

# J SHREWSBURY SCHOOL Journal



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Serving a community that empowers learners

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## Superintendent's Corner

### Educating our students in a VUCA world

DR. JOSEPH M. SAWYER  
 Superintendent of Schools

Many refer to the current era as the "Age of Acceleration." The fast pace of modern life; the daily torrent of digital communication; the instability of the global and national political landscape; economic uncertainty; rapidly shifting and polarized social and cultural norms; and changes in demographics and migration patterns all create a very turbulent environment. Although we live in a very safe community, news reports of war from across the world and of mass shootings across the nation provoke anxiety. Wherever they occur, acts of discrimination or hate based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or other human difference cause great distress. We are living in a very complicated time.

Schools across the nation are being affected by all of these things happening in society as a whole, and we are no exception. Further, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be felt in myriad ways, including the exacerbation of a

CONTINUED, see page 2

## In this edition

- Welcome to our new staff members [page 2](#)
- Lunch and Learn at SHS [page 4](#)
- Students soar with Sora [page 4](#)
- 2023 Superintendent's Award recipients recognized [page 5](#)
- Career Exploration at Marvell Semiconductor [page 5](#)
- School furniture gets a second life [page 6](#)
- Colonial Fund seeks donations [page 6](#)
- Career Technical Education opportunities for our students [page 7](#)



Pictured above is one of the colorful product displays at the "Maple & Main" retail business presented by the RISE program. Please see the photo above right for more information.

“ The power of youth is the common wealth for the entire world. The faces of young people are the faces of our past, our present and our future. No segment in the society can match with the power, idealism, enthusiasm and courage of the young people. – Kailash Satyarthi ”



On Friday, November 3rd, Shrewsbury Public Schools celebrated the Grand Opening of "Maple & Main," a retail business and learning space presented by the RISE (Reaching Independence through Supported Employment) program. RISE students and staff are pictured above in the retail space at the Grand Opening with some of the products available for purchase. Another product display is pictured below left.

## District's Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 looks ahead

SANDRA FRYC  
 School Committee Chair

In the Shrewsbury School Journal Fall 2022 Edition, School Committee member Lynsey Heffernan's article discussed how our school district was concluding the final year of its 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, and the committee was undertaking an initiative to develop a new Strategic Plan for 2023-2027. After a collaborative process, on April 26, 2023, the committee unanimously approved a new Strategic Plan representing the Shrewsbury Public Schools' goals and objectives for the next five years.

Shrewsbury Public Schools partnered with consultants from Focused Schools, who assisted with developing the new strategic plan for the district that aligns with our goal of improving educational outcomes for all students.

Shrewsbury Public Schools *Portrait of a Graduate* is our district's vision of the skills we want students to have mastered when they graduate. The skills include critical thinking and content mastery; leadership, global citizenship and engagement; innovation, resilience and focus; and collaboration and communication. The *Portrait of a Graduate* was our guiding North Star for determin-

ing the strategic priorities and direction of education in Shrewsbury.

After gathering input from all stakeholders - including students, family and caregivers, staff, and community members - the consultants from Focused Schools analyzed all feedback, including strengths, the areas to keep doing, and opportunities/areas for growth; the district determined the following three areas of focus for our Strategic Priorities for 2023-2027 to be:

- **Commitment to Educational Excellence – Ensure High-Quality Teaching and Learning:** Provide all students access to high-quality learning experiences in every classroom daily by developing and committing to districtwide expectations for high-quality teaching.
- **Commitment to Enhanced Well-being of All - Ensure a Safe and Inclusive Culture:** Foster welcome, safe, and inclusive learning communities where we honor and celebrate diversity, create connections and a sense of belonging for all, and support and engage all students, staff, and family members.
- **Commitment to Optimization of Resources - Partner with Community to**

CONTINUED, see page 3

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## Superintendent's Corner

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mental health crisis that was already emerging pre-pandemic, along with delays in social development and learning for many. The environment we find ourselves in can be described by the acronym VUCA, which stands for "Volatile," "Uncertain," "Complex," and "Ambiguous." VUCA was first coined by foreign policy analysts to describe the situation at the end of the Cold War, and its use increased further after 9/11. Over time, it has become a term used in organizational management lingo across business and other sectors, and I believe it is an apt descriptor for the current state of public education.

This VUCA environment creates many challenges for our schools, and we are working hard to respond to the needs of our students, families, and staff by focusing our efforts on providing systems of support. The district's strategic plan, which is detailed in the article in this issue by Sandra Fryc, Chair of the School Committee, is structured to focus our attention and resources on the issues that stakeholders told us were most important. The plan serves as a tool that helps us to respond to the turbulence characterized by VUCA in ways experts suggest: by creating a defined vision; demonstrating understanding of the greatest needs; communicating priorities with clarity; and developing systems that enable our schools to be agile in responding to unexpected changes.

Regardless of how strong our strategies, goals, and systems are, the most important factor in responding to a VUCA environment is our people. We know that when our families and our whole community support our schools in order to provide the resources and tools we need, and when our educators, support staff, and leaders work as a team to adapt in order to address our challenges, our students reap the benefits. This is not easy work, and there are no quick fixes – patience and perseverance will be required. I am optimistic, as I am confident that our plan is focused on the right things, and that we have the right people to put it into action. In doing so, we will meet our obligation to provide our town's young people with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed despite the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of today's world.



## Welcome to our new staff members

### BARBARA A. MALONE

*Executive Director of Human Resources*

Even as Shrewsbury Public Schools encountered one of the two most difficult hiring seasons to date in filling professional teaching and specialist positions (hiring for the 2022-2023 school year being the other), we are proud of our new hires and welcome them to the district. Our focus for this year has been on finding student services roles, including School Psychologists, licensed Moderate Special Education Teachers, and licensed Severe Special Education Teachers.

We continue to work hard to find enough strong candidates for our open ABA Technician and Child Specific Assistant positions. Both positions support students with disabilities who have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). At the time of writing (November 2023) we still have some of these positions available if there are members of the public who are interested in applying, and we ask that they email CSAPostings@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us or ABAPostings@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us with their cover letter and resume.

We continue to try to find ways to increase the diversity of our staff. For the 2023-2024 school year 19% of our new hires (all roles) self-reported as being in diverse federal categories, with 11.36% of our professional hires self-reporting in these categories. For the 2022-2023 school year 23% of our new hires (all roles) self-reported in diverse federal categories, with 13% of our professional hires reporting in these categories. For the 2021-2022 school year, 17% of our new hires self-reported in diverse federal categories.

### DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM

The following leaders were appointed for the 2023-2024 school year:

**Christian Girardi**,  
Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations  
*Master of Leadership and Educational Administration, Worcester State University*  
*Bachelor of the Arts in Music, Wesleyan University*

**Kristen Gasper**,  
Principal of the Major Howard W. Beal School  
*Educational Leadership Program, Fitchburg State University*  
*Master of Education in Special Education, Rivier College*  
*Bachelor of Science in Education, Lesley College*

**Michelle Dillon**,  
Assistant Principal for Oak Middle

School  
*Master of Educational Leadership, Boston College*  
*Master of Teaching, Clark University*  
*Bachelor of Biology and Music Education, College of the Holy Cross*

**Vanessa Colleran**,  
Reading Specialist  
*Master of Education, Language and Literacy, Simmons College*  
*Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and Special Education, Boston University*

**Susan Direnzo**,  
Reading Specialist  
*Certificate of Study, Reading Specialist, Fitchburg State University*  
*Master of Special Education, Fitchburg State University*  
*Master of Early Childhood Education, Worcester State University*  
*Bachelor of Science in Education, Westfield State University*

**Heather Mistretta**,  
Reading Specialist  
*Teacher Certification in Reading specialist, Worcester State University*  
*Master of Education in Moderate Disabilities, Worcester State University*  
*Teacher Certification in Moderate Disabilities, Worcester State University*  
*Bachelor of Arts in the History of Mathematics, Science, and Philosophy, St. John's College*

### NEW HIRING-PROFESSIONAL STAFF

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

The process includes phone, remote, or in-person interviews with principals, department directors, curriculum coordinators/instructional coaches, teachers, parents and central office administrators, and sometimes students, depending on the level. It also includes thorough background checks and demonstration lessons.

We continue to use [www.schoolspring.com](http://www.schoolspring.com) as a sourcing tool. We also advertised positions through [www.IMDi-university.com](http://www.IMDi-university.com) and [Indeed.com](http://Indeed.com) and the "Handshake" tool at various colleges and universities, and asked applicants to apply directly to my email address if that was more efficient for them.

### NEW EDUCATORS

#### Shrewsbury High School

**Andrea Anderson**,  
Moderate Special Education Teacher  
*Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Worcester State University*  
*Master of Severe Special Education, Fitchburg State University*

**Katherine Arsenault**,  
Biology Teacher  
*Bachelor of Science in Biology Education, Siena College*  
*Master of Education in Secondary Education, Providence College*

**Erin Blette**,  
Special Education Teacher  
*Bachelor of Arts in English, Coastal Carolina University*  
*Master of Teaching English and Moderate Special Needs, Northeastern University*  
*Doctorate in Education Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Leadership, Northeastern University*

**Gulderen Gunduz Deniz**,  
Mathematics Teacher  
*Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, Eskisehir Anadolu University, Turkey*  
*Master of Secondary Education in Mathematics, Old Dominion University*

**Julia Duquette**,  
Moderate Special Education Teacher  
*Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Worcester State University*

**Jennifer Goodrich**,  
Mathematics Teacher  
*Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, West Virginia Wesleyan College*

*Bachelor of Arts in Education, West Virginia Wesleyan College*  
*Master of Teaching Mathematics, Providence College*

**Robert Hassett**,  
Spanish Teacher  
*Bachelor of Arts in International Relations, History, and Spanish, Syracuse University*  
*Doctor of Jurisprudence, New England School of Law*

**Matthew Martucci**,  
Visual Arts Teacher  
*Bachelor of Fine Arts in Illustration, Ringling College of Art and Design*

**Amanda Mullen**,  
Spanish Teacher  
*Bachelor of Arts in Spanish for the Professions, Worcester State University*  
*Master of Education, Worcester State University*

**Christopher Ryan**,  
Business & Computer Science Teacher  
*Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Nichols College*  
*Master of Business Administration, Nichols College*  
*Master of Adult Learning, University of Connecticut*

**Monika Sudyka**,  
Mathematics Teacher  
*Bachelor of Science in Mathematics in Secondary Education, Worcester State University*

**Caryn Wardwell**,  
Music Teacher and Band Director  
*Bachelor of Arts in Music Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst*  
*Master of Music Education, Teachers College at Columbia University*

**Sherwood and Oak Middle Schools**

**Jill Goyette**,

CONTINUED, see page 3

## Welcome new staff

CONTINUED, from page 2

BRYT Academic Coordinator  
Bachelor of Arts in English, University of Massachusetts, Boston  
Master of Education in Special Education, Framingham State University

**Anne Johnson,**  
Structured Reading/Special Education Teacher

Bachelor of Arts English, Nazareth College of Rochester  
Master of Literacy, College of Saint Rose

**Olga Pineda,**  
Music Teacher and Orchestra Director  
Bachelor of Science in Marketing Management, De La Salle University, Philippines

Bachelor of Science in Music Education, Saint Scholastica's College, Philippines  
Master of Marketing, De La Salle University, Philippines

### Oak Middle School

**Rachel Adamsky,**  
Grade 8 Science Teacher  
Bachelor of Arts in Geosciences, Skidmore College  
Teacher Residency in Earth Science and Biology, Newton  
Master of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Massachusetts, Lowell

**Caitlin Alayan,**  
ELC Coordinator/Special Education Teacher  
Bachelor of Elementary Education and Liberal Studies with a concentration in Cultural Diversity, Westfield State University  
Master of Science in Severe Special Needs Education, Simmons College

Certificate of Advanced Educational Studies in Applied Behavior Analysis, Western New England College

**Winston Andraca,**  
Moderate Special Education Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Health and Physical Education, Montclair State University

Master in Teaching Special Education, Montclair State University

**Kelly Balezos,**  
Grade 7 Science Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Geology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Master of Secondary Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

**Matthew Fall,**  
Moderate Special Education Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Secondary Physical Education, Westfield State University

Master of Special Education, Cambridge College

**Abigail Moon,**  
Visual Arts Teacher  
Bachelor of Arts in Art History, Clark University  
Master of Arts in Teaching Visual Art, Smith College

**Daniel Regnier,**  
7th Grade English Teacher  
Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education, Framingham State University

**Julie Rhynhart,**  
Speech Language Pathologist

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Pepperdine University  
Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology, Worcester State University

**Jill Shah,**  
Grade 7 Science Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Carnegie Mellon University  
Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering, University of Maryland, Baltimore

### Sherwood Middle School

**Keren Albiston,**  
Intensive Special Education Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Rutgers

Master of Special Education, Rutgers  
Master of Administration in Education, Concordia University

**Molly Bates,**  
Grade 5 Math and Science Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and Mathematics, Assumption University

**Olivia Dean,**  
Grade 5 Math and Science Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Elementary Education, Bridgewater State University

Master of Mathematics Education, Boston University  
**Courtney Delaney,**  
Physical Education Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science, Fitchburg State University

**Stuart Grimes,**  
Grade 6 English Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher  
Bachelor of Arts in History, George Washington University  
Master of Middle School History Education, Lesley University

**Cassandra LaCoy,**  
Grade 6 English Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Psychology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Master of Elementary Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

**Leighann Orr,**  
Grade 6 English Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher  
Bachelor of Arts in Literature, Worcester State University  
Master of Elementary Education, American International College

**Jenna Reynolds,**  
Grade 5 English Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher  
Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education, Skidmore College  
Master of Special Education, Regis College

**Ariel Sloan,**  
Grade 6 Math and Science Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Worcester State University

### Calvin Coolidge School

**Danielle Grillo,**  
Grade 2 Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
Masters of Business Administration in Management, Wagner College

Masters of Elementary Education,

Curriculum and Instruction, Bay Path University

**Stephanie Hubert,**  
School Adjustment Counselor  
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Providence College  
Master of Social Work, Boston College

**Ashlee Procacini,**  
Grade 2 Teacher  
Bachelor of Elementary Education, Framingham State University  
Bachelor of General Studies/Interdisciplinary Studies, Fitchburg State University  
Master of Education in Elementary and Moderate Disabilities, Lesley University

### Floral Street School

**Andreia dos Santos Lucas Gutierrez,**  
English Language Learner Teacher  
Bachelor of Arts in Translation Studies, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Technologist in Management Processes, University of Marilia, Brazil  
Master of Education, Worcester State University  
Master of Education in ESL, Worcester State University

**Katie Mancini,**  
Grade 4 Teacher  
Bachelor of Elementary Education, Rhode Island College

**Lauren Wilson,**  
School Psychologist  
Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Endicott College  
Master of Science in Educational and School Psychology, University of Southern Maine

### Major Howard W. Beal School

**Carly Kadlik,**  
School Adjustment Counselor  
Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Framingham State University

Master of Education in School Counseling, University of Massachusetts, Boston

**Carrie Sullivan,**  
Kindergarten Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education, Westfield State University  
Master of Teaching Early Childhood Education, American International College

### Walter J. Paton School and Major Howard W. Beal School

**Sua Im,**  
Moderate Special Education Teacher  
Bachelor of Arts in Neuroscience, Wellesley College

Master of Education in Elementary Education, University of Massachusetts, Boston  
Master of Education in Special Education, Fitchburg State University

### Spring Street School

**Kelly Palumbo,**  
Moderate Special Education Teacher  
Bachelor of Science in Communication Disorders, Worcester State University  
Master of Education in Teaching Students with Special Needs, Elementary, Wheelock College

CONTINUED, see page 4

## Strategic Plan

CONTINUED, from page 1

**Maintain a Strong Financial Foundation:** Continue the financial stability established by the 2021 Operational Override.

Shrewsbury is a high-performing school district, and the new Strategic Priorities will help us continue to focus on the areas where we are doing well and want to continue to move forward, as well as address opportunities in the identified areas of need through clearly-defined goals and action steps.

In the area of *Educational Excellence*, Shrewsbury's priorities will focus on continuing to: ensure high-quality teaching and learning, close learning gaps, advance career and technical education, and develop a districtwide data culture. All students need access to exceptional educational experiences, and we will accomplish this by utilizing: staff experience and investment in professional development; the use of high-quality materials and technology; data analysis; strong instructional strategies; and an overall comprehensive system of support to meet the needs of all learners.

Our district prioritizes the social, emotional, behavioral, mental, and physical health of all students and staff by creating safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environments. To accomplish this, students and staff need to feel valued, supported, and empowered. The *Enhanced Well-Being of All* will prioritize a safe and inclusive culture and further promotion of student and staff wellness by strengthening social and emotional learning programming and supports, enhancing behavior supports and interventions, and evaluating and strengthening safety and security systems and protocols.

To maximize student success, resources must be allocated according to student needs while also maintaining a sound financial budget. The district priorities will include hiring, supporting, and retaining high-quality, diverse staff, maximizing family and community partnerships, strategically and equitably allocating district resources, partnering with the community to maintain a solid financial foundation, and improving facilities to address overcrowding and infrastructure needs.

The School Committee recommended not having a stand-alone priority of diversity, belonging, inclusion, and equity, as this work should be embedded in everything our district does and addressed specifically and strongly through all three focus areas.

The next step for the district's Strategic Priorities is to define specific goals and action steps that will be the focus of work during the 2023-2024 school year, as well as determine metrics to measure success or where we may need to pivot and

CONTINUED, see page 5

## Welcome new staff

CONTINUED, from page 3

### PROFESSIONAL TRANSFERS

**Aimee Bunn**, Clinical Coordinator for the district, from Floral Street School  
**Erin Hruskoci**, RISE Teacher, from Walter J. Paton School  
**Kristi Menard**, RISE Teacher, from Oak Middle School  
**Douglas Kershaw**, Grade 7 ELA, to Oak Middle School from Sherwood Middle School  
**Jacqueline Lawson**, Grade 7 Science, to Oak Middle School from Sherwood Middle School  
**Allison Campbell**, Grade 4, to Major Howard W. Beal School, from Spring Street School  
**Allyson Feeley**, Special Education Teacher to Walter J. Paton School, from a dual assignment that included Major Howard W. Beal School  
**Rebekah Landers**, Special Education Teacher to Major Howard W. Beal School, from Walter J. Paton School  
**Carrie Sullivan**, to Major Howard W. Beal School, from Walter J. Paton School  
**Jennifer Wilson**, to Calvin Coolidge and Floral Street Schools, from Sherwood Middle School

### NEW RETAIL MANAGER

**Jennifer Tabor**

### NEW PARAPROFESSIONAL STAFF

#### ABA Technicians

Benjamin Ayres, Kaydance Bergeron, Larissa Bryant, Shamar Burrell, Heanneah Casey, Gabrielle Demers, Jessica Derosiers, Lesley Engvall, Caitlin Ethier, Leanna Giang, Jamaliz Jimenez-Vargas, Susan McKay, Jennifer Natoli, Julie Santiago, Christina Tizzano, Christina Tomaiolo, Caitlin Wood, Nicole Murray, Rachael Thies, Jhalia Armas, Callista Pacheco, Paola Rodriguez, Priscilla Karikari, Abby Barrows, Payton Sherwood, Heydi Ortiz, Catherine Provencher, Marie Paillant, Maria Ginisi, Kyara Beauchemin, Nicorey Johnson, Gideon Adusei, David Munoz Juarez, Benjamin Montiel, Meredith Andrews, Bernard Bamfo

#### Child Specific Assistants

Amanda Balaparya, Courtney Ducasse, Laura Gregory, Suraia Hossen, Allison Kilham, Rajalakshmi Mahalingam, Emily McManus, Sarah Perreault, John Sweeney, Latha Shivaprakash, Maria Valle

#### Instructional Assistants

Colleen Brownstein, Lauren Ellerbrook, Gabriela Garza Aguirre, Kacey Hubley, Deborah Mazejka, Elizabeth Mitchell, Laura Ore, Susan Shea, Nikita Padia, Chandni Patel, Nora Watkins

#### Media Assistant

Kaylee Lambert

#### Special Education Paraprofessional

Barbara Gauthier, Amanda Salvaggi

#### NEW IT HIRES

Zachary Baldino, IT Specialist, Spring Street School

#### NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS/REGISTRAR

Jennifer Brown, Administrative Assistant, Spring Street School  
 Kevin Escalante, Registrar, District

## Lunch and Learn at SHS

### KATHLEEN KEOHANE

Director of Alumni Relationships and Community Partnerships

### DR. JANE LIZOTTE

Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being

Shrewsbury High School (SHS) has proudly launched an entirely new Career Exploration initiative. The new *Lunch and Learn* program is designed to provide our high school students with valuable opportunities to explore and learn more about their potential future careers.

Students from all grade levels will engage with, and gain knowledge from, alumni and community partners over lunch throughout the academic year. Groups of up to eight students meet with invited guests during each of the four, 20-minute lunch periods.

The *Lunch and Learn* program is a series of weekly events that take place on Fridays during regular lunch periods. These events are specifically structured to create a comfortable environment where students can gather insights about diverse career options, pose questions, and establish connections with professionals in various fields.



Mr. Carlos Garcia (SHS Class of 2015), Advance Coordinator at the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office and Shrewsbury Select Board Member, is pictured (top center above) talking with students at a "Lunch and Learn" session in October 2023.

#### Key Features:

- 1. Career Exploration:** Students have the chance to delve into different career options, gaining a preliminary understanding of what various professions entail.
- 2. Small Group Discussions:** Each *Lunch and Learn* session will consist of up to seven or eight students. This intimate setting ensures that students have the opportunity to actively participate and engage in meaningful conversations.
- 3. Diverse Topics:** Over the course of the program, a wide range of careers will be covered, from

STEM fields to Arts, Business, Manufacturing, and more. This diversity allows students to explore a variety of interests and passions.

- 4. 20-Minute Sessions:** The program has been structured to fit within the 25-minute lunch period (allowing a few minutes to buy lunch and sit down) to minimize disruption to the daily schedule while maximizing the learning experience.
- 5. Guest Speakers:** Shrewsbury Public Schools is inviting community members, business leaders

CONTINUED, see page 6

## Students soar with Sora

### EMILY BREDBERG

Media Specialist, Shrewsbury High School

### SHAWNA POWERS

Director of Instructional Technology & Media Services

### PAMELA SANTILLI

Media Specialist, Middle

### MICHELLE ZIMMERMAN

Media Specialist, Elementary

The Shrewsbury Public School (SPS) Media Centers are hubs of learning and reading in each building, and their influence extends well beyond the walls of our schools. Since 2020, Shrewsbury Public School students have had access to ebooks, audiobooks, and comic graphic novels through the Sora app and our subscription to the Commonwealth Ebook Collection (a program available primarily to grades K-12 schools through the Massachusetts Library System).

Despite joining only a few years ago, our K-12 students have accessed books through

Sora more than students from any other school district in the state. This year we have accounted for just under 10% of the hours read on Sora and 5% of the total checkouts across the state. From the beginning of August through November 1, Shrewsbury students have checked

out 20,000 books and read for 30,000 hours!

For more information about the Sora app, please reach out to one of our media specialists or visit <https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov/itams/elementary-media>.

**The ebooks you want to read, available from Shrewsbury Public Schools**

The image above includes a sampling of titles available to SPS students through the Sora app.

# 2023 Superintendent's Award recipients recognized

On opening day for Shrewsbury Public Schools staff, August 28, 2023, Superintendent Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer recognized a number of individuals for their extraordinary service to Shrewsbury Public Schools. The 2023 Superintendent's Award recipients were: Justine Burnett, Shrewsbury High School English Teacher; Dotty Flynn, District Accounts Payable Specialist; Director of Extended Learning Karen Isaacson; Executive Director of Human Resources Barbara Malone; Sherwood Middle School Paraprofessional Luanne McGrath; Oak Middle School Grade 8 Social Studies Teacher Jason Ponticelli; and Shrewsbury High School Student Support Specialist Nerida Vargas. Gina Marie Kelly, Floral Street School Assistant Principal, received the 2023 Thomas M. Kennedy Award, and Christina Manos, Director of English Language Learning, received the 2023 Jayne M. Wilkin Award. The

Elementary Instructional Coaches were recognized with the 2023 ChinHuei Yeh Award: Rebecca Dumphy and Lisa Papazian (Maj. Howard Beal School); Ashley Gallagher (Walter J. Paton School); Erin Kendrick (Calvin Coolidge School); Sarah

Matthews and Lindsay Morse (Floral Street School); and Donna Rice (Spring Street School).

The award winners are pictured below with Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Sawyer.



Pictured front row left to right: Barbara Malone, Dotty Flynn, Karen Isaacson, Luanne McGrath, Justine Burnett, Erin Kendrick, Lisa Papazian, Sarah Matthews, Ashley Gallagher, and Rebecca Dumphy. Pictured back row left to right: Christina Manos, Gina Marie Kelly, Jason Ponticelli, Dr. Sawyer, Nerida Vargas, Donna Rice, and Lindsay Morse.

## Strategic Plan

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change or rethink our approach. The process needs to be data-driven to assess measures of impact. We are not looking to reinvent or change what the district does; instead, the approach is to continually build on strengths and recognize areas where change is needed in a meaningful and flexible way to ensure the work done is significant, financially prudent, sustainable, and adds to continuous improvement of educational services.

Some highlights of focus during the 2023-2024 school year include:

- A pre-K through Grade 6 literacy initiative to increase the district's capacity to provide all students with the high-quality instruction and materials necessary to support reading and writing achievement and success in grade-level tasks and assignments.
- Create career and technical pathways for high school students by expanding opportunities for career exploration, job shadowing, and internships.
- Continue to foster inclusive and culturally-proficient practices and seek feedback regarding perceptions of belonging.
- Review outcomes of school start time changes to determine the impact on sleep health and well-being.
- Assess the current state of the district's safety and security systems and crisis-response processes.
- Continue the district's Teacher Diversification Project, including developing updated recruitment and selection processes to attract a more diversified and qualified applicant pool representative of student and community demographics.
- Partner with the Select Board to discuss options for a successor plan to the March 16, 2021, override statement to the residents of Shrewsbury.

Defining Strategic Priorities for the next five years is crucial as it represents the objectives our district believes are essential for continuous improvement in educational services for all students. The identification of clear and specific goals and the use of data and metrics to analyze the impact of the work being done is critical to moving our district forward educationally, as well as creating a clear path for the application of budget dollars.

The district's Strategic Priorities for 2023-2027 provide a defined roadmap for areas of focus that we believe will result in improved education outcomes, a sense of belonging for students and staff, and the application of all resources in a manner to ensure educational and cultural excellence in Shrewsbury Public Schools.

# Career exploration at Marvell Semiconductor

**KATHLEEN KEOHANE**  
Director of Alumni Relationships and Community Partnerships  
**DR. JANE LIZOTTE**  
Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being

Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Career Exploration programming extended into the summer, building upon the array of opportunities students encountered throughout the 2022-2023 school year. These initiatives are aimed at equipping students with the knowledge they need to make well-informed decisions regarding their future professional journeys, based on

Shrewsbury Public Schools' Strategic Plan. The Shrewsbury Public Schools 2023-2027 Strategic Plan includes the following goal: *Advance Career and Technical Education: Strengthen all students' postsecondary preparedness by expanding access to career and technical education, evaluating course offerings, and exploring pathway opportunities.*

- Expand opportunities for career exploration, job shadowing, and internships.
- Create multiple career and technical pathways for high school students, including coursework sequences followed by

authentic field training experiences.

Career Exploration events are designed to introduce students to different industries, trades, and post-secondary options.

In July of this year, a group of 11 students from Shrewsbury High School dedicated two full days to an enriching experience at Marvell Semiconductor. During their visit, they had the opportunity to explore various careers and engage in job shadowing activities. Marvell's "Career Immersion Program" was designed to offer each group a comprehensive 10-hour experience, which included mentorship, educational insights into different careers, and extensive support provided through group discussions, panel sessions, on-site observations, and structured hands-on projects.

On the first day - "Career Day" - students were warmly greeted at the Westborough facility and introduced to the engineers and staff members who would serve as their guides for the next two days. These students received a personalized tour of the Verification Lab, where engineers conduct tests on silicon chips. Here they gained insights into what silicon chips



Teams of SHS students at Marvell Semiconductor are shown above attempting to decipher "packets" that mirror the process of transmitting information over the internet.

CONTINUED, see page 7

## Lunch and Learn

CONTINUED, from page 4

and SHS alumni from various industries to share their knowledge, experiences, and insights with our students, providing them with real-world perspectives.

### Benefits of the Lunch and Learn Program:

- **Career Awareness:** Students will gain a clearer understanding of the career paths available to them, helping them make more informed decisions about their future.
- **Networking:** These sessions provide a unique opportunity for students to network with professionals who can offer guidance.
- **Inspiration:** Learning directly from professionals can be inspiring and motivate students to set and achieve ambitious career goals.
- **Soft Skills:** Participation in these sessions will enhance students' communication and interpersonal skills.

Upon their arrival at the high school at 10:30am, they take their seats at a round table positioned just outside the auditorium, adjacent to the cafeteria. To foster discussion, guests give a brief overview of their profession and how they chose it. Students are then encouraged to ask questions, such as: *What did you do after high school? How did you get into the profession you are in? What classes in high school did you take that helped you? Which classes would you recommend?*

Since early October SHS has been honored to welcome several alumni as guest speakers. These include Ms. Patrice Peris, SHS Class of 1999, who discussed pursuing a career in the music industry; Ms. Jessica Card, SHS Class of 2003, who shared insights on careers in social media; and Mr. Carlos Garcia, SHS Class of 2015, who works in the State Attorney General's office and is a dedicated Select Board member, who shared his enthusiasm for involvement in local politics.

Over the next few months, Shrewsbury High School will host the following guests speakers: a PhD in Biomedical Science, a Senior Scientist for Allorion Therapeutics, an IT specialist, a Conservationist and former Americorps leader, a CPA, a published author of teen novels, a Psychologist and trauma therapist, a Police Chief, and an Investment Banker. The schedule of upcoming speakers can be found at this link: <https://bit.ly/406S9Va>.

If you are interested in being a guest speaker, please contact [kkehane@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:kkehane@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us).

SHREWSBURY SCHOOL

# Journal

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## School furniture gets a second life

**APRIL YU**  
Assistant Finance and Operations Manager

Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) utilized rental warehouse space to store furniture from schools in the district during the COVID pandemic. The lease was terminated in the fall after distributing those items desired by the nine schools in the district, and then - per School Committee policy and state law - disposing of remaining furniture through a combination of public sale, charitable donation, and trash disposal.

Shrewsbury Public Schools hosted a successful public sale in October with about



"For One Child Foundation" Founder/Executive Director Ms. Racquel Knight and volunteer Ms. Maria Montano are pictured above (left to right above) with some of the donated desks from Shrewsbury Public Schools that will be delivered to classrooms in rural and remote areas of Jamaica.



The photo above of a classroom in Jamaica shows the types of furniture currently being used by students.

200 community members from local towns purchasing furniture for their households. After the public sale, SPS contacted non-profit organizations and private schools with an offer to donate any remaining furniture. The *For One Child Foundation* - which works to provide Jamaica's rural and remote schools with comfortable learning environments - responded and a site visit was arranged. Founder/Executive Director Ms. Racquel Knight was thrilled to see a variety of student desks, chairs, and tables in the warehouse that they would be able to take to students in Jamaica, and noted that the donation would help achieve her goal to procure 1,000 chairs. In late October Ms. Knight rented a moving truck and organized volunteers to help transport the furniture

to their storage area, with a goal of shipping it to arrive in Jamaica in January 2024. Ms. Knight, who plans to be in Jamaica to distribute the furniture and expects students will be excited to use higher quality tables and chairs than those that are currently in place, shared this note of appreciation:

*On behalf of the "For One Child" team, we would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation to the Shrewsbury Public Schools for this generous donation. Children in rural and remote schools across the island will be excited to have the school furniture in their classrooms.*

Shrewsbury Public Schools is happy to partner with the *For One Child Foundation* to help students in need.

## Colonial Fund seeks donations

**KATHLEEN KEOHANE**  
Director of Alumni Relationships and Community Partnerships  
**DR. JANE LIZOTTE**  
Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being

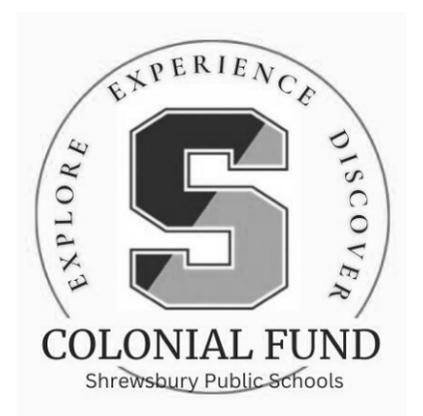
The **Shrewsbury Public Schools' Colonial Fund** has been instrumental in covering the costs associated with sending students to diverse locations in support of career exploration and student engagement. These expenses encompass registration fees, transportation, resources for coordinating students, and other necessary arrangements. While our school-to-career partnerships with local businesses have offered valuable in-kind support, sustaining and expanding these op-

portunities relies heavily on donations to the Colonial Fund.

The Colonial Fund, Shrewsbury's sole Annual Fund, greatly relies on monthly contributions. Even the most modest donation can have a profound effect. Several donors generously contribute as little as \$10 each month, and over time, these contributions have enabled us to support student transportation and cover event registration fees, including those for the Worcester Sports Management Summit and Youth in Motion program. This has removed significant barriers for our students by allowing them to participate in these valuable opportunities.

Please consider making a small monthly donation to the Colonial Fund. Your

regular contribution will directly impact the lives of Shrewsbury students, affording them enriching experiences. You may cancel your contributions at any time. To make a donation, please visit [<https://schools.shrewsbury.ma.gov/future/colonial-fund>]. Your generosity will create a meaningful difference in our students' lives, and we sincerely appreciate your support.



# CTE opportunities for our students

**TODD BAZYDLO**  
Principal, SHS  
**ANGIE FLYNN**  
Director of School Counseling, SHS  
**KATHLEEN KEOHANE**  
Director of Alumni Relationships and Community Partnerships  
**DR. JANE LIZOTTE**  
Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships & Well-Being



SHS students and School Counselors who visited the Blackstone Valley Hub for Workforce Development in October are pictured left to right above: students Aidan Cavanaugh, Jefferson Pineda, Aiden Gardner, Michael Halloran, Bradley Reynolds, Andrew Torres, and Kory Phan; School Counselors Ms. Jammie Lussier and Mr. Frank Flynn.

Shrewsbury Public Schools is working hard to provide students with a variety of Career Technical Education (CTE) opportunities. The Blackstone Valley Hub for Workforce Development in Whitinsville, MA, which is offering an initial training program for Shrewsbury High School (SHS) students during the 2023-2024 school year to introduce students to manufacturing and allied topics, represents one of these opportunities. The training is focused on manufacturing and primarily includes working with machine tools, welding, robotics, 3D printing, and laser engraving. Four full-school-day visits

were planned for 2023 - two in October and two in November - and these experiences will continue in the new year.

Component Sources International Group (CSI), contract manufacturer and distributor of custom-design precision mechanical components and assemblies located in Westborough, MA, is another manufacturing partner of Shrewsbury Public Schools. CSI will be offering both internships and paid-employment opportunities to high school

students. SHS Principal Mr. Todd Bazydlo and Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Well-Being Dr. Jane Lizotte visited CSI in October for a tour of the facility and a meeting with President Mr. Steve Doody and Administrative Assistant Ms. Kris Denorscia to explore ways in which to provide work and career experiences to students. We are very grateful to the Colonial Fund for supporting this career and life-readiness programming.

## Career Exploration

*CONTINUED, from left*

through the support of parents and local businesses who contribute to the Shrewsbury Public Schools' annual fund, known as The Colonial Fund. If you wish to see more of these valuable opportunities become accessible, we encourage you to contemplate making a modest or recurring donation to The Colonial Fund at <https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov/future/donate-now>.

SHS remains committed to offering various avenues for students to connect and interact with professionals. Opportunities include the Job Fair scheduled in November, the newly introduced *Lunch and Learn* program (please refer to our article elsewhere in this publication), Job Shadowing experiences available during the February and April (2024) breaks, and the Career Fair planned for February. Students seeking access to these programs can reach out to their counselors for assistance. Additionally, more detailed information will be regularly posted in the weekly SPS' electronic Community Bulletin.

Businesses interested in hosting students for tours, Job Shadowing experiences, or Career Day activities, should contact Jane Lizotte at [jlizotte@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:jlizotte@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us) or Kathleen Keohane at [kkeohane@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:kkeohane@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us). Your participation is greatly appreciated.

For those students who cannot attend a Job Shadow, Career Day or Job Fair, Shrewsbury Public Schools has introduced the "Jobs for Students" platform (accessible at <https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov/high/schoolcounseling/jobs-for-students>). This resource serves as a hub for connecting students with ongoing employment opportunities. The platform offers students convenient access to a variety of job listings, and allows businesses to showcase employment openings when they cannot attend Job Fairs or when job opportunities emerge outside of these events. The site is regularly updated to keep job listings current and accurate.

## Career Exploration

*CONTINUED, from page 5*

are, what they look like, and their various functions. During a casual "brown bag" lunch, students had the opportunity to mingle and connect with college interns who were spending their summers at Marvell. These interns generously offered advice on the essential classes to take, the kind of experience required, and the key steps to successfully apply for and secure an internship at Marvell. In the afternoon, students participated in a panel session with engineers who shared their personal career journeys, including the best advice they had received along the way.

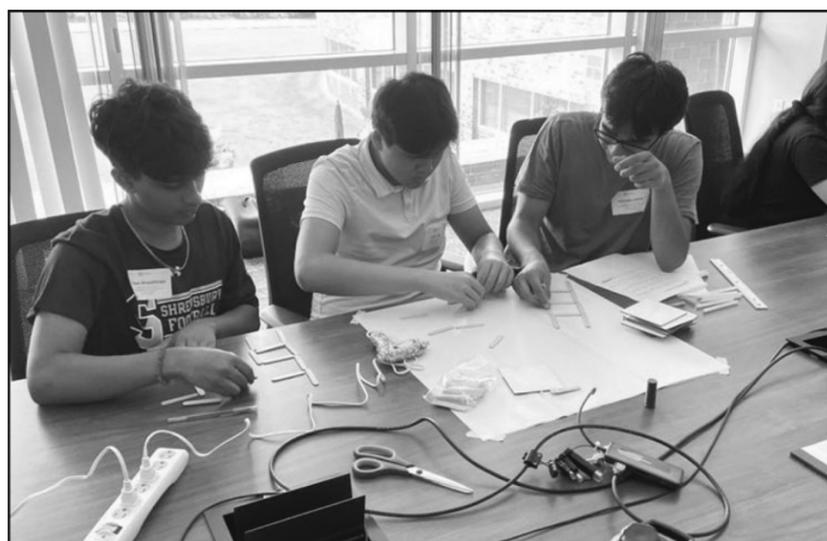
On the second day - "Job Shadow Day" - students were given firsthand experience of "a day in the life of a Marvell engineer." The group engaged in three distinct hands-on activities, specifically crafted to introduce the technical skills essential for creating prototypes, developing test methods, and generating documentation to support the production, assembly, or manufacturing of proposed product designs.

One activity involved composing a Test Plan to locate hidden "bugs" scattered around the room, demonstrating the process an engineer follows when crafting a Verification Plan for identifying issues

within their hardware. Another activity revolved around the creation and encryption of "packets," mirroring the process of transmitting information over the internet. This exercise effectively illustrated the concept of dropped packets and underscored the significance of encryption for data security. The third activity involved drafting a Design Specification for a chosen item, with the aim of having another team construct that item exclusively based on the design specification. This highlighted the critical importance of having a clear and easily comprehensible design specification before proceeding with hardware manufacturing.

After their 10-hour immersion at Marvell, the 11 students agreed that Marvell had wholeheartedly fulfilled its commitment to provide a "comprehensive and engaging experience aimed at clarifying the profession and the industry, while also offering valuable feedback and recommendations to enhance their confidence and progress in the pursuit of engineering."

Additional Career Exploration events will be organized and implemented during the academic year. This endeavor is made possible in part



A team of SHS students at Marvell Semiconductor is pictured above attempting to build a shelf from a Design Specification drafted by a different group of 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, Graphic Designer**

*CONTINUED, see right*

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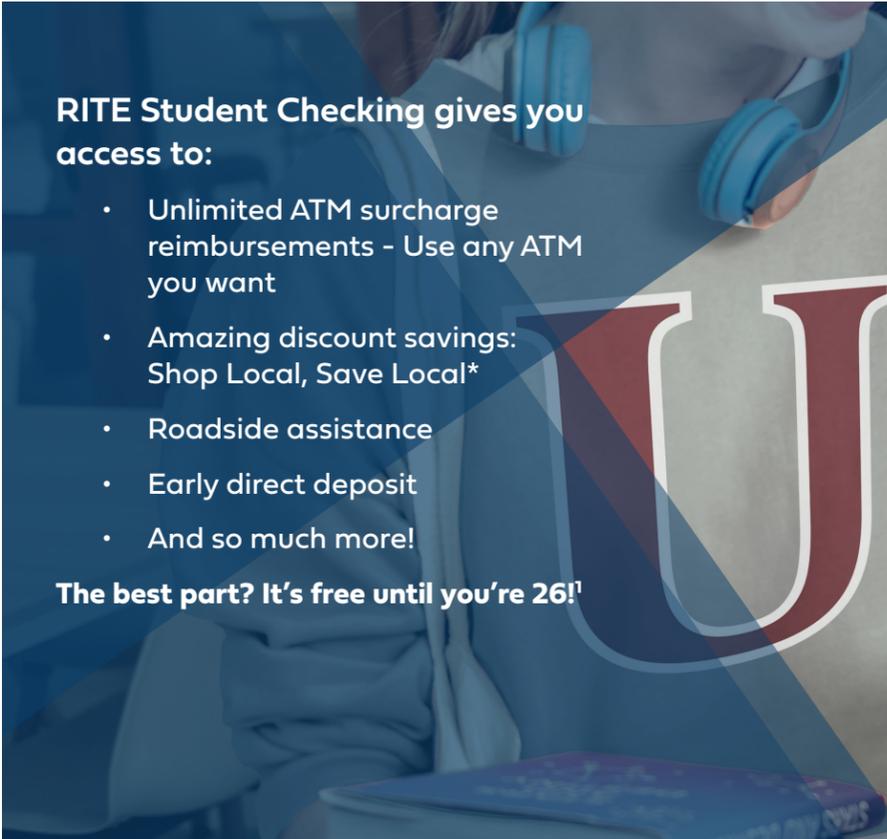
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