



## Superintendent's Corner

### Seeking truth to sustain our democracy

DR. JOSEPH M. SAWYER  
Superintendent of Schools

*The point of modern propaganda isn't only to misinform or push an agenda. It is to exhaust your critical thinking, to annihilate truth. – Garry Kasparov*

This quote from former world chess champion and Russian pro-democracy leader Garry Kasparov sums up the disturbing reality that citizens face in today's world, and it underscores why it is so very important that we not only teach our students to be literate in the traditional academic disciplines, but also to be literate regarding the information they consume. Our school district's mission statement compels us to provide our students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the 21st century, and to be an educated person this must include the ability to filter the torrent of information flooding smartphones, tablets, laptops, and televisions in order to discern the truth.

Media literacy is defined on Dictionary.com as "the ability or skills to critically analyze for accuracy, credibility, or evidence of bias the content created and consumed in various media, including radio and television, the internet, and social media." Our schools begin teaching information literacy concepts, along with other aspects of digital citizenship, starting in kindergarten and throughout subsequent grade levels through our library media centers' curriculum. Using re-

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“Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army.”  
– Edward Everett

”



Learning about Lunar New Year: on February 2, 2022, English Language Education Teacher Ms. Kitty Daly dressed in traditional attire and taught Calvin Coolidge School students about the traditions associated with Lunar New Year, which began on February 1.

### A new and improved budget cycle begins

JON WENSKY  
School Committee Chair

Along with my election to the School Committee seven years ago came the steepest learning curve I've known for any job in my career. I have been very fortunate to be surrounded by long-tenured, like-minded School Committee members who were willing to collaborate and share their knowledge. I leaned on their experience to understand the subject matter. During my first full year on the committee, I recall attending a PTO meeting with Dr. Dale Magee. During the discussion that evening, he succinctly explained the School Committee's three key areas of oversight - policy, budget, and the performance of the Superintendent. In our district, the most challenging area of oversight has always been the budget as a result of Shrewsbury's structural deficit and the volatility of various school budget-related expenses.

Due to Shrewsbury's historical structural deficit, it's been a challenge to maintain level services from year to year. We simply don't have enough commercial tax revenue coming into our town to support level services and have a dependency on property tax to either make or break the school budget. At the beginning of every calendar

year, the Superintendent provides his budget recommendation for the next school year. This recommendation typically includes the percentage increase to carry level services forward into the following year as well as any additional costs that are projected to be incurred by the school district. Weeks later, the Town Manager will submit his proposed budget for town services that includes the amount the town can afford to increase the school budget. It is the comparison of these two budget recommendations that typically has created a budget gap.

Over the last three school budget cycles, we've had to make some painful decisions as a result of the gap between the Superintendent's and Town Manager's budget recommendations. Prior to the pandemic, our FY21 budget started with a \$1.9 Million budget gap which included the reduction of 30 staff positions. Post pandemic, we incurred another \$2 Million deficit due to losses in fee-based services and school building rentals. During the FY22 budget cycle, more bad news came in the form of an insurmountable \$4.5 Million budget gap. This was a result of the pandemic's negative impact on the town with reduced revenue for automobile excise tax, meals tax, and other miscellaneous receipts. Not willing

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Superintendent’s Corner

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sources curated by Common Sense Media, our students, in a manner appropriate for their age level, learn ways to analyze media messages by considering the credibility of the source, the author’s motivation, the intended purpose, the quality of the information, and who might benefit economically or politically from the message. These higher-level analysis skills are key for our students to become critical thinkers in a media environment saturated with misinformation.

A particular challenge is that today’s young people typically use social media for news and information. Unfortunately, they are awash in messaging, mostly through images and short videos, that often contain inaccurate information or outright falsehoods and are designed to manipulate emotions. Further, they hear professional media organizations derided as “fake news” for political purposes, breeding distrust in sources that actually practice journalistic norms and ethics in reporting the news. As a Connecticut history teacher recently wrote in an article in Education Week, “None of this is good for truth or democracy, which requires a certain factual civic consensus in order to work.”

The ways in which citizens can be duped and manipulated by dishonest, state-sponsored media in an undemocratic society is painfully evident in Russia today. The facts of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine are being twisted or hidden from its own people, with the flow of accurate information from sources other than the autocratic government being restricted or labeled as “fake.” It is painful to see this Orwellian nightmare take place in Russia, while the Ukrainian people and their president use their access to information technology to share the terrible truth of what is happening to their country. Even this information still must be examined critically – as the Connecticut history teacher explains, when sharing with his class that the popular video of the so-called “Ghost of Kyiv” fighter pilot was actually computer-generated footage from a video game, his students expressed that they still wanted to believe it was true.

Our school district’s mission includes developing “an appreciation of our democratic tradition.” Unfortunately, democracy is not only at risk when an autocratic nation makes war to control another. It is also at risk right here in our country when information technology is used, either by a foreign or domestic source, to manipulate emotions and deny reality. It is critical that our schools succeed in our efforts to implement our longstanding policy of “encouraging students to search after truth and think for themselves.” Our democracy depends on it.

Seal of Biliteracy testing begins

KENNETH ALMEIDA  
Director, World Languages  
District Mentor Coordinator

Shrewsbury High School (SHS) began testing for the Seal of Biliteracy on Monday, February 7, 2022, and the first phase of testing began with students whose home language is one other than English. Testing began February 7 with the Avant World Speak in Marathi; the following day, the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) OPI/WPT (Oral Proficiency Interview/ Written Proficiency Test) in Urdu and Haitian Creole were administered. Wednesday, February 9, the largest cohort of students took the AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment or Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages) test; these students - whose home language was Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese or Spanish - were tested in writing, speaking, listening, and reading. On February 11 three students took the AJA

Tamil Proficiency test. During the week of February 14th, World Language students took the AAPPL test in Chinese, French and Spanish. Latin students took the ALIRA (ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment) test. Some technical glitches were encountered but quickly resolved thanks to the

troubleshooting of Mr. Steven McKinstry and Mr. Geoffrey Thayer, IT Support Specialists at SHS. The Department of World Languages eagerly awaits the results and will award recipients at the first ever World Language Award and Honor Society Ceremonies on April 13, 2022.



The picture above shows French 5 students taking the Interpretive Reading Exam.

Welcoming Shrewsbury alumni back

MICHELLE BISCOTTI &  
KATHLEEN KEOHANE  
Coordinators of  
Development and Volunteer  
Activities

Perhaps you have seen the postcard and wondered just what it was all about. Or maybe you’ve heard from a fellow classmate that they have recently reconnected with Shrewsbury Public Schools. Or maybe you haven’t heard anything at all.

Over the past few years, we have been actively searching for former students who attended Shrewsbury Public Schools in any grade. You don’t have to be a Shrewsbury High School graduate. We know that many of you have great stories to share about how you got where you are today, the (not so typical) road that you traveled to get there, and the experiences you had along your journey. Our current students would love to hear from you! Your perspective as students who used to sit in the same seats they do is powerful and impactful, especially if you have met and successfully overcome your challenges.

Alumni who have connected with us have been invaluable in enhancing so many aspects of education in our schools. During February 2022 we

connected 32 alumni with 32 different teachers and classrooms where current students of all ages were excited to hear from former students about their careers, college experiences or resiliency in overcoming challenges. We even had alumni connect remotely, so although many live far away they can still connect with students. Here is what one teacher had to say about Megan Downing, Class of 2015, who came to speak to her grade 6 class:

Megan completely captivated our students with her personal stories about her education in Shrewsbury and beyond, personal events that led her to choose a career in criminal justice, and her current work experiences. She was so poised and enthusiastic as she engaged with students and delivered a thoughtful presentation with messages of hope, resiliency, perseverance, and compassion. Our students loved asking her questions and she was so gracious with her time and attention. We are so grateful to Megan for sharing her story with us. Her strong passion to help those in our community has inspired all of us! “ – Moira Cristy, Sherwood Middle School 6 Blue Teacher

say about Megan’s visit:

I loved how Ms. Downing took time to spend with us. She told us how she faced some adversity in her personal life, shared stories about her education in Shrewsbury and in college, and gave us some tips on how to stay safe when in danger.

I really enjoyed Ms. Downing’s visit to our classroom to teach us about her experiences in criminal justice. It was really fun to learn how her personal experience led her to choose her career. I also liked her tips on how we could keep ourselves safe walking alone.

Experiences like these are exactly what our students need to hear, to feel connected to their community, to see their way forward into the world and to know there were others before them who had challenges in their lives. Your story doesn’t have to be glamorous - just honest.

If you have not connected with Shrewsbury Public Schools yet, here’s how: complete this short survey to tell us a little bit about yourself: <http://bit.ly/387nZom> or visit our website to see what we have been up to: <https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov/alumni>. Also, please join

Here is what students had to

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# COVID Testing Program update

**NOELLE FREEMAN**  
*Director of School Nursing*  
**APRIL YU**  
*Assistant Finance and Operations Manager*

As the COVID-19 pandemic has evolved over the past two years, state-sponsored COVID testing programs have been updated in an attempt to meet the needs of our school community. Pooled surveillance testing was offered to all students and staff beginning in the 2020-2021 school year. The start of the 2021-2022 school year saw the continuation of pooled testing (also known as COVID Safety Checks) along with the addition of the *Test and Stay* program that allowed for individuals who were identified as close contacts at school to be tested and remain in school as long as the result was negative. The most recent change to the state program occurred in January 2022 when contact tracing for positive cases of COVID at school and the *Test and Stay* program were discontinued, to be replaced with symptomatic testing and rapid antigen test kits for at-home testing and surveillance. Pooled testing also remains an option.


At the time of writing (February 18, 2022) symptomatic testing is available to all students and staff at the former *Test and Stay* location on Maple Avenue. In order to participate in this type of testing, Shrewsbury Public Schools staff or students who are experiencing symptoms can request a test by emailing [rapidtest@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:rapidtest@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us) and contacting their

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**SHREWSBURY**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## COVID-19 Testing Programs



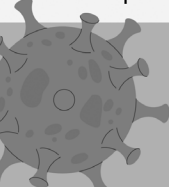
**1**  
**AT-HOME  
RAPID TESTING**

**What?** Rapid antigen test  
**When?** Every Wednesday evening  
**Where?** At home  
**Why?** Weekly surveillance  
**How?** Kit with 2 tests distributed at school every other Wednesday; opt in [here](#)



**2**  
**AT-HOME  
POOLED TESTING**

**What?** PCR test  
**When?** Every Tuesday morning; results typically come back late Thursday  
**Where?** At home  
**Why?** Weekly surveillance  
**How?** Kit distributed at school every Monday; opt in [here](#)



**3**  
**SYMPTOMATIC  
TESTING**

**What?** Rapid antigen test  
**When?** If you have [symptoms](#)  
**Where?** Testing site  
**Why?** If symptomatic  
**How?** Email school nurse & [rapidtest@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:rapidtest@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us) for authorization

- At-home rapid testing and symptomatic testing introduced
- Individual contact tracing paused and Test & Stay program discontinued
- Questions? Email [covidtesting@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:covidtesting@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us)

**UPDATES AS OF  
JANUARY 21, 2022**

*This infographic, featured on the COVID-19 Testing page of the Shrewsbury Public Schools website and designed by Administrative Assistant Ms. Blake Stewart, illustrated the different types of testing programs available in the district as of February 2022 and provided links to additional information.*

# Capstone Exhibition project - Modern Adolescence

**LIZA TROMBLEY**  
*Director of English,  
Shrewsbury High School*

Shrewsbury High School (SHS) senior Katelyn Smith (pictured at right with her project) created a podcast, “Modern Adolescence”, to explore the mental health struggles teens face today. Katelyn developed her podcast as part of her Capstone Exhibition project—an independent study experience that allows SHS juniors and seniors to explore their interests, discover more about their passions, and share their learning with the community at large. Katelyn’s work was featured by Spectrum News 1 on February 24, 2022. To learn more about Katelyn’s project, visit her website: [ModernAdolescence.com](http://ModernAdolescence.com)



To learn more about Capstone Exhibition at Shrewsbury High School, please contact Liza Trombley, Director of English, at email: [ltrombley@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:ltrombley@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us)

## Budget Cycle

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to reduce staffing or student services any further, the only tool left in the toolkit was to lobby for an override question on the Town Election ballot. Without an override and a dramatic change to the budget process going forward, the consequences were extremely dire and would result in 50 staff reductions in addition to the 30 we had lost just two years prior. The budget gap last year also brought with it the very real possibility that we would have been unable to open the brand new Major Howard W. Beal (elementary) School. If we were to not open the new Beal School, we would bear the risk of reimbursement to the state for what they had already spent to build Beal School if it didn’t open in full.

Of course, we know how this budget crisis played out and was resolved. In March of 2021, it was agreed that an override would be put on the May town ballot. Baked into this override was a collaborative agreement between the town Boards that a permanent fix would begin to be implemented to prevent such large budget gaps in the future. There is real work to be done still, but this year it is a relief to be able to have budget discussions that focus on providing quality education to our students instead of worrisome conversations that are peppered with the reality of reducing services and possibly incurring lasting damage to our school district.

The School Committee typically holds our first budget workshop late in the fall. It begins as a broad discussion of the health of our current budget and financial projections for the following year. There are many variables that make up the school budget including the volatility of Special Education costs and out-of-district tuition costs that the district has a responsibility to pay through the school budget. These volatile costs swing both in favor and to the detriment of our district. Because the main focus is to meet the needs of individual students, this challenge will always exist regardless of how predictable our budget will become for the next four years. I am pleased that we are able to meet this challenge in order to provide quality services for our students. The override agreement calls for at least a 4.25% increase over the previous year’s budget with a potential for it to go up to 4.75% on an annual basis if sufficient additional revenue is projected by the Town Manager. This agreement covers, at a minimum, four fiscal years (FY22 - FY25). This level of financial predictability for our school budget is a game changer and allows us to pursue new investments that will meet the needs of our school community.

For each of the six budget cycles I have reviewed since 2015, there has always been a variance between the Superintendent’s budget recommendation to maintain or improve level services and the Town Manager’s budget recommendation based on the fiscal health of the town. When entering our budget workshops each

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Alumni

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the almost 400 alumni who have already connected with us and each other, through LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12385425/>) and Instagram ([https://www.instagram.com/shs\\_alumni01545/](https://www.instagram.com/shs_alumni01545/)). Don't miss this opportunity to build your network, find lost friends, or just see what's going on back in your hometown.

If you are not comfortable speaking in front of a classroom, then there are other ways that you can help. We are always looking for alumni to improve our communications and connect with our community. Many of you have graced the pages of the Shrewsbury Public Schools Annual Report (*How many people do you recognize in this Annual Report?* [bit.ly/3HAYp16](https://www.shspublicschools.org/3HAYp16)) If you or someone you know would like to be highlighted, then let us know. You can email us at [alumni@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:alumni@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us).

If you have a business that you would like us to promote, consider purchasing an advertisement on the back of this publication. The Shrewsbury School Journal gets distributed to every household in Shrewsbury three times each year. Call 508-841-8409 for information on ads.

Is there a program in Shrewsbury schools that really shaped who you are today? Maybe a club or experience that helped you find "your people"? You could help other students find "their people" too by giving a donation to support something you loved during your school years.

No donation is too small and every dollar matters. Even \$5 per month will help. Whether you liked theater, music, science, math, speech and debate, or even gym, your donation will go where it truly matters. Give here: <https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov/alumni/donate>.

THANK YOU for joining the hundreds of other SPS alumni who are already making a significant difference in the lives of our current students.

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

Pushing the limits of photography for SHS students

PAMELA LeBLANC  
Visual Arts Director, K-12

Shrewsbury High School (SHS) provides photography opportunities for students in grades 10-12. *Traditional and Digital Photography* is a beginner class and covers the ins and outs of using both digital and 35mm film cameras. Students use the darkroom to print traditional black and white prints as well as learning Adobe Photoshop to manipulate and enhance their photos. Those students who look to further expand their knowledge can take advantage of *Darkroom Photography II*.



Above: Student Anya Pyro, Digital Photography

*I loved being in the darkroom and seeing my photographs come to life*, said SHS Anya Pyro. While we have offered Photography at SHS for many years, the *Traditional and Digital Photography* course was formed a couple years back to provide more opportunities to add a digital component without the scheduling conflicts. Students are able to use cameras as well as personal devices and iPads to capture images. The unique part of this course is that it is co-taught by Art Teachers Mrs. Kristine Cobb and Mrs.

Below: SHS student London Pano, Gelatin Print. London received a First Place Award in Photography from Anna Maria College's Annual Art Competition.



"Splash lab" photographs, like the one shown above, were taken by SHS students using one camera in a specific setting.

Sarah Williams. Together they instruct a group of 16 students and they emphasize the importance of individual and group work. Students are introduced to the history of photography by learning first hand how to use a pinhole camera and are taught skills to enhance their eye for shooting a stronger photograph through lighting, placement of subject, subject matter and composition. Students work collaboratively with peers on setting up the photoshoot in class, which may include painting with light, splash lab, self or posed portraiture. The course places emphasis on experimentation and collaborative thinking.

While in the darkroom students learn the process of camera settings, as well as the process for developing a successful photograph. After gaining an understanding of analog printing, students are able to explore the digital component of the course which introduces them to traditional photoshop techniques where negatives are scanned to combine and/or manipulate images. Students mirroring traditional darkroom techniques such as 'dodge and burn' through the use of computer-generated images is a great way to tie the two different processes together. *This class is a cool combo of modern and traditional photography, it gives a new perspective on how things were done years ago*, said student

Ally Arpino. Students explore the use of Adobe Photoshop to add imagery and/or color to black and white photographs, digitally manipulate imagery from film, and create collages from developed images. *Although I have taken a Digital Art class before, I learned so much more with Photoshop, such as the symmetry tool, and with that I was able to use more of my own images to create my Mandala*, said student Emily Diamond.

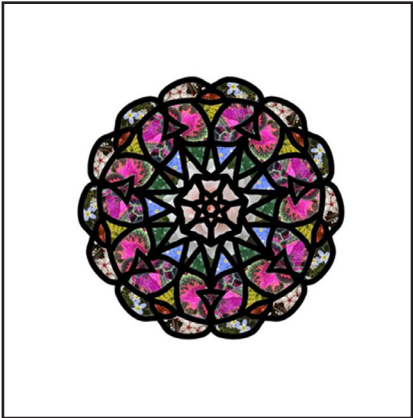
Recently Mrs. Cobb and Mrs. Williams were awarded grant funding from the Shrewsbury Education Foundation (SEF) that will provide students with additional photography tools, equipment, and materials to expand photographic and manipulation opportunities, and they are grateful to SEF for their support.



Above: SHS student Katey DeLeon is shown posing for classmate Abi Johnston as she captures her photo using a pinhole camera.



Above: Student Ally Arpino, Digital Photography



Above: Student Emily Diamond, Digital Photography



# Creative connections in our school community



Above: At Floral Street School Ms. Bisceglia's 3rd grade class created "EMPATHY" posters to celebrate the topic during February's All School Meeting. Art Teacher: Mrs. Sara Gustafson

**PAMELA LEBLANC**  
Visual Arts Director, K-12

Students across the elementary schools have participated in art activities that connect to school-wide initiatives. These various projects link to classroom curriculum, help to form school culture, and work to build a sense of community and belonging for all students in our schools. A few of these activities involve SEL (Social Emotional Learning), Square 1 Art fundraisers, the Book Blizzard Poster Design Contest, the celebration of Literacy, and other holidays and/or celebrations. Examples of how the students are using art to bring awareness, share, and get involved in their school community are shown above and to the right.

This year with the opening of the new Major Howard W. Beal School, staff and students throughout are making connections to the SEL Character Strong curriculum. Each month a word and character trait is represented through art pieces created and exhibited by students. A few from this year are the character traits Gratitude, Respect, Cooperation and Empathy. These art lessons serve as a great connection to the classroom curriculum and culture, while building a sense of community and belonging for all students in our schools.



Above: Walter J. Paton School Book Blizzard submission  
Art teacher: Mrs. Johanna Evans



Above: Spring Street School "Gratitude" project  
Art Teacher: Mrs. Amanda DeZago

Below: The character traits Gratitude, Respect, Cooperation and Empathy were explored in art pieces at Major Howard W. Beal School.  
Art Teachers: Mrs. Meri Buono and Mrs. Whitney Archambeault



Gratitude

Always "Snow" Respect



Cooperation

Empathy

# Students represent SPS at Youth Art Month

**PAMELA LEBLANC**  
Visual Arts Director, K-12

March celebrates Youth Art Month (YAM) at the Worcester Art Museum. YAM is a national celebration endorsed by the Council for Art Education, the National Art Education Association, and the Massachusetts Art Education Association which emphasizes the value of art education for all children and encourages support for

quality art programs in public and private schools. These are the students in grades K-12 who represented the Shrewsbury Public Schools at the celebration in 2022:

**Major Howard W. Beal School**  
Janie Liu, Kindergarten;  
Richa Dhingra, Grade 2;  
Max Avellaneda, Grade 3;  
Ilana Haddad, Grade 3; Tyler O'Connor, Grade 4; Huy Thai, Grade 4

**Calvin Coolidge School**  
Phoebe Zinger, Grade 1;  
Swardhuni Nagaraju Uppara, Grade 2;  
Victoria Pestova, Grade 3; Analia Ortega, Grade 4

**Floral Street School**  
Parvez Naceer, Grade 1;  
Naomi Kaneko, Grade 2;  
Lukas Kingsbury, Grade 2;  
Shreyas Shankar, Grade 2;  
Giovanna Follo, Grade 3; Chris Hall, Grade 4

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## Budget Cycle

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of the last four years, the opening questions would typically be *Can we carry forward level services?, What services and resources do we need to protect to ensure we meet the needs of all students?, and Where do we need to make cuts to mitigate a significant budget gap?* Gratefully, these questions were answered last year when the override was passed and the town-wide Board approach to the school budget was addressed. Now entering my seventh budget cycle I can confidently say that the seventh time is definitely the charm. We entered our January budget workshop this year with a very different approach, and instead of discussing staffing cuts, we are now discussing where staff additions would be beneficial. In addition, the School Committee charged the district's Senior Leadership Team to provide us with a "wishlist" of areas where there are significant resource gaps so that we may be able to begin work closing those gaps. This new level of budget stability and predictability allows our school district to respond to the impacts of the pandemic; address the student mental-health crisis; maintain a continued commitment to maintaining desirable class sizes; and strengthen our capacity to achieve the district's vision and goals.

As you can imagine, our needs as a school district have changed dramatically over the last two years. From all-remote learning to hybrid learning, and then back to full in-person learning during a pandemic, it has been paramount at every stage to ensure that students and educators have the tools they need for safe, productive time together. Thanks to strengthened oversight and a new, collaborative budgeting approach, we have been able to meet these needs, but we also now have the ability to be more responsive to the changing needs of our students.

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**SUPERINTENDENT'S BLOG**

<https://shrewsbury-superintendent.blogspot.com/>



COVID Testing

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school nurse. Individuals must be approved for testing based on criteria provided by the state program, and must complete a consent for testing before arriving at the test site. Testing with the BinaxNOW rapid antigen nasal swab test is available on days that school is in session.

Beginning in late January 2022, rapid antigen at-home test kits have been made available to all Shrewsbury Public schools students and staff who opt-in to the state program. The program involves distribution of a weekly test to be used for surveillance testing at home. Opt-in information can be found on the COVID Testing Program page of the SPS website ([schools.shrewsbury.ma.gov/district/covid-testing-information](https://schools.shrewsbury.ma.gov/district/covid-testing-information)).

All COVID testing for the 2021-2022 school year has been funded by the state sponsored program. More information about the state program can be found at [www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/testing/](https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/testing/).



Above: A rapid antigen test kit for at-home testing and surveillance.

Youth Art Month

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**Walter J. Paton School**  
Tijani Showunmi, Grade 2; Anna King, Grade 3; Norah Yi-En Lai, Grade 3; John Camden Young-Bustos, Grade 4

**Spring Street School**  
Audrey Bortnick, Kindergarten; Adeline Rapp, Kindergarten; Ruolan Ding, Grade 2; Jackson Doucette, Grade 4

**Sherwood Middle School**  
Gabby Boyers Watt, Grade 5; Dharshana Lakshmanan, Grade 5; Timothy McCoy, Grade 5; Jay Lambert, Grade 6; Ekaterina Makarenko, Grade 6; Rohan Sivakumar, Grade 6; Jack Skiff, Grade 6; Grace Yin, Grade 6

**Oak Middle School**  
Ellory Aherne, Grade 7; Maya Dodge, Grade 7; Satya Divarkaruni, Grade 7; Jack Schofield, Grade 7

**Shrewsbury High School**  
Jeremy Brinkmann, Grade 9; Laasya Gattu, Grade 9; Caitlyn Carroca, Grade 11; Camden Chenevert, Grade 11; Lulu Greene, Grade 11; Gayatri Kondabathini, Grade 11; Kya Daniels, Grade 12; Aasiya D’Urso, Grade 12; Kiara Garcia, Grade 12; Eliza Gaston, Grade 12; Megan Harris, Grade 12; Hala Jaber, Grade 12; Christina Mathew, Grade 12; Adam Nguyen, Grade 12; Julia Shanoudy, Grade 12; William Shi, Grade 12; Stephanie Trotto, Grade 12

RISE (Reaching Independence through Supported Employment)

Shrewsbury’s post-high-school community program for students 18-22 years old - Opening Fall 2022

**MEG BELSITO**  
Assistant Superintendent  
for Student Services

Community members, business owners, parents, and students, are working together on an excellent new opportunity for our Shrewsbury Public School young adults with disabilities.

As you know, Shrewsbury Public Schools prides itself on equity and access for all students, and this can be seen within all of our schools and our community partnerships. Shrewsbury High School currently provides students with and without disabilities access to internships and vocational opportunities within the high school and local community-based settings.

Given recent federal grant funding for special education, the Student Services Department is beginning an investment in these students aged 18-22 years old to develop its own community-based education program. This program will target each student’s post-secondary vision while providing direct functional academic instruction, employment skills, community experiences, and planning for post-school adult living.

Best practices in transitional

services for this student population have continued to evolve, including an increased emphasis on providing community-based opportunities for students to develop critical skills related to independent living and employment. Creating our own 18-22 program for students entitled to these services beyond high school will allow them to receive instruction to help reach their post-secondary vision, employment opportunities, local community experience, and access to independent living skills within their town of residence. Recently, we formed an advisory committee that includes parents, business owners, and school staff to support this work. This committee provides input, feedback, and recommendations to our school-based team. This partnership includes holding meetings together to further develop a vision and a mission, discuss what our town needs to support our community and business development, and everything in between!

Our vision and hope are to create a program to support our 18-22 student population with disabilities while including peers without disabilities as partners in work and social opportunities. Our goal is to offer the least restrictive environment for our students ages 18-22 with this

new program beginning in the fall of 2022.

Because this programming should be based in the community, our next steps will be to secure a program site and design services for educational, community-based job development, transition and vocational assessments/portfolios, job coaching, and travel training. Developing this program will foster successful long-term outcomes for our students with disabilities as they transition from high school to adulthood, ultimately creating and promoting the connection and belonging to our community outside the walls of the public school system!



Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Senior, Ryan Love, is shown above measuring eyeglasses with a lensometer for the Lion’s Club. This is one of Ryan’s vocational opportunities that Special Education Teacher Meghan Wallace developed. Students clean, measure prescriptions, and sort eyeglasses to donate to third-world countries for the Lion’s Club. This job is one example of the opportunities offered to our current students at SHS that we are looking to build upon as they graduate.

Students make connections with StoryCorps

**JENNIFER DIFRANCESCA**  
Director of Social Sciences,  
Shrewsbury High School

Although the pandemic has disrupted many aspects of learning, members of Shrewsbury High School’s (SHS) National Social Studies Honor Society found opportunities to connect with individuals in their families and communities as part of a StoryCorps project this year. “StoryCorps’ mission is to preserve and share humanity’s stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world.” ([www.storycorps.org](https://www.storycorps.org)) Beginning in November 2021, students reflected on the role stories have played in their lives and brainstormed a list of individuals whose lives and perspectives they wanted to learn more about. Using the resources

available through StoryCorps, students invited, organized and facilitated conversations with family and community members in December 2021 and January 2022. Although the conversations explored a range of topics and emotions, they all highlighted the connections students have made with the adults in their lives:

- I knew he could make conversation with almost anything so I was really grateful with how open he was to reflect on all different things.
- I was not expecting that to be her favorite memory but it meant a lot to me to hear that answer and that memory.
- I could tell he enjoyed this “travel in time” where he got to remember the best times of his life and reflect on what he learned so far.
- I could see her face light

- up when I asked her certain questions.”
- My Nana always loves to speak of what she was like at my age, but having a real interview which was recorded made it even more special.
  - She was emotional which made her responses to the questions so much more genuine and relatable.

These conversations are now archived at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington DC. Throughout Spring 2022, students in SHS Social Sciences elective courses will continue to contribute to the community of stories found in the archive. You can listen to the conversations by going to the SHS Social Sciences Stories community found on StoryCorps’ Archive webpage: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhk9jv7>



# How to become an Impact Partner

**MICHELLE BISCOTTI & KATHLEEN KEOHANE**  
*Coordinators of Development and Volunteer Activities*

Did you know that you could help make big changes in our schools? Every year, a small group of people have made a big impact on our schools by giving modest amounts to the Colonial Fund every month. We call these monthly donors our **Impact Partners** because their regular contributions influence our schools every month, which adds up to an **even bigger impact over time**.

Over the past 12 months (through February 2022), our Impact Partners have contributed \$8,300 to the Colonial Fund by giving \$10, \$20 or even \$50 a

month. Looking at the projects the Colonial Fund is sponsoring this school year (see box), \$8,300 equates to:

- All 150 ukuleles to expand our elementary music program *or*
- Half of the books necessary to complete our World Book Project across all schools *or*
- Almost 1,000 books to update and make whole, the leveled reading libraries in all of our elementary schools *or*
- Outfitting seven high school math classrooms with white boards for the Thinking Classroom Pilot Program

By giving an average of just \$30 per month, our Impact Partners

made one of these projects possible. **Become an Impact Partner.** Start by donating \$10 a month to the Colonial Fund or choose another monthly donation that is comfortable for you. You, too, can have a big impact in our schools.

Signup is easy, just start here: <https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov/future/donate-now> or scan the QR code.

Thank you for your support!



To find out more about the Colonial Fund and the many programs it has funded over 8 years, please visit: <https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov/future>.

## WHAT IMPACT COULD YOU MAKE?

**\$10** for a pound of coffee for the coffee cart

**\$25** for two world language media books

**\$50** for a week's worth of supplies for the coffee cart

**\$50** for a set of six leveled reading books

**\$75** for one ukelele for our expanded music program

**\$100** for one helmet & one harness for the adventure course

**\$100** for a day of mindfulness training

**\$200** for TV production equipment

**\$200** for a white board in a Thinking Classroom

## Nine New Projects the Colonial Fund is Funding This Year

- 1. Math “Thinking Classrooms”** – a pilot program at SHS that reimagines learning space in math classrooms with white boards mounted to classroom walls, creating vertical, non-permanent work surfaces where students can work through math problems in small groups. **2. Media Center World Language Book Project** – creating world language collections in all of our schools' media centers to give students the opportunity to read text in their home language and enhance the sense of belonging. **3. “Do The Math”** - providing teachers with additional tools and curriculum aides to help elementary students build or rebuild their understanding of key math topics. **4. Civics Curriculum Expansion** - enhancing the way civics and social studies are taught through a combination of professional development, new classroom and independent resources for students and hands-on experiences. **5. Improved & Expanded Leveled Reading Libraries** - the collection of leveled reading books at each elementary school will be expanded to ensure each school has enough books for all levels of readers. **6. Coffee Cart Business Venture** – helping Special Education students learn valuable skills, with a new “Coffee Delivery Service” for teachers and staff at the high school. **7. Expanding the K-4 music program with ukuleles** - enhancing the music education of our K-4 students by adding ukuleles into the music program to introduce instrument play and reading music earlier in the curriculum, also sparking interest, bringing joy and helping students develop a love of music. **8. Challenge Course improvements** – updating equipment on all 13 elements of the 10-year-old ropes course, a valuable and popular Physical Education class at Shrewsbury High School where students are able to conquer fears and build confidence. **9. New Equipment for the SHS TV Studio** - expanding the scope of projects that students can complete outside of the classroom, using additional mobile cameras and audio equipment.

### Statement of Non-discrimination

Shrewsbury Public Schools is required by the Massachusetts Department of Education to publish an annual statement of non-discrimination. This notice serves to meet that requirement. The Massachusetts Equal Educational Opportunity statute, General Laws Chapter 76, § 5, ensures that all students have the right to equal educational opportunities in the public schools. The Shrewsbury Public School District is committed to ensuring equal educational opportunities for all students, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation or disability and homelessness. The Shrewsbury Public Schools are in compliance with state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment. The following laws apply: Massachusetts General Law Chapter 76, § 5, which states, “No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in the admission to a public school or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and course of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation or homelessness.” Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 is a Federal statute which states, in part, “No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program receiving federal assistance.” This requirement not to discriminate in educational programs and activities also extends to employment. Ms. Barbara Malone, is the Title IX Coordinator, Director of Human Resources at (508) 841-8400. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, provides that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in be denied the benefits of or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Title VI provided for equal access and prohibits discrimination in the assignment of students to classes. It also prohibits discrimination in ability grouping or tracking students. The Shrewsbury School Committee's Policies #316 and #645, which have been combined into a single policy entitled “Anti-Harassment & Title IX Policy”, deals directly with the issues of harassment. Copies of this policy are available on the School Committee's policy website, at each school, or through the Superintendent's office, located at 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545. Further information may be obtained by contacting Ms. Barbara Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources @ 508 841-8443. The following grievance procedure, which was approved by the Shrewsbury School Committee, is to be used for all issues relating to harassment or discrimination involving student and/or staff: 1. The Shrewsbury Public Schools does not and will not knowingly discriminate against any student or employee on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability or homelessness. All reports of harassment or discrimination will be taken seriously and investigated in a timely fashion. Reports will be held in confidence to the extent provided by law. There are differing procedures required by law for Title IX v. other forms of discrimination. Any student who believes he/she has been the subject of harassment or discrimination should immediately report the incident, either verbally or in writing to an administrator, adjustment counselor, guidance counselor, or teacher. The principal must be notified in all cases of harassment or discrimination. If the complaint constitutes suspected sexual harassment the Title IX Coordinator must also be notified by the original staff member notified of the complaint or their Principal. If any employee believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment, the employee has the right to file a complaint with Shrewsbury Public Schools by contacting the Title IX Coordinator. It is the goal of Shrewsbury Public Schools to promote a workplace that is free of sexual and other forms of harassment. If you would like to file a complaint directly you may do so by contacting the Executive Director of Human Resources, Title IX Coordinator: Barbara Malone, Shrewsbury Public Schools, 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury,

MA 01545; bmalone@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us; Ph 508-841-8443. Complaints may also be filed with any School Principal, any Assistant Principal, or any Assistant Superintendent for Shrewsbury Schools, or with the Superintendent of Schools. These individuals are also available to discuss any concerns you may have and to provide information to you about this policy and our complaint process. Harassment Investigation When a complaint of harassment (sexual or other forms) is received, an administrator will promptly investigate the allegation in a fair and prompt manner. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstance or allowed by law. Please review the full Title IX policy at <https://campussuite-storage.s3.amazonaws.com/prod/11162/b2004386-1ca3-11e6-b537-22000bd8490f/2225766/0a1bbd7a-6c71-11eb-9f34-0a90ee9eb86d/file/316-645%20-%20Anti-Harassment%20&%20Title%20IX%20Policy.pdf>. Complaints about the Superintendent of Schools should be made to the Chairperson of the School Committee. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal statute which states, in part, “No otherwise qualified individual, shall solely on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” This requirement not to discriminate in educational programs and activities, also extends to employment, via a request to Ms. Barbara Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources, (508) 841-8443. Each school has a designated Section 504 Coordinator. Initial student or parent inquiries relating to Section 504 should be directed to the building-based Section 504 Coordinator who can be contacted through the principal's office. Further information may be requested by contacting Ms. Margaret Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, the district's Section 504 Coordinator at (508) 841-8400. The following grievance procedure should be used to report discrimination under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Acts of 1973: To fulfill its obligation under Section 504, the Shrewsbury Public Schools recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding personnel and students. No discrimination against a person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs or activities of the Shrewsbury Public Schools. The school district has a specific requirement under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which includes the responsibility to identify, evaluate and if the child is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to free and appropriate educational services. Questions about eligibility or services should be first directed to the building-based coordinator. If a parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school, he/she has a right to a hearing, first with the district's Section 504 Coordinator, and secondly with an impartial hearing officer. The district's Section 504 Coordinator can be reached at 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545 or by phone at (508) 841-8400. The Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, the district's Section 504 Coordinator, who will provide a written report of the district's findings, will hear all grievances in a timely manner. If a parent or guardian is unsatisfied with the results of the review, they may contact one of the agencies listed below. For grievances not resolved at the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services level, a review by an impartial hearing officer may be scheduled. Individuals with grievances are not required to use the Shrewsbury Public Schools' grievance procedure. Written complaints may be filed with the following agencies: Massachusetts Department of Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148, (781) 338-3000; United States Department of Education Region 1 - Office of Civil Rights, 8th Floor, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02203 (800) 368-1019; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, John F. Kennedy Federal Building, 475 Government Center, Boston, MA 02203 (800) 669-4000; Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, One Ashburton Place, Room 601, Boston, MA 02108 (617) 994-6000.





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ensure that Shrewsbury is a great place  
to live, work, and raise a family.  
I respectfully ask for your support and  
your vote on Tuesday, May 3rd.

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