

Superintendent’s Corner

Extraordinary efforts during an extraordinary time

DR. JOSEPH M. SAWYER
Superintendent of Schools

This column is adapted from Dr. Sawyer’s graduation remarks to the Shrewsbury High School Class of 2021

Usually, you seniors are begging for snow days because you don’t have to make them up at the end of the year, but as you know, this was a very different kind of year. Little did you know back in early March 2020 that I would be calling a “no school day” because of concerns about a virus, followed by not returning to school for the rest of your junior year and then attending school in-person on alternating days or entirely from home for most or all of your senior year. As was mentioned at last night’s Commemoration, this year part of “senioritis” was actually *wanting* to come to school more often, and thank goodness that became possible.

Of course, forecasting the weather doesn’t compare to the frustrations we all felt with not being able to forecast the evolution of a pandemic that has affected all of us deeply – and too many tragically due to the loss of loved ones. I truly wish that your high school experience wasn’t interrupted and impacted in so many difficult ways that were beyond your control. As a result of the circumstances, many important decisions needed to be made about how we

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“ Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family. ”
- Kofi Annan



Major Howard W. Beal School is opening in Fall 2021. See more on page 4.

A brighter path forward for our schools

JON WENSKY
School Committee Chair

The May 4th town vote in favor of the operational override will have positive, game-changing effects on how we prioritize and plan for school budgets over the next four years. We are extremely grateful to the residents of Shrewsbury for their overwhelming support of educational and municipal services. The voters decided to invest in our town, preserve and enhance our quality of life, and to protect the critical resources of our public schools during a time when it’s most urgently needed.

On May 22, Town Meeting members unanimously approved the School Department’s FY22 budget of \$75,722,168. This represents an 11.36% increase over the FY21 budget. This increase eliminated the \$4.8 Million budget gap that existed prior to the operational override vote. It includes \$6,034,050 (or 8.87%) to bring our current program forward in addition to restoring 4 of 30 teaching positions removed as a result of last year’s \$1.9 Million budget gap. These four additions include two grade 5 teachers and two high school teachers. Additionally, this budget fully funds the opening and operation of the new Beal Elementary School in September, the equivalent of \$1,692,835 or 2.49% of the total increase. These funds will be used to ex-

cute our elementary school redistricting plan, provide equitable class sizes, improve access to educational space across all five elementary schools, and will finally provide Shrewsbury access to tuition-free, full day kindergarten for all students.

This educational budget crisis we faced for next year was far worse than what led to the successful 2014 override. A budget solution for FY22 required careful consideration, diligence, and discussion with town leadership to evaluate the risks and determine the best path forward for our community. Ultimately, the only solution would be to allow the voters of Shrewsbury to determine the fiscal trajectory of the town through voting on an operational override. The successful override could not have been made possible without the forward thinking and outstanding financial planning of our Town Manager Kevin Mizikar, the partnership established between the School Committee and Board of Selectmen, and the unanimous support of the Finance Committee. We appreciate our town leadership for listening to these critical budgetary concerns and for working together to find a solution that seeks to maintain and improve all town services - municipal and public education.

The passage of the May 4th override forged a

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would educate you and all of our students from preschool through high school during this long-duration health emergency. I am quite sure that there were times when my decisions were imperfect and caused you frustration and difficulties, and for that I am sorry. I think it is important to commend you for persevering through it all, to commend your families for supporting you, and to commend all of the Shrewsbury educators and support staff who worked incredibly hard to adapt in order to meet your needs to the best of their abilities. I will be forever grateful for everything that all of you – students, families, and school staff – did to navigate through these challenges, and I ask that you all take a moment to cheer and applaud one another for your extraordinary efforts during what has been an extraordinary time.

This past year has indeed been extraordinary, and your experiences have become a part of the person you are now and will influence the person you will become. I have no doubt that you are better equipped to adapt to challenges, and that you are better able to respond to the reality that things can change quickly and drastically. As the pandemic is (hopefully) coming to a close, there are still an abundance of challenges to take on, and our society needs thoughtful and motivated young people like you to use what you have learned from your families, from your friends, from school, and from these extraordinary experiences of the past year to make a positive difference.

So, here is my final forecast for the Class of 2021. I’m predicting you will live lives that model respect and kindness; that use the knowledge and skills you have learned to make significant contributions to the well-being of others and your community; and that make a positive difference for those who are fortunate to receive your friendship and love. I wish you the brightest of skies ahead, and I am confident that after this year that you have what it takes to weather the inevitable storms. Godspeed, and congratulations Class of 2021!



Recognizing 2021 retirees

BARBARA A. MALONE
Executive Director of Human Resources

Twenty-two staff are ending their education careers with a well-deserved retirement. In combination, they have served the students of Shrewsbury for 472 years. This total represents an average of 21.45 years of service in Shrewsbury and does not include prior educational experience in other districts. Each of these talented staff members is recognized for their commitment and dedication to the children of Shrewsbury. Listed below are the names, positions, schools, and years of service to Shrewsbury. We wish them a healthy, relaxing, and happy retirement.

Administrators

Gregory Nevader has served 12 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. He is retiring as an Assistant Principal for Shrewsbury High School.

Teachers/Professional Staff

Adrianna Anderson has served 10 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as a Spanish Teacher for Oak Middle School.

Patricia Broszeit has served 34 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as a Kindergarten Teacher for Calvin Coolidge School.

Noreen Camerato has served 25 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as a First Grade Teacher for Spring Street School.

Kathleen Floyd Pehoviak has served 20 years as an educa-

tor in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as a School Counselor for Shrewsbury High School.

Barbara Luby has served 23 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as a Fourth Grade Teacher for Spring Street School.

Judith O’Connor has served 16 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as a School Counselor for Shrewsbury High School.

Marc Spisto has served 28 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. He is retiring as a School Psychologist for Shrewsbury High School.

Cheryl Stoychoff has served 37 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as an English Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher for Sherwood Middle School.

Michelle Thayer has served 21 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as a Kindergarten Teacher for Beal Early Childhood Center.

Susan Tokay has served 6 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as a Special Education Teacher for Shrewsbury High School.

Robert Wilson has served 23 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. He is retiring as an Art Teacher for Floral Street School.

Paraprofessionals

Mary Gill has served 34 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as an Instructional Aide for Walter J. Paton school.

Darlene Golden has served 22 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as a Child Specific Aide for Sherwood Middle School.

Diane Killay has served 18 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as an Instructional Aide for Beal Early Childhood Center.

Elissa Lindsay has served 20 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as an Instructional Aide for Beal Early Childhood Center.

Debra O’Donnell has served 16 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as an Instructional Aide for Beal Early Childhood Center.

Rosemary Royer has served 23 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as a Media Aide for Walter J. Paton School.

Catherine Shaw has served 20 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as a Special Education Aide for Sherwood Middle School.

Joan Sjogren has served 14 years as an educator in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as an Instructional Aide for Beal Early Childhood Center.

Administrative Assistants

Donna Manzoli has served 33 years in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as the Curriculum Administrative Assistant for the district.

Kathleen Taylor has served 17 years in Shrewsbury. She is retiring as an Administrative Assistant for Shrewsbury High School.

Summer learning 2021

AMY CLOUTER
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

June always arrives with a warm welcome, and never more so than this year! When we flipped the calendar to the 18th, students and staff across the district celebrated achievements hard won during the pandemic. The combination of high vaccination rates and the reduced spread of the COVID-19 virus in Massachusetts are certainly harbingers of better times ahead. At the same time, we know that students will continue to need support even as we plan to resume school as we knew

it in 2019. For that reason, curriculum teams at every level designed summer resources such that there would be learning materials available to every child in Shrewsbury, including links to offerings facilitated by the Shrewsbury Public Library. Please check out the district website for details.

Similar to last year, students will be able to access activity calendars, online practice tools and a robust summer reading program via the district web page. In addition, under the direction of Liza Trombley, Director of English at Shrewsbury High School, and Lisa Daly, Curriculum Coordinator for English Language Arts in Grades 5-8, this

summer students will be able to connect with each other in a Reading Buddy program. Finally, some students have been invited to attend in-person summer programs at either Sherwood Middle School or Oak Middle School.

What will summer school look like this year? As an administrative team, we continue to follow guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as we think about how best to serve our students. The Student Services Department has always run an Extended School Year (ESY) program for eligible stu-

Connected in a disconnected year

SARAH ANDREWS
Class of 2022
MR. JASON ANDREOLA
*Instructional Technology
Teacher & Yearbook Advisor,
Shrewsbury High School*

It's no secret that this year has been, for lack of a better word, unprecedented. This brought a lot of uncertainty for creating the Shrewsbury High School (SHS) 2021 yearbook and determining how to fill pages in a year to be filled with social distancing, masks and cancellations. When the yearbook committee sat down in September, over the Zoom technology platform, we grasped at straws to think of new ways to capture this year with so much uncertainty ahead. Would schools close again? Would we have enough content and photos to create a yearbook? How would we build the book over Zoom? How would pages of all masked people look? We also dug deep for ways to be able to honor our seniors, who would be missing out on a lot in their final year of high school.

After several meetings and hours of brainstorming, we

settled on a theme of "connected", to represent the ways we would still remain connected in a very disconnected year. Despite not all being together, we discussed how our connections would come in varying new ways this year, including both in person and online. Additionally, we discussed how our connections run beyond a single year and how we are connected through our community. To represent this theme, we decided on a gold line running throughout the book, looping and twisting through "Zoom" group photos, and masked pictures of students. The book also includes artwork from an SHS senior representing places in Shrewsbury that connect us further. Our cover was designed to be simple and clean which seemed fitting during a pandemic.

As the year went on, we missed spirit rallies, football games, and school-wide events that make SHS so special and also make for great photos for yearbook pages. So, we had to think beyond what our book looks like in a typical year. Realizing the possibility that sports and events may be cancelled all year, we created new page spreads. These included

"students and their pets" and "seniors through the years". We also kept the classic pages featuring an adorable collection of senior baby photos, and a committee favorite, our senior superlatives.

In November, with our first seventy-page deadline on the horizon, filling up a whole book seemed near impossible. We scrambled for candid photos of students smiling with their eyes, and awkward, socially distant embraces. As the year progressed, our book began to take shape, and it finally seemed to become possible. As life returned back to normal, so did our book. We brainstormed how to complete the final pages as the end of year senior events evolved and also came to life.

Although challenging at times, creating a yearbook with the concern of nothing to fill it up, gave us a new perspective on this project. We learned how to think outside of the box to create a yearbook that represents how our students were brought together this year and it will keep us connected for years to come. However far we drift, we always remain connected.

Brighter path

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groundbreaking agreement between the School Committee and Board of Selectmen to exercise fiscal discipline and commit to no additional Proposition 2 ½ override questions for at least the next four years. The override framework creates a newly established stabilization fund and reasonable operating budget increase maximums. It will allow our public schools to incrementally restore positions, programming, and key supports that have been cut in previous years. It offers a predictable, fiscally responsible framework and financial transparency to our residents. The School Committee and School Department look forward to fulfilling the promise made to the community and to continuing our proven track record of providing an outstanding return on investment to its taxpayers for public education.

Shrewsbury is the 27th largest out of 320 school districts in Massachusetts. We are the fifth largest district

We are extremely grateful to the residents of Shrewsbury for their overwhelming support of educational and municipal services.

Returning to full in-person school

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jane Lizotte, who is serving as Acting Principal of Walter J. Paton School, shared these photos of students returning to full in-person learning in April:



Top left: Grade 1 Teacher Jenna Violette greeted returning student Sheldon; top center: Grade 3 Teacher Dan Campbell joined by his new in-person students (l-r) Shane, Justin, and Louie, gave enthusiastic thumbs up upon their return to school; top right: Grade 4 Teacher, Patricia Hollyer toured Paton School with returning student, Sashwat; bottom left: Grade 1 Teacher Jenny White enjoyed a snack break with her students; bottom middle: Grade 2 Teacher Jill Symonds (l), welcomed student Chase as he transitioned from all-remote Teacher Jordan Lyons (r) to Ms. Symonds' in-person classroom; bottom right: a rainy day called for a socially-distanced picnic lunch, enjoyed on beach towels.

out of 281 non-city districts in the state (top 2%). We provide public education services to over 6000 students and rank in the bottom 11% in per pupil expenditures, as Shrewsbury is #286 out of 320 districts. If we were to spend the state average, we would need to invest another \$18.63 million on public education in a single year. Needless to say, this district squeezes every penny out of the tax dollars that fund our schools. The budget challenges we've experienced over the last 16 months required significant effort and skilled estimates based on a multitude of factors - both known and unknown. The School Committee is thankful to Superintendent Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations Mr. Patrick Collins, and the entire Shrewsbury Public Schools Senior Leadership Team for their transparency, diligence, and patience while we worked to mitigate this fiscal crisis.

This has unquestionably been the most challenging time in the history of Shrewsbury Public Schools. Our 800+ employees, including district leadership, principals, administration, school nurses, educators, and staff - have all worked tirelessly to make this school year a reality, providing high quality educational services through remote, hybrid, and full in-person learning. The dedication, commitment, and sacrifices they have made for the success and well being of our 6000+ Shrewsbury students has

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Major Howard W. Beal
School opening in Fall 2021

Beal School continues to make excellent progress (see photo on page one and photos below) and will be ready to open and welcome its new school community on the first day of school, September 1, 2021. As students and staff enjoy vacation, work will continue through the summer to complete the construction, furnishing, and staffing of the building.

Those attending the Major Howard W. Beal School in the fall should look for regular communications throughout the summer from Principal Chris Girardi and Assistant Principal Shelley Hoey, who will be sharing updates about the progress of the school, including invitations to tour the site and begin building community as the start of school gets closer.



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

A warm welcome to Beal School’s new
Assistant Principal

CHRIS GIRARDI
Principal, Major Howard W. Beal School

Shrewsbury Public Schools are excited to share that Mrs. Shelley Hoey has been formally appointed to the Beal Assistant Principal position effective July 1, 2021.

Shelley is a graduate of the University of Connecticut, Storrs with a Master of Arts in Education. She worked as a Grade 3 teacher in Willington, CT prior to her move to Floral Street School in 2004. Shelley was a Grades 3 and 4 teacher for four years and then took on the role of Instructional Coach/Curriculum Coordinator, which she has served in for the last 13 years. Shelley has completed

an Assistant Principal Internship and Assistant Superintendent Administrative Internship and has successfully served as an acting Assistant Principal at Floral during long-term leaves. Mrs. Hoey brings an amazing skillset to this position with strong leadership practices, communication skills, deep pedagogical knowledge, and a seamless connection with the core values of the Shrewsbury Public Schools and vision of the new Major Howard W. Beal School. It is clear that Shelley loves teaching children, in Shrewsbury as well as her own family, and this love will fit right into our Beal culture.

Shelley continued in her role as Instructional Coach/Curriculum Coordinator through the end of the FY21 school year,



Mrs. Shelley Hoey, Assistant Principal, Major Howard W. Beal School

but has already made a large impact on the ongoing planning, hiring, and transitioning for the new Beal School this fall. Please join us in welcoming Shelley Hoey to Beal as the new Assistant Principal.

Shrewsbury High School names two new
Assistant Principals

KATHLEEN POWER
Shrewsbury High School
Class of 2022

After what has been the craziest, most challenging year for those involved in education, Shrewsbury High School (SHS) welcomes two new Assistant Principals to their Administrative Team. Although the shoes of both Greg Nevader, who is retiring, and Jeffrey Lizotte, who has accepted the Principal position at Oakmont High School, will be hard to fill, all are confident in the two new hires and their abilities. The hiring committee was in search of two candidates with fresh perspectives and passion for making personal connections with students. Luckily, these two individuals were not hard to find as both have been a part of the SHS community for many years. As of July 1, Mrs. Nga Huynh and Mr. Jeffrey Lane will be the new Assistant Principals of Shrewsbury High School. Mrs. Huynh will be the grade level administrator for the Class of 2025, and Mr. Lane will fill that role for the Class of 2023.

Mrs. Huynh lived in Shrewsbury for twenty-five years, and both of her children are SHS alumni. Before working in Shrewsbury as our Director of School Counseling, she worked in the Boston Public Schools as well as at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, and Auburn High School. Mrs. Huynh earned her Bachelor of Arts



Ms. Nga Huynh, Assistant Principal for Student Services, and Mr. Jeffrey Lane, Assistant Principal for Student Activities, Shrewsbury High School, are pictured above.

degree from Wellesley College, her Master of Education in Teaching Mathematics from Harvard University, and her Master of Education in School Counseling from Boston College. I had the opportunity to meet with her immediately after her appointment and was taken by the amount of passion she had for the students and families of Shrewsbury. I saw an educator who cared very deeply about the development of each individual student. I saw someone who loved the diverse population that Shrewsbury High had to offer, and someone who was looking to give every student a voice. Huynh says she “fell in

love with the community”over the twenty-five years she lived here, and cites that as her reason for staying and working in the district. She looks forward to connecting with students and families on a broader scale than she does in her current position. She hopes to get to know students, really learn who they are and who they want to be, and help them to achieve their personal goals. In addition to her role as grade level administrator, Mrs. Huynh will assume the role of Assistant Principal for Student Services. Using her prior experience as School Counseling Director, she will work as

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The 2020-2021 School Year - lemons or lemonade?

BECKY DUMPHY, SHELLEY HOEY, ERIN KENDRICK, LINDSAY MORSE, LISA PAPAZIAN, DONNA RICE
ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM COORDINATORS/
INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES

What do the following quotes have in common?

"When life gives you lemons, make lemonade."

"Always look at the glass half full."

"Every cloud has a silver lining."

If you answered that they all inspire the importance of having an optimistic attitude during times of adversity, then you are correct! This past year was nothing short of challenging, but in the spirit of viewing the glass as half full, let's take a look at some of the **positives** that came out of this unprecedented year!



Diego, a second grader at Floral Street School, is browsing books for his book box with Mrs. Morrocco.

Student Perspectives:

Reyan, a Kindergartener from Mrs. Kilgore & Mrs. Barrett's Kindergarten class said, "I like having snack outside because I can discover things while I eat. I like to get fresh air. Being outside is fun!"

Mia from Mrs. Grossman's 1st grade class thought Morning Meeting games, like scavenger hunts, were a fun and exciting part of her remote day.

Reagan, a second grader from Mrs. Frankian's class, likes the new recess games that were created to allow socially-distanced play. She especially loves when the teachers play the games with the kids.

Ishawn from Mrs. Stanwick's 3rd grade class enjoyed sleeping in on remote days and not having to rush to get the bus.

Students in Mrs. Berthiaume's 3rd grade remote class at Coolidge said that, even though they weren't in school in person, they had a great year during which they learned



Mrs. Marchand's kindergarten students are shown planting their spring plants in the garden at Walter J. Paton School.

to persevere, took fun virtual field trips, did important tasks like MCAS, and shared things that made them happy and proud.

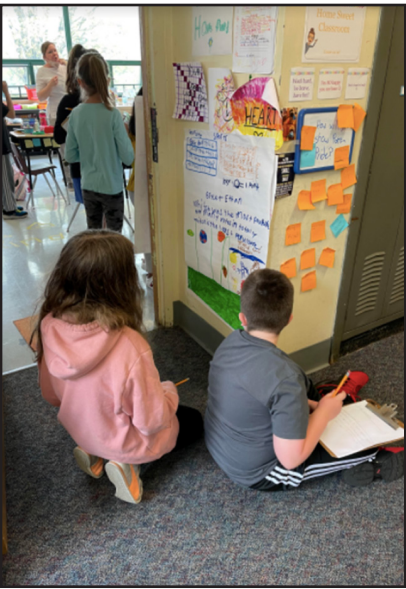
Aiden from Mrs. Ross's 4th grade class learned some great workout routines during remote physical education. He plans to use them this summer at his house.

Aditya, a remote 4th grader from Mrs. Hinds' class at Coolidge, said, "Even though we were online we still got to have fun. We still have friends even though we were online. We were using a device to meet with each other and that was the only difference."

Teacher and Paraprofessional Perspectives:

Meaghan McCarthy, hybrid/in-person first grade teacher is thankful for the opportunity to collaborate with teachers from across the District. In fact, since March 2020, grade level teachers from across the District have met 2-3 times on a weekly basis to develop a coherent scope and sequence and plan weekly lessons.

Kathleen Bodyk, an elemen-



Ms. Curtis' Grade 3 students at Walter J. Paton School are working on collecting and interpreting data.

tary paraprofessional, got to know a lot more about students while working with them over Zoom. She comments that students at home were always eager to spend an extra few minutes chatting about what they were doing to keep busy. Kathleen has noticed a lot more friendly waves and hellos in the hallways!

Kristin Kilgore, a Kindergarten teacher, is walking away from the 20-21 school year feeling more tech savvy. She feels her mind has been opened to many new ways to use technology with her 5 & 6 year-old students. Kristin was reminded about how it feels to be a student again, while trying all the new things teachers learned throughout this year.

Remote fourth grade teacher Nicole Cormier reflected about students' initiative and ability to connect across the district, "Students have gained independence. They can read and follow a schedule at a younger age, and are more responsible for taking initiative for not only their meetings, but also for initiating and completing tasks. Elementary students got the



Mrs. Kilgore's & Mrs. Barrett's kindergarten classroom enjoy snack time outside at Beal Early Childhood Center.

chance to meet students from other buildings and build new friendships."

Many teachers are proud of the way their students rose to the challenges that remote and hybrid learning had in store for them this year. Despite our "new way of learning" students remained upbeat! Elizabeth Marciello, a remote first grade teacher, is amazed at how well her students adapted and showed responsibility even while not being physically present in the building.

It's no question that anyone who experienced school during this pandemic will never forget the 2020-2021 school year. However, hopefully they will also remember the lemonade that they made from those sour lemons!



Summer learning

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dents with disabilities. This year the Curriculum team will join the effort with the Summer Academy. For the first time, Shrewsbury Public Schools will offer a free in-person program to support general education needs. Our goal is to help students get a head start on the next school year by revisiting key learning goals in English Language Arts and Math. Accordingly, we have been collaborating across schools to develop a plan that will engage and support students as they seek to master key content standards.

What can students and families expect? Input from families and staff as well as past program successes tells us that students are eager to have a variety of experiences over the summer. The Academy program is two weeks by design, leaving lots of time for family vacations and other important learning experiences. Students participating in the Academy will engage with each other and with Shrewsbury educators to practice key academic and social skills, Mondays through Thursdays from July 26- August 5th, with English Learners starting a week sooner. The instructional model is designed specifically with the needs of students in Grades K-8 in mind, and students will be grouped so that they may form friendships with peers attending the same school in the fall. Shrewsbury High School is offering a unique program for select students.

Importantly, many of the supports we are putting into place this summer will extend through the coming school year. Working together we can work to instill a love of learning, self-directed discovery and resilience in our students this summer and for a long time to come.

Brighter path

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been an invaluable asset to our town. As a School Committee member, I've watched many other cities and towns struggle with decisions that this team made look easy. We have been very fortunate to have such forward thinking, transparent, detail-oriented educational leadership to simultaneously navigate through a budget funding emergency, the building of a new elementary school, the redistricting of the elementary grade level, and the uncharted public educational waters of a pandemic.

Make no mistake, the 2020-2021 school year was a Herculean effort that required patience, flexibility, and grace from the entire school community for the sole purpose of keeping our students and staff safe and together during these unprecedented times. With a clear financial path ahead for staffing and programming, the future of Shrewsbury Public Schools has never looked brighter.

SHS Assistant Principals

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student support personnel, serve as a liaison between the nursing staff and families, and will manage the master schedule. Mrs. Huynh is poised for great success.

Mr. Jeffrey Lane will assume the position of Assistant Principal for Student Activities. Mr. Lane has lived in Shrewsbury since 2000 and has brought up all four of his children here. Three have graduated from SHS, and one remains in the school district. Prior to coming to Shrewsbury, Mr. Lane worked in Worcester Public Schools for twenty-two years. For the past three years, he has served as the Director of Health, Physical Education, and Family Consumer Science for Shrewsbury Public Schools. Lane earned his Bachelor of Science from Bridgewater State University and later, his Master of Education in Physical Education from Springfield College. When I met with Mrs. Huynh, I also had the privilege to meet with Mr. Lane and discuss his hopes and goals for his new position. In doing so I found that he cared immensely about the development of every student and seeks to prepare them for the bigger obstacles faced after graduation. I especially appreciated the positive attitude that he expressed throughout his whole interview. He is a “do-er”, someone who tries to use the word “no” minimally. Lane likes to make things happen for the students as he feels that the students are what makes Shrewsbury so special. He says he loves “what we offer here in Shrewsbury for our kids. All the different programs we have. There really is a niche for every student.” In his new role, he looks forward to supporting students. He feels catching students in other settings outside of school is extremely important. He values the connections made while seeing students at sports games and performing arts events. These qualities make him a strong candidate for working to support students and contribute to their social and emotional well-being.

Mr. Bazydlo, SHS Principal, is especially confident in the two new hires as he feels they will do a tremendous job in bringing stability to Shrewsbury High School post pandemic. He says “Mr. Lane and Mrs. Huynh have complementary skill sets that will serve our entire community well. As we begin to emerge from the pandemic it is critically important to have two leaders who are student centered and can bring stability to our community during this time of change. I believe Mrs. Huynh and Mr. Lane are the two people who can help support students, families and staff and help us ease this transition.”

After speaking with both of them, I, an incoming senior at Shrewsbury High School, am beyond excited to see what they make of their new roles. I sensed their love and compassion for our town, and this reassured me about the year to come. In adding these two leaders, Shrewsbury High will maintain an administrative team who is second to none when it comes to valuing students and encouraging them to be the very best version of themselves.

Oak and Sherwood students receive high honors in regional and state science competitions

PAMELA POITRAS
Curriculum Specialist

This spring, students at both Oak and Sherwood Middle Schools competed in regional and national science competitions receiving high honors for their schools. Sherwood students on 6 Silver under the mentorship of Teacher, Jonathan Butler, and Paraprofessional, Lisa Easson, competed in the eCYBERMISSION challenge. eCYBERMISSION is an online STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) competition for students in grades six through nine. Students were challenged to use their knowledge of math and science to work in teams to solve problems in their community. They collaborated virtually during independent learning time and utilized the engineering design process to develop creative solutions to complex environmental problems. Students tackled issues like climate change and sustainable growing conditions. One group designed an aquaponic fish tank to grow fresh produce in regions where conditions were not favorable for traditional growing techniques. Congratulations to the following students for receiving national recognition

and prizes for their work.

Massachusetts First Place Winners: Sanchi Gera, Arin Shinde, Wesley Tuttle, Suhrit Ghosh

Massachusetts Second Place Winners: Ahaan Sinha, Aadish Navinkuma, Riya Reddy Tee-gala, Advik Shekhar

Massachusetts Honorable Mention Winners: Shayan Hossen, Sidharth Sivaramakrishnan, Rishi Gandhi

This year, the Oak Middle School science fair club met virtually throughout the school year. Students, with help and support from club advisor and Design Lab Teacher Jeremy Mularella, designed and car-

ried out scientific investigations to answer self-generated questions involving science, technology, or engineering. It was a competitive field of projects this year, and ultimately twelve projects were selected to complete in the Worcester Regional Science Fair. Students submitted videos of their projects to be judged. All twelve students from Oak Middle School placed at the regional competition and moved on to the state fair. Projects included an app to determine the best foods for maintaining healthy blood pressure and a door alarm sensor to alert people to a live Zoom meeting. Congratulations to the following students for placing at both the regional and state fairs.

	Worcester Regional Science Fair Results	MA State Science and Engineering Middle School Science Fair Results
Sreegouri Vangala	Honorable Mention	1st Place
Shruti Sivashankar	3rd Place	2nd Place
Sabrina Welch	2nd Place	2nd Place
Angad Pannu	2nd Place	2nd Place
Aditi Pathak	2nd Place	2nd Place
Aumkar Deochakke	Honorable Mention	3rd Place
Ishana Saroha	3rd Place	3rd Place
Vaisalli Navaneethan	Honorable Mention	3rd Place
Aashi Gupta	Honorable Mention	3rd Place
Nidhin Cheruvari	3rd Place	3rd Place
Laasya Gattu	3rd Place	3rd Place
Anna Wang	2nd Place	Honorable Mention

Young Athletes at Parker Road Preschool

BRIDGET NICHOLS
Director, Parker Road Pre-school

This past March at Parker Road Preschool, as we continued to patiently await the re-opening of our amazing playground and more outdoor time, we were strengthening our bodies and team-building skills inside our classrooms.



A morning student at Parker Road Preschool makes her way through the obstacle course.

Thanks to the dedication, leadership and hard work of our district Physical Therapist, Mrs. Brittany Zelesky, we had the great fortune of incorporating the Special Olympics Young Athletes program into our curriculum at Parker Road Preschool. The Young Athletes play program is designed for children with and without intellectual disabilities, ages 2-7. The program introduces basic sport skills like running, kicking and throwing, and offers families, teachers, and caregivers the chance to share the joy of sports with all children.¹ It also serves as a great foundation for the wonderful unified sports we have at the middle and high school level in Shrewsbury!

Young Athletes provides children of all abilities the same opportunities to advance in core developmental milestones. Children learn how to play with others and develop important skills for learning. Children also learn to share, take turns and follow directions.¹ Young Athletes is a fun



Student Anika Sunda is shown on her way to scoring a goal.

way for children to stay active and establish healthy habits for the future. It is a great program which encompasses **motor skills, social emotional learning skills, sport readiness, and acceptance.**¹

On May 27th and May 28th, we hosted a culminating event

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The wall on Gulf Street

JUSTIN WINN
*English Teacher,
Shrewsbury High School*

The following are remarks given by Mr. Winn, English Teacher, at the Shrewsbury High School Class of 2021 Commemoration on June 2, 2021, edited for publication.

I would like to start with a thank you to our School Committee Members, Dr. Sawyer, Mr. Bazydlo, the school administration, class officers and advisors, fellow teachers and staff, parents, and members of the greater Shrewsbury community. And of course, welcome and congratulations to you, the class of 2021!

It was a good winter for the wall on Gulf Street. That is where I live, Gulf Street, if you didn't know and for most of you that is not new information. I'm pretty sure you could turn to the person sitting next to you and they'd direct you to the exact location.

My first year in the house, two freshman students knocked on my door to sell Gold Cards and acted surprised when I opened up. They, of course, knew all along that this was where I lived and were all too eager to share the news with everyone in class when we returned to school that following Monday—including threatening to write directions to my house on the whiteboard. I don't blame them or anyone else who has seen me at home gardening and eagerly honked their horn or waved in recognition. I don't want to jinx myself here, but so far no one has messed with me or the house, no vandalism or damage at all, except for the wall, which I will get back to in a bit.

I didn't mind when the student I bought a Thanksgiving pie from, for the Robotics fundraiser, asked if he should bring the pie to school or just drop it off at my house because as he said, "I know where you live...I hope that's not creepy or anything."

Maybe it should make me a little uncomfortable, but honestly, I guess I asked for it when I moved to the town where I teach...directly on the route to school. In fact, there is something almost comforting in being recognized like this. And from your perspectives, I know there is something comforting about being able to recognize the familiar, as well.

I don't want to get you too sad too early in my speech, but I hope you will feel a little nostalgic when I remind you that soon you will be leaving this

familiarity behind. The things that make hometown life so great, and (at the same time for many) so claustrophobic, is that sense of the familiar--the routines and the consistency--and what makes moving on so frightening and so exhilarating is starting anew.

You know, as an English teacher I like to write, and a few years ago I wrote about this hometown familiarity in a piece I titled "Classification." I'll share it with you now, but first I'll give you a bit of a vocabulary preview...big surprise! Again, I am an English teacher.

At the heart of this piece is the importance of being able to classify things, to be able to define and name the world around us. I mention a few plants I grow in my garden, including the Latin names *Calamagrostis Acutiflora* which is a type of tall grass and *Asclepias Tuberosa* which is also known as butterfly weed, a really amazing plant that monarch butterflies rely on to help them journey across thousands of miles to find their way back to where they belong (see poem at bottom).

Now I shouldn't encourage this type of distracted driving, waving and honking your horn as you take a turn at, very often, near-breakneck speed. But although there have been a few minor car accidents out in front of my house, as I said before: no serious damage has been done...except for the wall, which brings us back to the beginning.

It was a good winter for the wall on Gulf Street. Most winters as the roads ice over and the early morning traffic whips around the corner, there will be at least one incident of a car skidding out and sidewinding into that wall. More often than not, it turns out to be a student

behind the wheel running late for school. Luckily, no serious injuries have happened.

My wife has an entire routine down: check to see if the student is okay, get them out of the road and away from the wall in case another student skids out and creates a pileup, ask if they called their parents, remind them when they get on the phone with Mom that the first thing they should say is "I'm okay" before letting her know the damage done to the car, and waiting with them in our driveway, freezing cold in the morning air, while help is on the way. OR if the car is fine, shoveling it out and pushing it up the road shouting "good luck having a productive day after your traumatic start to the morning!"

You know I would help her do all of this, but I'm usually busy teaching first period at this point. I tell her she should set up a little side hustle: charge for hot chocolate and an extra shovel or a consultation fee for talking to your angry parents when they find out how fast you were ACTUALLY going. I'm kidding! You know if I didn't get to school at 6:40 in the morning I would be out there helping as well. It just kind of comes with the territory.

This was a good winter for the wall on Gulf Street, though, because there wasn't a single accident to help out with. The roads, in fact, were mostly quiet as over half of you stayed home each day...and, even on the days you did drive to school, you were not usually in so much of a rush with the parking lot wide open, almost barren in its emptiness: the massive containers in the upper east lot brooding like sentinels, filled with the unused desks for all of you who would

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Classification

They see me and know me and that brings me some comfort.
Taking the fast turn onto Gulf Street on their way to school
My students running late will recognize me giving a last-second drink
To the hanging basket of *Calibrachoa*, before I too head to class,
Running my hand through the shoots of the *Calamagrostis Acutiflora*,
Whispering that name like nectar to myself and some of them
Will even shout my name in excitement driving by--a teacher
In his natural habitat--like finally witnessing butterfly weed
In the wild, something that has always been there, we've only just been seeing it
In books. They tell their other friends and teachers of the sighting
To document my existence--nerds like me taking every opportunity
To order the world with a pointed finger--*Asclepias Tuberosa* is what we call you,
You live and thrive in full sunlight and chalky dirt, you evolved
Over millions of years in symbiosis with the Monarchs you sustain--
I see you and know you and that brings me some comfort.

Young Athletes

CONTINUED from page 6

to celebrate all the hard work and fun learning in which our students and staff engaged. It was an hour-long event that took place on our back field, beginning with an opening parade (balloon torch and all!) and of course ending with an awards ceremony and freeze pops! Each student had an opportunity to demonstrate what he/she/they learned over the past eight weeks in class, as outdoor sport stations were completed to earn gold stars on each student's Competition Card. Each piece of the Young Athletes curriculum was incorporated across our celebration and it was a huge success!



Above: Student Ralph Provencher enjoys a freeze pop while showing off his medal. Below: Some of Mrs. Vangel's friends celebrate their gold stars.



At Parker Road we always strive to promote acceptance and respect for students of all abilities and ensure that students of all skill levels are included as much as possible. Thanks to the passion, initiative and inclusion advocacy of Miss Brittany, we were able to celebrate this core value of ours in a fun and healthy way! We are so proud of each and every one of our athletes and encourage all families to motivate their children to stay active over the summer – running, jumping, playing with balls, and climbing at playgrounds are great ways to continue to build upon these skills!

¹Young Athletes Resources: <https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/young-athletes>

Gulf Street

CONTINUED from page 7

not be here every day.

And though it was a good winter for the wall on Gulf Street, it was not a good winter for many of us. I don't need to elaborate on the challenges this winter, this entire past year, has presented. Shakespeare coined the phrase "the winter of our discontent" at the start of his play *Richard III*...and this may be a moment where his words fall short. It was not just discontent that many of us felt, but a deeper, more painful sense of loss.

At the very least, all of us here felt the need to break out of the doldrums—the isolation and repetition of days at home this winter—and so it may seem strange that I have chosen to end my speech to you by talking again about the familiar: that same strip of road that most of you who go the back way to school pass by every day.

In many ways, you are coming up to that hard turn in life much like the Gulf Street curve. Your parents and your teachers are like

me standing outside and praying that you don't go so fast. And you will speed a little bit. Some of you will speed a lot (I don't recommend it); you will want to relish the newness of your life beyond high school, experience the challenges and changes before you and fill yourself up with all this next leg of the journey has to offer and sometimes you'll want to go too fast.

Do not be afraid to take the turns slowly though, look at the beautiful flowers and name all the living things you can, take life and savor these fine moments in between the moving on.

We, the adults in your life, hope so much that you will take the turns, make those transitions whole, but sometimes (like in winters past) there will be skidding out; you will lose your way and may careen a bit; you may sideswipe the stone wall. Although it didn't happen at my house this year, many people have hit that metaphorical stone wall and that was, and is, and will be when we need the support to shepherd us along.

You will call your mothers, your parents, your guardians, your

friends and let them know you are okay first, and then you will see that someone is there with a shovel or a strong back to help push you out of the rut. This year has taught me that we need each other so much, especially when we are feeling most alone.

So when you come back to your hometown after heading off on the next big adventure, take a ride down Gulf Street. It will be familiar to you, like the halls of a high school you will wish you could have spent more time in. You may see me there planting or raking, working up something nice out of the dirt, my face like the faces of all your teachers and your loved ones smiling at the vision of the little things we planted blooming into life.

And wave, honk your horn, celebrate this simple, same old lovely, familiar life that you once led, but do not be afraid to drive on, take the corner, and keep moving. There is so much life ahead.

It was a good winter for the wall on Gulf street, but it will be an even better summer for the driver on the road.

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