changes. The Shrewsbury Public Schools website <https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov> has complete information regarding the elementary restricting project and it will be updated throughout the Elementary School Redistricting Committee’s work. There will also be updates provided during our School Committee meetings and other public meetings. I encourage everyone to periodically review the school department website for updates. Finally, if you have questions as the redistricting project moves along, please do not hesitate to reach out to the School Committee at [schoolcommittee@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:schoolcommittee@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us)



Welcome

CONTINUED from page 2

tional College  
Bachelor of General Studies in Human Development, Lesley University

Michele Rogers, School Nurse  
Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Rivier College

Michael Stack, Chemistry  
Bachelor of Science in Education, Biology and Chemistry, University of Limerick (Ireland)  
Master of Arts in Education, Portland State University

Ryan Stoens, Chemistry  
Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry and Secondary Education, Knox College

Carissa Valeri, Visual Arts  
Bachelor of Arts in Art, Framingham State University

Tiffany Vega, School Counselor  
Master of Counseling in School Counseling, Assumption College  
Bachelor of Science in Communications and English, Salem State University

Kerri Vokes, Adjustment Counselor  
Master of Social Work, Boston College  
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, University of Massachusetts at Boston

Oak Middle School  
Kelli Keaney, Mathematics  
Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and Secondary Education, Assumption College

Grace McKenzie, English Language Arts  
Master of Education in Secondary Education, University of Massachusetts at Boston  
Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Sydney Packer, Science  
Master of Education, University of Massachusetts at Amherst  
Bachelor of Science in Biology, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Nancy Sinacola, Latin  
Bachelor of Arts in the Classics, Wesleyan University

Genevieve Steere, Special Education  
Master of Education in Special Education, Fitchburg State University  
Bachelor of Education in Moderate Special Education and Elementary Education, Fitchburg State University

Kristen Swartz, Mathematics  
Bachelor of Education in Middle School Education and Mathematics, Fitchburg State University

Jon Zucchi, Music  
Master of Education in Music Education, Boston Conservatory  
Bachelor of Arts in Music, Providence College

Sherwood Middle School  
Jonathan Kelly, Principal of Sherwood Middle School  
Master of Education in School Leadership & Administration, Worcester State University  
Master of Arts in American Studies, Uni-

Students learn about, and practice, good citizenship

JENNIFER DiFRANCESCA  
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,  
SHREWSBURY HIGH SCHOOL

This fall, students enrolled in Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Social Science courses have had multiple opportunities to practice the skills, knowledge and dispositions that will enable them to be active, capable and caring citizens of their local, national and global communities. Students have connected their learning to current issues and will have opportunities to connect with real world audiences through field studies and guest speakers.

In World Civilizations, ninth grade students began the year with an overview of various forms of government using resources from iCivics. They then engaged in an in-depth examination of autocracy by analyzing the reigns of absolute monarchs such as Louis XIV of France and Peter the Great of Russia. At the conclusion of the unit, the Class of 2023 had their first opportunity to write a Document Based Question, in which they organized information from multiple sources and created an argument in support of their thesis. In October, students examined how French citizens, such as Robespierre

and Napoleon, used their civic knowledge, skills and dispositions to influence the causes, course and consequences of the French Revolution. In November, students will evaluate the impact of nationalism, conservatism and liberalism on events in the 1800s and make connections to the world today.

In US History I, tenth grade students began the year examining early European settlements in North America including the impact on Native American societies. More recently, tenth grade students developed their ability to analyze the purpose and point of view of sources as part of their analysis of events during the American Revolution such as the Boston Massacre. Students also had opportunities to demonstrate their civic knowledge, skills and dispositions during simulations of the Congress under the Articles of Confederation or the Constitutional Convention. During these simulations, students were able to experience challenges and opportunities similar to those faced by members of our state and national legislative bodies.

In US History II, eleventh grade students began the year examining the Gilded Age including immigration, the rise of big business and the impact of

industrialization on different socio-economic groups. They analyzed the credibility, accuracy and relevance of various sources to determine if the events and individuals of the Gilded Age had more of a positive or negative impact on America. During their study of the Progressive Era, students evaluated the next steps and actions proposed by citizens, groups and government agencies to address the problems facing the nation in the early 1900s. Members of the Class of 2021 also examined how individuals, such as W.E.B. DuBois, Theodore Roosevelt and Susan B. Anthony, defined civic knowledge and skills and compared and contrasted it with how students define citizenship today.

Throughout the year, students in World Civilizations, US History I and US History II as well as our elective courses will continue to explore and have opportunities to practice what it means to be a capable and caring citizen of their local, national and global communities. They will improve their ability to ask questions, evaluate sources, develop arguments, present in a variety of formats, and determine next steps by using technology, engaging with guest speakers and expanding their knowledge during field studies.

versity of Massachusetts at Boston  
Bachelor of Arts in History, Assumption College

Erin Kennedy, Special Education Team Chair (transfer and promotion)  
Certificate of Advanced Educational Studies in BCBA, Western New England College  
Master of Science in Education and Severe Special Needs, Simmons College  
Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Communications, Assumption College

Jennifer Bolt, Adjustment Counselor  
Master of Social Work, Salem State University  
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Providence College

Erica Dougherty, Science/Mathematics  
Master of Education in Elementary Education, Worcester State University  
Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Westfield State University

Caitlin Early, Special Education (promotion)

Master of Education in Special Education and Elementary Education, Lesley University  
Bachelor of Science in Health Education, Worcester State University

Carie Holman, Spanish  
Master of Arts in Spanish, Worcester State University  
Bachelor of Arts in Spanish, Framingham State University

Jordan Smith, English Language Arts/Social Studies  
Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education, Westfield State University

Roberto Soto, English as a Second Language (transfer)  
Master of Education in School Leadership & Administration, Worcester State University  
Teacher Certification Program in English as a Second Language, School for International Training  
Bachelor of Education in Secondary Education and Biology, University of Puerto Rico

Elementary Level  
Jacqueline Marcello, Director of Preschool and Elementary Special Education (promotion)

Advanced Training Program in Applied Behavior Analysis, Northeastern University  
Master of Science in Communication Disorders, Worcester State University,  
Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, University of Maine at Orono

Beal Early Childhood Center  
Jenie Song-Gagne, Music  
Master of Music in Music Education, University of Miami  
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music Performance, Carnegie Mellon University

Heather Downs, English as a Second Language (transfer)  
Master of Education, Lesley University  
Bachelor of Science in Education, Framingham State University

Coolidge School  
Erin Cook, Third Grade (transfer)  
Master of Teaching, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth  
Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education, Worcester State University

CONTINUED, see page 7



# Transitions at Sherwood Middle School

MEG BELSITO  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
FOR STUDENT SERVICES  
NOELLE FREEMAN  
DIRECTOR OF NURSING  
AMY WALLACE  
ADJUSTMENT COUNSELOR/  
CLINICAL COORDINATOR-  
TRANSITIONS PROGRAM  
PATRICIA WATERHOUSE  
DIRECTOR OF MIDDLE SCHOOL  
SPECIAL EDUCATION

Over the past several years, the need to provide increased support for students who struggle with mental and behavioral health issues has been a focus of Shrewsbury Public Schools, as evidenced by two of our District Strategic Priorities: *Enhanced well-being of all*, and *Learning environments where everyone's success matters*. With this in mind, during the 2018-19 school year, the district applied for, and was awarded, a Comprehensive School Health Services Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health School Health Unit. This grant will provide partial funding for a new program whose aim is to support struggling students at Sherwood Middle School.

*Transitions* is a short-term, intensive general education program that is open to students with and without disabilities who experience significant difficulty with the transition from elementary to middle school, and/or are transitioning back to a full schedule after missing extensive amounts of learning due to serious mental health, medical, and/or life transition challenges. The program provides clinical support, academic coordination, family support, and coordinates services with other school staff and community providers. *Transitions* is staffed by a school adjustment counselor and an academic coordinator.

Services provided to students in *Transitions* and their families include direct clinical supports, academic coordination, family engagement, and care coordination. Direct clinical supports are provided by the adjustment counselor and include counseling, coping mechanisms, skill building, and crisis intervention. Academic coordination involves collaboration between the academic coordinator, the classroom teachers, and other Sherwood Middle School support staff to ensure that the student

demonstrates sufficient mastery of curriculum. Recognizing that family support and collaboration are essential to student success, *Transitions* staff meet and communicate with a student's family on a regular basis to discuss student progress and create a plan for next steps. In an effort to ensure that students receive the care and services that they need both in school and outside of school, the program clinician provides care coordination that includes consultation and collaboration with all in-school supports and community providers available to each student to maximize their success.

The Sherwood Middle School *Transitions* program has been established in consultation with the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health's Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT) team. Shrewsbury Public Schools educators worked with the BRYT team to establish a successful *Transitions* program at Shrewsbury High School in 2017, and feel fortunate to have this opportunity for continued collaboration as the Sherwood Middle School program takes shape.

*Special Education, Bay Path University*  
*Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Wheelock College*  
Megan Moran, Adjustment Counselor  
*Master of Counseling Psychology, Assumption College*  
*Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Franklin Pierce College*

Allison Whiteside, Music (shared with Paton)  
*Bachelor of Music in Vocal and General Music Education, Miami University*

Paton School  
Stephanie Curtis, Fourth Grade  
*Master of Elementary Education, Lesley University*  
*Bachelor of Science in Health Education, Worcester State University*

Rebekah Landers, Special Education  
*Master of Science in Special Education, Simmons College*  
*Bachelor of Arts in English, University of Massachusetts at Amherst*

Kara Richardson, Adjustment Counselor (transfer) (shared with Spring)  
*Master of Social Work, University of Connecticut*  
*Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education, Worcester State University*

CONTINUED, see right

## Welcome

CONTINUED from left

Emily Walker, First Grade  
*Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and Psychology, Worcester State University*

Allison Whiteside, Music (also shared with Floral)  
*Bachelor of Music in Vocal and General Music Education, Miami University*

Spring Street School  
Laura Braun-Lush, School Psychologist  
*Educational Specialist in School Psychology, Appalachian State University*  
*Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, North Carolina State University*

Kara Richardson, Adjustment Counselor (transfer) (shared with Paton)  
*Master of Social Work, University of Connecticut*  
*Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education, Worcester State University*

Parker Road Preschool  
Bridget Nichols, Special Education Team Chair (promotion)  
*Applied Behavior Analyst Certificate, University of Massachusetts at Boston*  
*Master of Education in Special Education, Lesley University*  
*Bachelor of Arts in Human Development, Boston College*

Jennifer Foran, ELC Coordinator  
*Master of Education, Simmons College*  
*Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Worcester State University*

Sheila Parnell, Preschool (promotion)  
*Master of Education in Special Education, Lesley University*  
*Bachelor of Arts in Preschool Education, PreK-2, Bay Path University*

New Office Support Staff  
Pamela Panarelli, Registrar (rehire)  
Blake Stewart, Central Office Administrative Assistant

New Paraprofessional Staff  
Tutors  
Deb Martel (retired teacher)

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Technicians  
Thayna Aguiar, Marissa Bachand, Sujatha Bhogaraju, Ashleigh Carrasquillo, Sasirekha Gurunathan, Samuel Hanson, Debra Harstad, Jamie Hurley, Rhythm Kesavan, Robert Lamb, Erin Laverty, Lam Nguyen, Kristin Overly, Kami Pawelek, Nicole Quatrale, Morgan Robinson, Christine Romano, Daniela Romeo, Tiffany Sackett, Edlira Simmarano, Rashmi Vinchure, Ariana Zecco

Child Specific Aides  
Katie Andress, Hymavathi Avadhuta, Tonga Carter, Reena Dhal, Jessica Dujnic-Bjork, Destiny Hernandez, Ivannah Jacob, Samantha Letourneau, Emilia McCool, Patricia McIntosh, Deborah Mihaley, Stephanie Morgan, Jaclyn Pierce, Katelyn Salsgiver, Renee Stiert, Meghan Tower

Instructional Aides  
Adelina Baka, Marybeth Graham, Colleen Judge, Bridget Marshall, Donna Twitchell

## Welcome

CONTINUED from page 6

Brianna Hamel, Special Education  
*Master of Education in Teacher of Students with Severe Disabilities, Fitchburg State University*  
*Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, University of Massachusetts at Lowell*

Michelle Lucas, Third Grade  
*Master of Education in Elementary Education, Anna Maria College*  
*Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Bridgewater State University*

Carey Mount, Special Education  
*Master of Education in Special Education, Fitchburg State University*  
*Bachelor of Business Administration, University of Massachusetts at Amherst*

Katrice Theroux, Adjustment Counselor  
*Certificate of Study in School Social Work/School Adjustment Counseling, Assumption College*  
*Master of Arts in School Counseling, Boston College*  
*Bachelor of Arts in English, St. Michael's College*

Floral Street School  
Lindsay Morse, Curriculum Coordinator/Instructional Coach  
*Certificate of Advanced Studies*

*in Resiliency in the Helping Professions, Assumption College*  
*Master of Education as a Reading Specialist, American International College*  
*Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education, Framingham State University*  
*Bachelor of Arts in Communications, Assumption College*

Kristen Burt, Special Education  
*Master of Education as a Reading Specialist, Gordon College*  
*Bachelor of Science in Moderate Special Education and Elementary Education, Boston University*

Emily Knapp, Second Grade  
*Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Elementary Education, and Special Education, Hartwick College*

Elizabeth Marciello, First Grade  
*Master of Teaching in Elementary Education, University of Massachusetts at Boston*  
*Bachelor of Science in Psychology, University of Massachusetts at Boston*

Ani Marold, Third Grade (rehire)  
*Master of Education, University of Massachusetts at Amherst*  
*Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, University of Massachusetts at Amherst*

Emma McLaughlin, Special Education  
*Master of Education in Severe*



# September 11 day of service


PRESTON KARP  
STUDENT,  
SHREWSBURY HIGH SCHOOL

I have always had a passion for helping others. When I was selected to be the Project 351 Ambassador for Shrewsbury in 2017, I was ecstatic and honored by the fact that I would be able to put my passion for service to good use by receiving leadership training and service experiences unlike anything else. After an exhilarating first year of service, I have been honored to serve on the Regional


Unity Corps (RUC), a Project 351 alumni leadership board for the past two years.

As a member of the RUC, I have been able to develop the legacy I will leave at Shrewsbury High School (SHS). Last summer, I worked with SHS principal, Mr. Todd Bazydlo, to create a Shrewsbury-based service project in honor of the September 11 National Day of Service. This is a pilot project that is expected to grow in the coming years. In 2019, small groups of Shrewsbury High School students united in service at Grafton Community Harvest

Farm, Saint Anne’s Church and Thrift Shop, and The Be Like Brit Foundation. The idea is that putting goodness into the world by serving the community will combat the tragedy of the events that occurred on September 11, 2001. The day was truly incredible as approximately thirty SHS students and ten faculty members traveled to the three locations to serve. I had the privilege of serving at The Be Like Brit Foundation which was a true pleasure. I feel so grateful to have been able to create this project and I truly look forward to seeing how it grows in the coming years.



**HANNAH KANE**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
North Weymouth District, Shrewsbury, Weymouth



*I hope everyone is having a terrific school year!*

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Paid for by the Committee to Elect Hannah Kane



From left to right, students Julia Rider, Ankita Goswami, Meg Sullivan, Grace Crowley, Caitlin Kane, Megan Lambert, Ethan Clarke, Preston Karp, and Caroline Shields are shown with English Teacher Kelly Lawlor and a volunteer from The Be Like Brit Foundation.

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## Colonial Fund Speaker Series

The Shrewsbury Public Schools Colonial Fund is excited to sponsor a three-part speaker series for caregivers, staff and the community. Experts in their field will each address an important topic tied to the district's strategic priorities. Please join us for these important conversations.



**Cathy Vatterott**  
*Rethinking Homework: Best Practices that Support Diverse Needs*  
Thursday, November 14th @ 7:00 p.m.  
Shrewsbury High School



**Richard Weissbourd**  
*Taming Admissions Anxiety: Navigating hopes, expectations & the minefield of status & achievement pressure*  
Tuesday, March 31st @ 7:00 p.m.  
Shrewsbury High School



**Lynn Lyons**  
*Continuing the discussion about anxiety: Helping teens learn the important skills of tolerating uncertainty and discomfort*  
Tuesday, April 7th @ 7:00 p.m.  
Oak Middle School


**About the Colonial Fund**

The Colonial Fund's mission is to invest in the development of new ideas and initiatives that support the district's strategic priorities. Through funding speakers, projects, and programs, the Colonial Fund strives to help students obtain the skills and knowledge they need for the 21st century.


<https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov/future/colonial-fund>



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