

# J SHREWSBURY SCHOOL Journal



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Serving a community that empowers learners

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## Superintendent's Corner

### Craving connection

**DR. JOSEPH M. SAWYER**  
 Superintendent of Schools

One of my goals this year is to make an assessment of how our students are doing in the aftermath of the pandemic. As part of that work, recently I spent time in all of our elementary schools, both middle schools, and the high school in order to have conversations with groups of students. I met with over 200 students from grades 3 through 12 in various leadership groups, clubs, activities, and programs in order to ensure that I was able to speak with a cross-section of our very diverse student population. This turned out to be a terrific learning opportunity for me, as hearing students' first-hand perspectives of their experiences at school provided many important insights.

The questions I asked each student group were simple: "What is going well at school?" and "What can be better?" The students with whom I spoke were, without exception, thoughtful about what they shared in response. While I was able to take many notes about a variety of topics that came up – some very specific! – there were some universal themes that emerged across the age groups.

Some issues students raised had specific elements that are different from what previous generations experienced in school because of newer technology – such as what they like and dislike about certain educational software programs we use. However, what students most appreciate about our schools, and what troubles them most, have a timeless, human element.

Students of all ages expressed appreciation for when their teachers explain things

*CONTINUED, see page 2*

## In this edition

- **Social Sciences connect students with the community** [page 2](#)
- **RISE is on the move** [page 2](#)
- **Changing school start times to improve adolescent sleep health** [page 3](#)
- **Pizza Project Competition at Sherwood Middle School** [page 4](#)
- **SHS students showcase Capstone projects** [page 4](#)
- **SHS hosts second annual Career Fair** [page 5](#)
- **Peers mentoring peers: setting the "Foundation" for student success!** [page 5](#)
- **SPS Connects - a new alumni networking platform** [page 6](#)

“ *Education breeds confidence.  
 Confidence breeds hope.  
 Hope breeds peace.* ”  
 – Confucius



Shrewsbury Public Library Head of Youth Services Sonja Drotar (left) and Children's Librarian Roxanne Starkin visited Sherwood Middle School Media classes on February 10 to share books and activities with students and answer questions about the public library. Hilary Clegg, Sherwood Media Specialist, has been inviting the public librarians to visit each of her media classes this year in order to encourage students to visit the public library. In addition, Mrs. Clegg collaborated with the public library to conduct a card drive at the beginning of the school year.

## Honoring the diversity of our community

**LYNSEY HEFFERNAN**  
 School Committee Chair

Over the last many years, the diversity of Shrewsbury has blossomed. We learned in our Elementary Redistricting process in 2021 that in the course of two decades Grades K-4 enrollment changed from over 90% white students to less than 50%. With that diversity in our community there have been incredible benefits and, at times, challenges to adapt quickly enough to create the inclusive and welcoming community that we want for all our school settings. One of the recent challenges has been a desire by some thoughtful parent and student leaders to add Diwali to the official School Calendar as a school holiday.

While the School Committee recently voted to not modify the calendar as asked, I must begin by commending the parents, community members and the students for using their voices to advocate for inclusion and recognition. We received many emails on this topic, a student petition began at the middle school level, and many came to our meeting to speak directly to us about why this change was important to their families. I am truly thankful for their advocacy and for the ways each demonstrated how we are a community that can respectfully debate and discuss important issues.

Inclusion, to me, means we ensure that each and every student, staff and educator in our building feels supported, welcomed and invited to bring their full self to school each day. These feelings should apply to everyone, celebrating any religion, or no religion. I do not wish to have the School Committee be in the role of picking and choosing which religion deserves a holiday and which does not. I want everyone, no matter their faith, to feel supported as they exercise their right, under law, to honor participation in religious events of significance to them without reprisal. This right applies to all individuals, including those of Hindu faith to celebrate Diwali, known as the Festival of Lights, to those of Muslim faith celebrating Eid al-Fitr at the end of Ramadan, and to those of the Jewish faith honoring Yom Kippur, among others.

A point that stood out to me over the past months is that we need to restate and reaffirm the absolute right for a student to dedicate a day to affirming their religious convictions and family connections even if that day is a school day. Our community benefits from students taking the time needed to be fully present at important religious and family events. Not only is this the right approach, this right is enshrined in both state law and our school district's policy. Students may not,

*CONTINUED, see page 3*

## Superintendent's Corner

CONTINUED, from page 1

clearly, and when they are patient with those who need extra time or assistance to understand the concept being taught. Students notice when school staff genuinely care about them and their well-being, and they value being able to talk to them and get advice. They appreciate it when educators make them feel like they belong.

Across all of our schools, students expressed that what could be better is how students treat one another. They were clear that generally students act kindly and respectfully toward one another, but that too often there are instances of unkind behavior, often described as teasing or bullying. Some students, particularly in older grades, reported the use of inappropriate language or slurs that demean others based on their identity, whether related to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender. Students conveyed their belief that in some cases this language is used out of ignorance or as misguided attempts at humor, while in other cases it is perceived to be targeted with the intent to be hurtful.

Because all students are imperfect, unkindness and cruelty have always been part of school environments to some degree. However, the best schools minimize these behaviors by creating cultures that make expectations for respectful behavior explicit, create norms of belonging and respect for all, and address behaviors that violate the school community's values in a manner that promotes both accountability and improvement. Our students do notice where our schools are making good efforts to do these things, but they want and need us to do better – and as we do, we will improve the learning environment for all.

In one of the high school student groups, a participant succinctly summed up what our students need: "Just one word: *connection*." My conversations with students revealed that they want to be part of something that is meaningful to them in schools where they feel they belong, whether that is in our classrooms or through school activities. We know from the pandemic that isolation leads to disconnection, and our schools must strive to build true human connection for our students, in a world where being online and using social media create an illusion of connectedness.

Like all of us, our students – no matter their age – crave connection with their community, both with their peers and with the adults who educate them. That has always been true, and always will be, no matter how technology and society evolve. If we are wise, we will listen to what our students are telling us and respond by building and nurturing those human connections that are the fabric of every truly successful school.

## Social Sciences connect students with the community

**JENNIFER DIFRANCESCA**  
*Director of Social Sciences*

Students involved with co-curricular activities related to the Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Social Sciences department had unique opportunities to interact with their community this fall and winter. Since 1985 the Massachusetts Bar Association has facilitated the statewide Mock Trial competition. Although SHS has had a team for several years, the preparation and dedication of the current team resulted in unprecedented success including qualifying for the "Sweet 16 trials" on March 1, 2023. In other statewide events, the Political Action Group will participate in Massachusetts Student Government Day on March 31. Since 1947, this annual event has enabled students to learn more about state government by experiencing a "day in the life" of a statewide elected official. Finally, members of SHS's National Social Studies Honor Society built

connections with members of their family and community by conducting interviews as part of a StoryCorps project. (You can listen to some of the stories by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/527bbwj2>). The connections made during the StoryCorps project as well as the experiences with Mock Trial and Student Government have provided SHS students unique opportunities to engage and contribute to their communities.

SHS students enrolled in World Civilizations, United States History I & II courses as well as Social Science elective courses have also had opportunities to not only interact with ideas and each other but also to grow as citizens. Students have continued to develop their skills as citizens through research and writing, participation in simulations, and the creation of podcasts and other presentations. In the fall, all students had the opportunity to participate in the National

Mock Election program which is facilitated by the JFK Presidential Library in Massachusetts. Members of the class of 2023 have continued to receive responses to the letters they sent to local, state and national institutions and governments as part of their Civic Action Project in the spring of 2022. Meanwhile, students in US History II have been developing their skills as citizens in preparation for their Civic Action Project this spring. Finally, students continue to make connections with the community through guest speakers including members of local government, veterans' groups, and field studies.

As students work through the spring semester at SHS, we look forward to supporting their continued growth. Please ask the SHS students you know to share their experiences with StoryCorps, Civic Action Project, or other learning in the Social Sciences.

## RISE is on the move

**MEG BELSITO**  
*Assistant Superintendent for Student Services*  
**MEGHAN BARTLETT**  
*Assistant Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services*  
**KRISTIN HERRICK**  
*Director of Specialized Programs*  
**MEGHAN DE LEON**  
*Director of High School Special Education*  
**CHRISTINE PELLERIN**  
*RISE Coordinator*  
**ALICIA HARRIGAN**  
*High School Team Chair*

Shrewsbury Public School's **RISE (Reaching Independence through Supported Employment)** program is a post-secondary program designed for students, ages 18 – 22, who qualify for additional learning opportunities following their high school experience. The goal of RISE is to provide students with the skills and experiences they need to successfully and independently navigate their local community. The focus is to increase students' overall independence with functional academic life skills, employment opportunities, and community access.

RISE focuses on ensuring students are able to be contributing members of society. A large part of this is to provide students with opportunities to be active in their local com-



Throughout the year, current and future RISE students have participated in trips including hiking, bowling, cross country skiing, and most recently a tour of Polar Park in Worcester. Pictured (left to right, above) are students Gotham Subramanian, Jazmin Roldan, Carl Amazan, Ryan Love, and Kamden Duprey.

munity and become familiar with their community at large. During their time at RISE, students participate in community learning experiences, volunteer and paid work opportunities, and community-based leisure activities. Students practice the skills they have learned in the classroom and apply those skills in the natural community setting. They will participate in community-based activities to learn and practice skills related to independent living, such as shopping, ordering at restaurants, community leisure activities, and travel training. Social and leisure activities are incorporated regularly into RISE programming and might include social groups, games, community leisure activities, and social meetup groups with other 18-22 programs.

Our intention for RISE is to also open a retail business in the center of Shrewsbury! This retail space will allow teachers to target pre-employment skills such as inventory, point of sales, social skills, etc. We are continuing the planning process for the RISE storefront—to be named shortly. After surveying various community groups like the Shrewsbury Town Center Association, Shrewsbury Public Schools District Leadership, Shrewsbury High School (SHS) students, Special Education Parent Advisory Council members and the RISE Advisory Committee, our students will be selling local merchandise set to highlight our lovely town and schools. While shopping, community members will

CONTINUED, see page 4

# Changing school start times to improve adolescent sleep health

**SARA RUSSELL**  
Sleep Health Advisory  
Committee Member

Next school year, Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) students will be able to sleep a little longer due to later school start times. After carefully considering a wealth of information presented by the Sleep Health Advisory Committee, the School Committee unanimously voted in January to adopt a schedule that will delay the start times of all Shrewsbury K-12 Public Schools by up to 35 minutes for the 2023-2024 school year.

 <b>Shrewsbury Public Schools K-12 School Start &amp; End Times 2023-2024 School Year</b>		
School	Start Time of Student School Day	End Time of Student School Day
Shrewsbury High School	7:55 a.m.	2:20 p.m.
Sherwood & Oak Middle Schools	8:35 a.m.	3:00 p.m.
Beal School Coolidge School Floral Street School Paton School Spring Street School	9:15 a.m.	3:30 p.m.

The reconsideration of school start times is neither new nor unique to Shrewsbury Public Schools. In recent years, the nearby towns of Ashland, Marlborough, Newton, Northborough/Southborough, and Westborough have all delayed their school start times in hopes of improving the chronic sleep deficits that The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) state affect nearly 80% of American teenagers. Unfortunately, Shrewsbury is no exception to these grim statistics. Results of the 2021 Shrewsbury High School Regional Youth Health Survey revealed that 80% of Shrewsbury High School students report getting less than the recommended 8 - 10 hours of sleep per night with nearly 50% getting six or fewer hours of sleep nightly.

Early school start times have been identified as a key adjustable contributor to teen sleep loss and a growing body of research has demonstrated that delaying start times is an effective countermeasure. Accordingly, the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics have urged school districts across the U.S. to implement middle and high school start times no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

Sleep for some Shrewsbury High School (SHS) students is further shortened by busing logistics that require pick-ups as early as 6:19 a.m. so that the same buses can be on time for their subsequent middle and elementary school routes. For SHS students to get the recommended minimum of eight hours of sleep, they'd need to be asleep by 9:30 p.m. the night before. Here's the tricky part: Homework,

technology, after-school activities, and employment all compete with sleep for students' time. Further, the onset of puberty brings a biological shift in their circadian rhythm that causes many adolescents to feel too alert to fall asleep before 11:00 p.m. and too sleepy to perform optimally early in the morning.

Dr. Judith Owens, Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School and the Director of the Center for Pediatric Sleep Disorders at Boston Children's Hospital, has voiced that these biological changes are in direct conflict with early school start times. In her December 2022 webinar for our school community, Dr. Owens explained that rising too early robs teens of REM sleep, a sleep stage that primarily occurs in the second half of the night and is critical for brain development, emotional processing, and long-term memory storage of newly learned information. To cope with insufficient sleep and the demands of their busy lives, many teens often rely on weekend oversleep, caffeine, and energy drinks, which is a cycle that can leave them in a permanent state of jet lag.

SPS started working to address the issues affecting student sleep health a few years ago. In keeping with the 2018-2022 strategic priority of "enhanced well-being of all," a Sleep Health Advisory Committee formed to examine students' sleep health and the impact of the district's school start times. However, the committee paused work in its early stages due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In September 2022, Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Shrewsbury Public Schools, convened a new Sleep

Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) to resume work on this issue. The volunteer members were composed of students, parents, educators, counselors, health professionals, and administrators who examined sleep health research, stakeholder feedback, child care issues, practices in other districts, and logistics related to changing school start times. Between November 2022 and January 2023, the SHAC documented and shared their findings with the School Committee in a series of data-driven reports and presentations, which are all available to the public on the SPS District and School Committee's webpages. Using data from their research and community feedback, the SHAC worked within financial and logistical parameters to develop two alternative schedule options that sought to balance students' sleep needs with diverse stakeholder values. After a second round of community feedback, the SHAC's final consensus recommendation was to implement the more modest of the two change options, which shifts all school start times later, equalizes the length of busing tiers, and starts the high school in the first bell tier at 7:55am (currently 7:35 a.m.), the middle schools at 8:35 a.m. (currently 8:00 a.m.), and elementary schools at 9:15 a.m. (currently 9:00 a.m.). In concert with education about sleep health and hygiene, further discussion of the district's homework policies, and ongoing dialogue about responsible technology use, the new start time schedule is poised to contribute to a strong framework of support for our students' health and well-being.

## Honoring diversity

CONTINUED, from page 1

and should not, suffer any "adverse or prejudicial effects" from taking this time (Shrewsbury School Committee Policy 291). On this point, I think we need to do a better job of educating our administrators, faculty, staff, students and parents on this policy. I believe the vast majority of our educators have followed our guidance and seek to support all students as they celebrate various religious holidays. However, students of many faiths have referenced how they have not felt supported when they elect to respect their families' religious commitments. The School Committee has asked the Superintendent to ensure that, at the start of the school year:

- all staff are educated about this policy,
- that building administrators communicate appropriate expectations throughout the school year,
- that teachers thoughtfully reflect on the calendar when creating significant assignments and assessments, and
- that communication about this topic to parents be greatly enhanced in the next school year.

My hope for the district is that we embody a community which does not favor one faith or people over another, but that we foster understanding and mutual respect for differences in beliefs and promote the religious pluralism of Shrewsbury.

**“I want everyone, no matter their faith, to feel supported as they exercise their right, under law, to honor participation in religious events of significance to them without reprisal.”**

## 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

# New Jobs for Students website - now hiring!

**KATHLEEN KEOHANE**  
Director of Alumni Development and Community Relationships

The new Jobs for Students website, located in the School Counseling section of Shrewsbury High School's website, is an excellent resource for high school students who are looking for part-time jobs or summer employment. It features a comprehensive, timely list of job opportunities from local businesses in the area where students can find jobs that fit their interests, skills and schedules. Whether they are looking for a job in retail, food service, child care, or any other industry, the website has a variety of options available. With 23 businesses already on board, this platform provides a wide variety of job options for students looking to gain work experience and earn income. More information can be found here: <https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov/high/schoolcounseling/jobs-for-students>

## RISE

CONTINUED, from page 2

be invited to look around and browse our unique and fun candies, drinks, and more. Our program's staffing plan will include a site-based Coordinator, two Special Educators, Job Coaches and a Retail Business Manager. Special thanks to Shrewsbury High School Teacher Jason Andreola and his Marketing class, and SHS Teacher Shirley LeMay and her Interior Design class, for input, recommendations, and advice on our new logo and business concept.

RISE and the new retail store will be located in the center of town at 557



Katrina T. Lallier, Graphic Designer ([www.ktlallier.com](http://www.ktlallier.com)) and Shrewsbury Public School parent, worked with our team in creating and developing the RISE logo shown above. RISE's logo illustrates the three components of a post secondary program: the book reflects instruction and learning; the circle with people indicates community and partnership; the house with a heart represents independent living.

Main Street. The district will be leasing the property from Chacharone Properties. Renovations of the site will be completed this spring. The center of town is an ideal location for this business and program. The students will have access to other local businesses or agencies such as police, fire, banking, library, the Shrewsbury Senior Center, and the post office, which will allow them to explore other vocational

CONTINUED, see page 6

# Pizza Project Competition at Sherwood Middle School

**MELISSA McCANN**  
Grades 5-8 Math Curriculum Coordinator

Sherwood Middle School students on the 6 Pink, 6 Lime, and 6 Green Teams recently participated in the Pizza Project Competition! All teams were challenged to design an award-winning pizza. The mathematical criteria included calculation of unit rates and equivalent ratios to calculate the cost to make each pizza and determine a profit margin. Students used their creativity to develop a commercial and a brochure to help promote their award-winning pizza! Chef Brooke Lawson, who has worked in famous restaurants across the country and as a Distributor at Sysco, judged the competition and determined the top pizza from each team:

Team 6 Pink (Teacher Jacqueline Lawson; students Sienna, Hedi, Chloe, and Davi J.) - *Meat-A-Licious Pizza*

Team 6 Green (Teacher Gloria DiGiacomo; students McKenzie, Tanush, Jackson, and Prithika) - *The Slicer*

Team 6 Lime (Teacher Abigayle Celata; students Hansi, Shreya, and Nethra) - *Magnificent Mushroom Madness*



Chef Brooke Lawson is shown above at left with Team 6 Lime students Hansi, Shreya, and Nethra (left to right), who designed the overall winning pizza - *Magnificent Mushroom Madness*. The brochure they created for their pizza is pictured below.

**MAGNIFICENT MUSHROOM MADNESS**

Only 10 dollars for a small pizza!  
20 dollars for a large pizza!

OUR PIZZA IS MADE OF DOUGH, CHEESE, GARLIC, GREEN BELL PEPPERS, AND MUSHROOMS. PLUS THE INGREDIENTS ARE ALL ORGANIC, AS A BONUS.

**"PIZZA. YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT"**

Ingredient	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Dough	1	\$1.00	\$1.00
Cheese	1	\$1.00	\$1.00
Garlic	1	\$1.00	\$1.00
Green Bell Peppers	1	\$1.00	\$1.00
Mushrooms	1	\$1.00	\$1.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$5.00</b>

The overall winner was *Magnificent Mushroom Madness* from Team 6 Lime, which local restaurant and community partner

Shrewsbury Pizzeria served as a special for the month of February. We appreciate Shrewsbury Pizzeria's support!

# SHS students showcase Capstone projects

**EMILY BREDBERG**  
Library Media Specialist  
Shrewsbury High School

The Capstone Exhibition Program at Shrewsbury High School (SHS) enables students to conduct an

in-depth independent study project. It is a two-semester program for Juniors and Seniors to explore personal interests outside of the classroom. On January 9th and 10th, seven students from the class of 2023 presented their Capstone journeys to

an audience of faculty, staff, friends, and family. Then on February 8th, the students celebrated their learning and accomplishments through a day-long Capstone showcase in the media center. Classes from across the school came to view the presentation artifacts and discuss the projects with Capstone students.



Pictured above are seven students from the Shrewsbury High School Class of 2023 (left to right, Anusha Prabhakar, Tharegha Manoharan, Jaya Singh, Nicole Orlik, Madeline Mrva, Kylie Griffin, and Gayatri Kondabathini) who presented their Capstone journeys to faculty, staff, friends, and family in January, and then showcased their Capstone projects in the media center in February.

**Gayatri Kondabathini** designed a budgeting app called *WalletLux*. She researched the best practices for financial planning and budgeting solutions. She then designed the front and back end code for an app prototype designed to help organize budgets and offer advice.

**Jaya Singh** and **Tharegha Manoharan** collaborated on their Pages of the Mind project. They explored the history of language and the

CONTINUED, see page 5

# SHS hosts second annual Career Fair

**KATHLEEN KEOHANE**  
 Director of Alumni  
 Development and  
 Community Relationships

On February 7, 2023, Shrewsbury High School (SHS) held its second annual Career Fair, which proved to be our biggest event yet. Representatives from 35 different businesses, schools, and career fields attended, making it an outstanding opportunity for curious and engaged young people to connect with potential employers. At the same time, students learned about diverse opportunities and life journeys from which they could gain perspective. The fair provided students with access to jobs, internships, career advice, training, and job shadowing opportunities, all of which are essential for building practical experience



Brendan Hicks (SHS Class of 2013) from Energy Monster is pictured above at the Career Fair.

and professional skills.

All juniors and seniors were invited to attend one of four separate 45-minute sessions during their Early Release Day. Hundreds of students

took advantage of this opportunity to explore a wide range of post-high school options. In addition, the fair welcomed 11 SHS alumni who were eager to speak with current students and offer their insights and advice.

We were thrilled to welcome back former students: Ron Whittle (1966) a Vietnam Veteran; Ken Mongeon (1991) Fidelity Investments; Rita Paparazzo (1998) Miach Orthopaedics, Inc.; Tony Ngo (2000) Lofty Homes; Gabby Demac (2010) Demac Real Estate Group; Darius Corcoran (2012) Millis Public Schools; Brendan Hicks (2013) Energy Monster; Lauren Buckley (2014)



Gabby Demac (SHS Class of 2010) from Demac Real Estate Group, eXp Realty, is pictured above talking with students.

*CONTINUED, see page 7*

# Peers mentoring peers: setting the “Foundation” for student success!

**DR. ERICA PRATT**  
 Director of Health, PE,  
 Family Consumer Science  
**PAMELA LEBLANC**  
 Director of Visual Arts

For several years now, the Family Consumer Science, Music, Physical Education (PE) and Visual Arts departments at Shrewsbury High School (SHS) have been providing multiple learning opportunities for students to access the curriculum in a least restrictive and inclusive setting. The Foundations courses provide a collaborative opportunity for peer mentors in a leadership role to work alongside students with disabilities. Students currently meet twice per week during the rotating schedule between art, cooking and music and three days of PE. During their time in these classes, students explore basic concepts of art, cooking, music, and physical education and apply

skills in various exhibits, performances and movement experiences. Every effort is made in these courses to promote cross-curricular connections with several subject areas.

When asked about their experiences in these courses, students shared the following:

*Great opportunity to be able to take a leadership role and kind of act like teachers, there was a lot of collaboration. -Caitlyn Umile (Class of 2025)*

*We got to build relationships that we might not have gotten if we didn't take this class. -Sarah Sullivan (Class of 2024)*

*I feel happy! I can see my friends! -Camden Chenevert (Class of 2023)*

In November 2022 a culminating event took place at SHS where students in



Foundations of Cooking student Emily Nelson (above at left) shared, “This is me and my friend Isa, we’re making cookies. My favorite part is learning something new with my friends.”

each of the courses came together to celebrate a Thanksgiving Feast (turkey and all its fixings as well as an array of desserts) with their peers, staff and district administration. Students in the Foundations

*CONTINUED, see page 6*

## Capstone

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importance of stories for our cultures and ourselves through a website and a short documentary. Additionally, they researched bibliotherapy, the use of books for therapy treatment, and collected book recommendations for the practice.

**Nicole Orlik** explored the stock market, investments, and financial advice for her Capstone project. She compiled her research through a website designed for other students interested in finance and investments.



Student Nicole Orlik is pictured above presenting information on her Capstone project which explored the stock market, investments, and financial advice.

**Madeline Mrva** researched decarbonization, the practice of reducing carbon to fight climate change. She compiled her research in a LibGuide for the SHS Media Center for other SHS students doing research about environmental issues.

**Kylie Griffin's** Capstone project explored the misconceptions about forensic science in popular television programming. She conducted research, attended a summer course on forensic science, created a website, and designed an interactive digital game.

**Anusha Prabhakar** explored the representation of classical Indian dance in Massachusetts. She interviewed and filmed members of the Indian dance community in Massachusetts discussing the nature of classical Indian dance, the relationship between guru and student, and the tension between tradition and fusion with more modern dance.

You can view artifacts from their projects and learn more about the Capstone program online here: <https://tinyurl.com/shscapstone2023>

Director of English Liza Trombley and Emily Bredberg served as the faculty advisors for the class of 2023 Capstone Exhibition students. There are 12 students in the class of 2024 in the current Capstone cohort. They recently began their Capstone work and will present next January.

## Foundation

CONTINUED, from page 5

of Cooking course created the menu and prepared the meal, while students in Foundations of Art created invitations, as well as exhibited artwork and handmade ceramic pieces. A slideshow consisting of pictures from all Foundations courses ran during the feast to showcase the students' accomplishments.

Students also shared the following: *I feel like we were really lucky to have this opportunity that a lot of other students don't [have] to make new friends.* -Ava Branca (Class of 2023)

*No matter how bad of a day you are having, you always leave this class with a big smile and you create great relationships with the other students.* - Lily Lorentsson (Class of 2024)

Students within the courses have several opportunities to celebrate their learning throughout SHS and the community. Some examples include displaying artwork at the Shrewsbury Town Hall and Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union, visiting the Worcester Art Museum, food preparation, United Sound (an after school music club) as well as Unified Basketball and/or Track. At the March 1st School committee meeting, senior student Drew Conant had the opportunity to share his experience enrolled in the Foundations program. He noted that these courses, "provided real world skills such as patience, empathy and communication and they serve as a catalyst for building strong relationships with all different students and lifelong skills."

Here are some highlights of our Foundations Courses:

### Foundations of Art

Do you enjoy exploring a wide variety of art materials and techniques? This course is open to students in grades 10 through 12 while working collaboratively with their peers. This course is designed for students who enjoy the process of creating art, exploring basic art concepts and techniques while incorporating some speciality art projects such as weaving, clay, collage, etc. Students will gain valuable experiences while working in a diverse setting that fosters leadership & teamwork in an inclusive setting.

### Foundations of Cooking

This course is open to students in grades 10 through 12. Students under the direction of the teacher will serve as peer partners and experience collaboration across basic cooking, nutrition, and kitchen safety. Students will gain valuable experiences while working in a diverse setting that fosters leadership & teamwork in a safe and inclusive setting.

### Foundations of Music

This course is open to students in

CONTINUED, see page 7

# SPS Connects – a new alumni networking platform

**KATHLEEN KEOHANE**  
Director of Alumni Development and Community Relationships

Introducing the all-new SPSCConnects.com Alumni Portal! Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) launched this exciting networking platform for SPS alumni in January. While you may not have graduated from Shrewsbury High School, you are encouraged to join SPSCConnects as you are an important member of the "SPS Alumni Team!"

**What's different about this site?** What sets SPSCConnects apart from other networking platforms is its focus on allowing alumni to reconnect with former classmates and expand their professional networks within the trusted Shrewsbury Public Schools community. The site boasts a familiar design with a News Feed at the center for sharing information, job postings on the right, and easy-to-use navigation tools on the left:

decisions about their careers, college, and choices after high school.

We've heard from many alumni who would love to share their post-high school experiences and advice with current students. They recognize that if they had the chance to go back and talk to themselves in high school, they would do things differently. Well, now they have that chance! When alumni create an account on SPSCConnects, they can specify that they would like to be a mentor. Mentors have the opportunity to teach a class, be a guest speaker, and more. We'll be posting these opportunities on SPSCConnects, and any and all alumni are welcome to respond.

If you prefer to just connect with old classmates, or have them find you, that's ok too. SPSCConnects is exclusively for SPS alumni, current and former faculty, and staff. It's also a great place to connect

1991) has already invited her classmates, and many have joined. Members of your class are waiting for you!

Joining is easy – just visit SPSCConnects.com and login with your email or LinkedIn account. If you use LinkedIn, the system will download all of your LinkedIn information. We're currently building up our network before we invite students to the site, so now is the perfect time to join. Once you join, you can specify how much information that others can see about you, and you will have access to other members' information as well. On the SPSCConnects site, we will post jobs in the district, alumni in the news, sports updates, upcoming school events, and events that you may wish to participate in. Many alumni have already attended our Job Fair, Career Fairs, Career Exploration Summit, Opening Day presentations, and been featured in the SPS Annual Report. In return, they've offered job shadowing,



The SPSCConnects site is a fantastic resource for alumni of Shrewsbury Public Schools. It's a place where you can see what is happening in our schools, catch up with alumni in the news, and share your own story. It's also a powerful tool for helping current students find alumni who can help them with their future

with former teachers and share what's been happening since graduation. As Tony Ngo, class of 2000, says, "Love this so much! I'm here to help and listen!" So far, we have alumni from 1972 through 2022 in the network, but we need more! SPS Director of Visual Arts Pam LeBlanc (Class of

internships, and part-time jobs to students. Alumni are truly enriching the education of students across the district. If you're an SPS alum, please join our new network. Students are eager to hear from you, and we have a variety of programs planned to engage you throughout the coming year.

## RISE

CONTINUED, from page 4

and work opportunities. We are thrilled that the location has parking and is on the public transportation line. This will allow for things like travel training if a student requires that kind of learning, or further access in the community if they do not have their own transportation.

RISE looks to provide students

with meaningful employment opportunities in their local community that focus on each student's individual interests and strengths. Through the program students will have the opportunity to develop these skills by way of volunteer opportunities, internships, and paid employment. Vocational opportunities take place within the local community and depend on support and partnerships with local businesses. In addition, the RISE students complete internships in the lo-

cal schools where they provide support in the cafeterias, lunch rooms, recess, and front offices.

With RISE and our business, we believe we will foster successful long-term outcomes for our students with and without disabilities as they transition from high school to adulthood, and ultimately, develop and foster the connection and belonging to our community outside the walls of the public school system.

## Career Fair

*CONTINUED, from page 5*

Toni and Guy Hairdressing Academy; Megan Downing (2015) Wayside Youth and Family Trauma Intervention; Tim Hally (2015) co-founder of Munq Creative; and Michael Campbell (2019) Wayne J Griffin Electric, Inc.

Other businesses in attendance included Charles River Laboratories; Continental Pools; Cytiva; Detec Together; Lutco, Inc.; MA Dept Fire Service - DFS Massachusetts Firefighting Academy; NyLa Laboratories; Rockland Trust; SALMON Health and Retirement; Shrewsbury Electric and Cable Operations - SELCO; Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union; Sierra Pools; TJMaxx, Northboro; Worcester Railers; and Worcester Red Sox.

Community colleges and Trade and Military Schools in attendance were Massachusetts Army National Guard and Massachusetts Air National Guard; Mass Bay Community College; The Peterson School; Porter & Chester Institute; Quinsigamond Community College, Technology Learning Center; Toni and Guy Hairdressing Academy; and Universal Technical Institute.

More information can be found at this link: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w\\_XajM54Fk7AVKELmajaJNs6GqhC6405/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w_XajM54Fk7AVKELmajaJNs6GqhC6405/edit)

The Career Fair was a great success. Many students found it incredibly beneficial, as was evident in the post-event survey feedback they provided. One student reported: "I was able to make connections, and I became more aware of possible careers." Another student was grateful to be able to learn about a variety of jobs and opportunities, including volunteer opportunities and internships, they were previously unaware of. Several students applied for summer jobs and internships, and many registered to job shadow during the February and April school breaks. This would not have been possible without the generosity and support of the many businesses who participated in the event, and we are truly grateful for their commitment to providing our students with meaningful career exploration opportunities.

The Career Fair will be an annual event at SHS. As always, we are actively seeking businesses interested in connecting with our students and offering

valuable mentorship, job shadowing opportunities, or internships, while providing students with options that help them better understand their interests and purpose. If you are interested in attending our next Career Fair or Job Fair, or have jobs to offer our students, we would love to hear from you! Please email: [kkeohane@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:kkeohane@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us)

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## Foundation

*CONTINUED, from page 6*

grades 10 through 12 while working collaboratively with their peers. This course is designed for students who enjoy exploring different musical concepts and techniques and creating music. All students will have the opportunity to prepare and explore educational, music-based lessons while fostering leadership, creativity, communication and collaboration in an inclusive setting.

Foundations of Physical Education  
 This course is open to students in grades 11 and 12. Students under the direction of the Physical Education teaching staff serve as peer partners to develop knowledge & skills that promote PE, wellness, sports & recreation activities. Students will gain valuable physical activity experiences while working in a diverse setting that fosters leadership & teamwork in an inclusive setting.



### 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, Executive Director of Human Resources at (508) 841-8443. 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 or [bmalone@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:bmalone@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us). 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 students 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/they has/have 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/she/they has/have 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](mailto: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/they has/have 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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It has been an honor to serve Shrewsbury as a member of the School Committee.

I have worked hard during my time on the School Committee to provide a high level of educational services to students and excellent return on the investment taxpayers make in public education in Shrewsbury.

*I respectfully ask for your support and vote on Tuesday, May 2, 2023*

**Sandra Fryc**  
School Committee

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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