

Superintendent's Corner

Honoring our educators' professionalism

DR. JOSEPH M. SAWYER  
Superintendent of Schools

This column is adapted from Dr. Sawyer's remarks at the district's recent Professional Status Reception, where educators who have achieved professional status (similar to tenure) are honored for their achievement.

It is my special privilege this year to be able to honor our educators who have achieved the important milestone of professional status in 2020, 2021, and 2022, as we have not held this event since the fall of 2019 due to the pandemic. It is my good fortune to be in my 26th year of serving as a leader in our schools, and I have never missed this event. It does not get old for me, because it is always a treat to be a part of this first-class recognition of individuals who have excelled at serving our students.

Before I say a few words about the significance of achieving professional status in Shrewsbury, I want to welcome our honorees' guests this evening. Those of you who are spouses, significant others, family members, or close friends know that these educators have earned this achievement through many, many hours of demanding work. You know better than anyone that it is a total myth that being an educator is an easy job, as being good at this work requires high levels of skill, dedication, and effort. Thank you for the support you provide to our educators so that they can do the

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“Life isn't perfect, any failures you have are actually learning moments. They teach us how to grow and evolve.”  
— Phillipa Soo ”



Second Graders (left to right) Elma Shan (Beal), Lena Nihlawi, (Beal), and Sophia Costa Guimaraes (Paton) show off some of the World Language Books available to them in their school media centers. Please see the “World Language Books” article on page 5.

Planning! Planning! Planning!

LYNSEY HEFFERNAN  
School Committee Chair

The Shrewsbury Public Schools are in an exciting moment. We are a strong district, with excellent educators, support staff and leaders, resulting in students who thrive after graduating. Yet, any organization needs to always be thinking about what is around the next corner to ensure we are continually improving. We are concluding the final year of our five-year plan 2018-2022. Gratefully, we are coming out of the most painful aspects of the pandemic. So now is the time to assess where we are, and most importantly, where we are going.

**Strong Foundation**  
This phase of work will be built on past efforts to set our vision for the future, clarify the mission of our organization, and pronounce our core values.

First our vision. The district has a compelling vision of what we want for all students when they graduate, called our *Portrait of a Graduate*. This statement was created by a collaborative effort between students, parents and staff and

was formally adopted by the School Committee in 2017. The ideals of this effort continue to be as relevant today as they were when drafted: Critical Thinking & Content Mastery; Leadership; Global Citizenship & Engagement; Innovation; Resilience & Focus; and Collaboration & Communication.

Next, the mission of the Shrewsbury Public Schools as stated is to provide students with the skills and knowledge for the 21st century, an appreciation of our democratic tradition, and the desire to continue to learn throughout life.

Finally, the district's values are the statements of our core principles and ethics. These encompass Respect & Responsibility, Collaboration & Communication, Commitment to High Standards & Expectations, and Equity.

**Setting New Goals**  
Each of these foundational statements, our vision, our mission and our values form the underlying basis upon which we will build out our priorities and metrics for the next five

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Superintendent’s Corner

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important work of teaching and supporting our students.

The term “professional status” is used in Massachusetts, where “tenure” is used in most places. I do like our state’s term, as it emphasizes that educating students is indeed a *profession*. When researchers asked teachers themselves what makes for a true educational professional, they cited these qualities: 1) character, 2) commitment to change and continuous improvement, 3) knowledge of one’s subject and skillful delivery of instruction, and 4) obligations and relationships outside of regular duties. Therefore, to be a “professional” means that you must be a good person worthy of emulation; that you are responsible for changing and learning as the profession evolves; that you must develop great expertise in both what you teach and how you teach it; and that your commitment to your students and colleagues must go the extra mile.

You are being honored this evening because you have shown that your character, your skill, your work ethic, and your commitment make you the kind of educator that we want to have in Shrewsbury for the long haul. You have already made notable contributions to our schools, and I am confident that over the course of your career here you will make many more. Not all of those with whom you started at new educator orientation years ago are here this evening, as our district cannot be extraordinary for our students without extraordinary educators – and therefore we do not offer professional status to those whose work is ordinary. It is truly my privilege to formally recognize your achievement of professional status this evening, and I thank you for your considerable effort that went into earning this distinction.

Finally, it is important to note that you all have earned professional status during the course of the most challenging circumstances for education in our lifetimes. While all of us can be proud of the efforts made to support our students through the pandemic and its aftermath, we all recognize that this work is ongoing and now requires additional measures of urgency and importance. Knowing the true professional educators you are, the fact that our community’s young people are in your caring and skillful hands gives me reassurance that our schools will rise to meet this challenge.

Thank you for honoring Shrewsbury by being an educator here. Congratulations on your achievement, and I wish you all the very best for a long and fruitful career serving our students.

Welcome to our new staff members

**BARBARA A. MALONE**  
*Executive Director of Human Resources*

Shrewsbury Public Schools has completed hiring for all professional-level positions and we’d like to welcome new faculty, specialists, and staff to the District. This hiring season we had a decrease in candidates to choose from for professional positions, but greater success in filling positions before the start of school. The focus for this year was on hiring more mental health and special education professional support, in addition to the openings created by retirements or resignations.

In contrast to our success at hiring professional positions, we struggled 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). We still have some of these positions available if there are members of the public who are interested in applying, and I ask that interested members of the public email [CSAPostings@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:CSAPostings@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us) or [ABAPostings@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:ABAPostings@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us) with their cover letter and resume.

We worked to increase the diversity of our finalists through a variety of means. These included overt discussions of how bias could unintentionally influence searches, where each search team participated in an exercise to illustrate the issue of in-group bias prior to interviews; adding diversity-related questions to our interviews; and asking that search teams seek out diverse members of our school communities to participate as search team members. For the 2021-2022 school year we reported that 17% of our new hires self-reported in diverse federal categories. For the 2022-2023 school year 23% of our new hires self-reported in diverse federal categories. For professional roles the percentage is 13%, a statistic we will be tracking year over year.

**DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM**  
The following leaders were appointed for the 2022-2023 school year:  
**Ms. Hallie Burak**, Principal of Oak Middle School *Master of Elementary Education, Lesley University; Bachelor of English, University of Rochester*  
**Dr. Scott Mulcahy**, Principal of the Walter J. Paton School *Doctor of Education, Creighton University; Master of Education, Worcester State College; Master*

*of School Psychology, University of Hartford; Bachelor of Elementary Education and Psychology, Stonehill College*  
**Ms. Jamie Millett**, Director of Counseling and Mental Health Services *Master of Social Work, Simmons University; Bachelor of Psychology and Criminology, Merrimack College*  
**Ms. Lindsey Stasiowski**, Human Resources Manager *Master of Human Resource Management, New England College of Business & Finance; BSBA - Management Concentration, New England College of Business & Finance*

**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 our primary sourcing tool. We also advertised positions through [www.IMDiversity.com](http://www.IMDiversity.com) and asked applicants to apply via schoolspring if they were interested. We have also posted on other employment websites.

**NEW EDUCATORS**  
**District**  
**Felicitie Boisvert**, Social Worker *Master of Social Work, Boston College; Bachelor of Psychology, University of Massachusetts*  
**Nicole Bradley**, Clinical Coordinator *Master of Special Education, Assumption College; Bachelor of Psychology and Spanish, Westfield State University*  
**Dr. Colleen Canty**, Clinical Coordinator *Doctorate of Philosophy, Antioch University; Master of Special Education, Fitchburg State University; Bachelor of Psychology, Clark University*

**RISE Program**  
**Christine Pellerin**, Coordinator *Master of Science in Education & Teacher of Students with Severe Disabilities, Simmons College; Bachelor of Communication and Media Literacy & Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities,*

*Wheelock College*  
**Shrewsbury High School**  
**Zachary Besaw**, Special Education Teacher *Bachelor of Psychology & Communication, Worcester State University*  
**Patricia Copello**, Portuguese Teacher *Bachelor of Business Management, University of Mackenzie*  
**Dr. Rana Dabbagh**, Biology Teacher *Doctor of Dentistry, Tufts University; Bachelor of Science in Biology & Chemistry, Worcester State University*  
**Alicia Derry**, School Adjustment Counselor *Master of Social Work, Boston College; Bachelor of Psychology, Worcester State University*  
**Andrew Frassa**, Social Sciences Teacher *Master of Special Education, Regis College; Bachelor of Political Science, Northeastern University*  
**Guimei Jia**, Mandarin Chinese Teacher *Bachelor of Chinese Language and Literature, Shandong Normal University, China*  
**Alexa Kassos**, Speech Language Pathologist *Master of Speech-Language Pathology, Worcester State University; Bachelor of Science Communication Sciences and Disorders, University of New Hampshire*  
**Leslie Keddy**, English Teacher *Master of Education, Northeastern University; Bachelor of Journalism, Boston University*  
**Michael Lachimia**, English Teacher *Master of Education, Boston College; Master of Arts, Catholic University of America; Bachelor of Philosophy, Providence College*  
**Jessica Lamagdeleine**, English Teacher *Master of Education, Worcester State University; Bachelor of English, Assumption College*  
**Robert Moray**, Special Education Teacher *Master of Education in Mathematics, Boston University; Bachelor of Mathematics, University of Massachusetts, Boston*  
**Albert Munoz**, School Adjustment Counselor *Master of Social Work, Westfield State University; Bachelor of Criminal Justice, Westfield State University*  
**Paul Quinn**, Special Education Teacher *Master of Education, Fitchburg State University; Bachelor of History, Nichols College*  
**Sheena Sanchez**, Social Sciences Teacher *Master of Secondary Education, Sacred Heart University; Bachelor of History and Social Science, Eastern Connecticut State University*  
**Sagar Shah**, Physics Teacher *Master of Physics, Gujarat University; Bachelor of Physics, Gujarat University*  
**Lauren Silbor**,

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English Language Education Teacher  
*Bachelor of Physical Education, Springfield College*  
**Bridget Simmons,**  
School Nurse  
*Bachelor of Athletic Training, Northeastern University; Associates in Nursing, Quinsigamond Community College*  
**Gregory Soboff,**  
School Counselor (Guidance)  
*Masters of School Counseling, Boston College; Bachelor of Communication, Barry University*  
**Kayleigh Webert,**  
School Nurse  
*Bachelor of Nursing, Northeastern University*

**Oak Middle School**

**Jessica Becque,**  
Occupational Therapist  
*Master of Occupational Therapy, Salem State University; Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst*  
**Jane Collins,**  
BRYT Program Coordinator (shared with Sherwood)  
*Master of Education, Boston College; Bachelor of History, College of the Holy Cross*  
**Caitlin Davidson,**  
Special Education Teacher  
*Master of Education, American International College; Bachelor of Special Education & Psychology, Westfield State College*  
**Katherine Dear,**  
Spanish Teacher  
*Master of Education, James Madison University; Bachelor of Spanish, Hollins University*  
**Alexander Johnson,**  
Grade 7 Teacher  
*Bachelor of Sociology & Anthropology, Fairfield University*  
**Niti Kapoor,**  
Grade 7 Math Teacher  
*Master of Mathematics, Delhi University India; Bachelor of Mathematics, Delhi University India*  
**Joshua Lennox,**  
Music Teacher (Strings and Orchestra)  
*Bachelor of Music Education, Palm Beach Atlantic University*  
**Zachary Nogueira,**  
Grade 7 Teacher  
*Bachelor of History, University of Massachusetts; Associates of General Studies, Bristol Community College*  
**Andrew Shoro,**  
Drama and Theater Teacher  
*Master of Theater Education, Emerson College; Bachelor of Music, Catholic University of America*  
**Erica Soucy,**  
Special Education Teacher  
*Bachelor of Human Development, Rivier University*  
**Huiqing Tay,**  
Grade 7 Teacher  
*Master of Education, Lesley University; Bachelor of Environmental Science, Monash University*

**Sherwood Middle School**

**Jennifer Briare,**  
Special Education Teacher  
*Master of Elementary Education, Southern New Hampshire University; Bachelor of Elementary Education, Southern New Hampshire University*  
**Trisha Cardinal,**  
Speech Language Pathologist

*Master of Communication Disorders, University of Massachusetts; Bachelor of Communication Science and Disorders, Marymount Manhattan*  
**Abigayle Celata,**  
Grade 6 Teacher  
*Bachelor of Education, Anna Maria College*  
**Jane Collins,**  
BRYT Program Coordinator (shared with Oak)  
*Master of Education, Boston College; Bachelor of History, College of the Holy Cross*  
**Katelyn Fiore,**  
Grade 5 Teacher  
*Bachelor of Education, Emmanuel College*  
**Morjane Hmaidi,**  
Grade 6 Teacher  
*Bachelor of Psychology, University of Massachusetts; Bachelor of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, University of Massachusetts*  
**Tamar Jeniski,**  
English Language Education Teacher  
*Master of Literature, Boston College; Bachelor of English, Brandeis University*  
**Lauren Kimble,**  
School Adjustment Counselor  
*Master of Social Work, Springfield College; Bachelor of Social Work, Regis College*  
**Sarah Koopman,**  
Grade 6 Teacher  
*Master of Special Education, Lesley University; Bachelor of Elementary Education, Framingham State University*  
**Katelyn Salsgiver,**  
Special Education Teacher  
*Master of Special Education, Worcester State University; Bachelor of Elementary Education, Worcester State University*

**Elementary and Preschool**

**Heidi Anderson,**  
English Language Education Teacher  
*Master of English as a Second Language, Gordon College; Bachelor of Early Childhood/Linguistics, Gordon College*  
**Ashley Celulario,**  
Special Education Teacher  
*Master of Special Education, Simmons University; Bachelor of Education, Westfield State University*  
**Sarah Coddington,**  
School Adjustment Counselor  
*Master of Social Work, State University of NY- Stony Brook; Bachelor of Social Work, Cairn University*  
**Marissa Davis,**  
Grade 1 Teacher  
*Master of Elementary Education, Worcester State University; Bachelor of Elementary Education, Worcester State University*  
**Allysen Feeley,**  
Special Education Teacher  
*Master of Special Education, Assumption University; Bachelor of Elementary Education, St. Joseph College*  
**Elyssa Glassman,**  
Music Teacher  
*Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, Lesley University*  
**Laura Hildick,**  
Preschool Teacher  
*Master of Special Education, Fitchburg State University; Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, Fitchburg State University*  
**Breana Hogan,**  
Grade 1 Teacher

*Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, Worcester State University*  
**Sarah Incutto,**  
School Adjustment Counselor  
*Master of Counseling Psychology, Assumption University; Bachelor of Psychology, San Jose State University*  
**Kerri Kelly,**  
Kindergarten Teacher  
*Master of Early Childhood Education, Anna Maria College; Bachelor of Psychology, Assumption College*  
**Sarah MacRae,**  
English Language Education Teacher  
*Master of Science in Health, University of Montana; Bachelor of Psychology, Assumption College*  
**Jessica Masterson,**  
Speech Language Pathologist  
*Master of Speech Language Pathology, Worcester State University; Bachelor of Communication Sciences & Disorders, University of New Hampshire*  
**Janey Mullins,**  
Grade 4 Teacher  
*Bachelor of Elementary Education, Framingham State University*  
**Lucinda Orne,**  
Grade 4 Teacher  
*Bachelor of Elementary Education, Fitchburg State University*  
**Liz Ryan,**  
Visual Arts Teacher  
*Bachelor of Fine Arts, Massachusetts College of Art and Design*  
**Lindsey Soboleski,**  
Music Teacher  
*Master of Music Education, University of Hartford; Bachelor of Music Education, University of Vermont*  
**Carrie Sullivan,**  
Grade 2 Teacher  
*Master of Early Childhood Education, American International College; Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, Westfield State University*  
**Samantha Swanson,**  
Special Education Teacher  
*Master of Special Education, Simmons College; Bachelor of Special Education, Curry College*

**New Paraprofessional Staff  
ABA Technicians**

Alison Balducci, Katherine Barber, Alex Beebe, Matthew Belair, Anna Billings, Elizabeth Brow, Haley Bullied, Melissa Burke, Zachary Duval, Taylor Escobar, Karen Fiorino, Jodi Giles, Franklyn Hernandez, Courtney Johnson, Jessica King, Gabriella Knight, Morgan LaPlante, Emily Letendre Kacy Mackin, Hannah Marks, Shweta Mehediratta, Erin Murphy, Amelia O'Brian, Dianne Prentiss, Julie Rofrano, Waumoe Segrain, Bianello Suero, Courtney Supernor, Rachel Wells, Stephanie Wilson, David Zulauf

**Child Specific Assistants**  
Gabriella Amoros, Adrianna Bent, Larissa Bryant, Cathleen Donahue, Noemi Espinal, Maranatha Falaise, Ambreen Haider, Sri Sesha Kadambari, Karishma Kapur, Kimberly McManus, Leila Miller, Swarna Muddinti, Adipto Sengupta, Rupavahini Singaravadivel,

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Planning!

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years. As a community we need to ask ourselves, where do we want to be five years from now? By 2027, what changes and improvements do we want to see for our students, our staff and the district?

The district has engaged some outside help to organize this work and help us ensure that we are hearing all voices in this process. After completion of a competitive procurement process, *Focused Schools* has been engaged as a partner to facilitate and support our strategic planning process. They are an experienced educational consultant that will also provide an independent lens not only to our process but also to our thinking and engagement efforts to reach all stakeholder groups. Throughout the Fall and Winter please be on the lookout for ways to share your experiences and opinions of where we are succeeding today, and where we could improve. We envision chances for folks to attend in-person sessions or focus groups, digital feedback options like *ThoughtExchange*, and other public forums to gather feedback from our diverse community. Our hope, after a robust process to engage students, family, staff and the community, is to have the School Committee approve new five-year goals in the Spring of 2023. So please, participate in the conversation and help us to set a plan for the future for all of our kids.

Welcome new staff

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Vinci Viswanathan, Jamie White

Instructional Assistants

Colleen Brownstein, Rachel Daniel, Rita Innamorati, Priya Jain, Elizabeth Mitchell, Lori Olds-O'Donoghue, Kerry Palumbo, Alice Salles

Literacy Tutor

Najiya Syed

Media Assistant

Maria Clara Macedo-Wood

Special Education Paraprofessional

Pampa Chakraborty, Shyamal Chaudhari, Jessica Kamosky, Ian McGuirk, Nitu Patel, Leah Rodriguez, Seham Shaker

New IT Hires

Reginald Devone, IT Specialist; Angel Perez, IT Specialist; Matthew Shibu, Data Specialist; Hunter Tyner, IT Specialist

New Administrative Assistants

Alyssa Collins, Special Education Office





# Shrewsbury High School alumni spotlight:

## Conversations with Shrewsbury first responders

**DR. JANE O. LIZOTTE**  
*Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Well-Being*  
**VISHNU ANGIRAS,**  
*SHS Class of 2024*  
**ANANYA ARVIND,**  
*SHS Class of 2023*  
**FAITH LOIZEAUX,**  
*SHS Class of 2024*  
**REBEKAH POWERS,**  
*SHS Class of 2024*  
**JAISURIA SATISH BABU,**  
*SHS Class of 2024*

This fall we had the honor and privilege to meet with some of Shrewsbury’s first responders, who are also alumni of the Shrewsbury Public Schools, to learn about school, home, and life experiences that supported their school-to-career journey. The interviews took place just after 7:00 a.m. on a rainy Wednesday morning in the bustling Shrewsbury High School (SHS) Commons. The first responders with whom we met include the following:

- **Shrewsbury Police School Resource Officer Alicia Brownell**
- **Shrewsbury Fire Lieutenant David Muntz**
- **Shrewsbury Firefighter Michael Guarino**
- **Shrewsbury Police Officer Jeff Svendsen**

Each of the first responders was asked by the student interviewers to respond to the following prompts:

- *Please share school experiences that supported your school-to-career journey. In what ways did our schools support life experiences (personal and professional) that led you to your current position in our community?*
- *How/when did you decide to be a first responder? Who or what prompted your decision?*

**Shrewsbury Police School Resource Officer, Alicia Brownell**  
Written by Rebekah Powers and Faith Loizeaux

Alicia Brownell is the School Resource Officer at Shrewsbury High School (SHS), where she graduated in 2010. Officer Brownell also attended Floral Street School, Sherwood Middle School, and Oak Middle School. When asked about her experience in high school, she shared, “I wasn’t engaged in any clubs or extracurriculars and I didn’t have a particular focus on my path after high school. Academically, I didn’t excel. It wasn’t that I didn’t want to do well in school or didn’t like it. It’s just that I had a hard time.” Alicia played softball when she was

younger. She attended tryouts for the JV [Junior Varsity] team at SHS, but never ended up playing for them. She explained, “If I wanted to do [softball], I needed a car. But I came from a family [with] not a lot of money. I was only going to be able to get a car if I could pay for it myself, so in order for me to get to and from [practice], I needed to get a job. So, I left in the middle of tryouts.”

After graduating from SHS, Officer Brownell attended Quinsigamond Community College (QCC). She continued to work while studying at QCC. During her first few years there, she was holding down three jobs at once. At the age of 22, she enlisted in the Army Reserve. Two years into the program, she began considering a career path, “I was trying to figure out something that translated to a civilian job. With that being said, I ended up taking the civil service exam. I eventually got selected to be a police officer for the town, which I really enjoy.” Reflecting back on her experiences as a teenager, Alicia advised, “You can’t just expect to have everything handed to you. You can’t expect to not have to work for something. I had to make a sacrifice. I think that’s influenced my life and shaped me as a person a lot.”

Officer Brownell is a veteran of the U.S. Army Reserves, having served eight years with the 94th Military Police Company based in Londonderry, NH. She enlisted in 2014 as a Private First Class and ended her service as a Sergeant. We are grateful to Officer Brownell for spending time with us and providing a glimpse into her life.

**Shrewsbury Police Officer, Jeffrey Svendsen**  
Written by Vishnu Angiras

Immediately after greeting Officer Svendsen, I asked him why the intersection at the bottom of the school hill was blocked off the night before. I remember driving through the traffic and seeing several police cars in every direction, simultaneously fascinated and curious as to what had happened. This sort of encounter with the police is exactly what inspired Officer Svendsen to join their ranks, although his case was much more extreme. One Friday afternoon of his freshman year, Svendsen went to a local bank with his family, but was surprised to see that it was closed. This struck him as odd. It was only 1:45 p.m. and he could still see the teller in the building, signaling for them to leave. Moments later, police cars swarmed the building and his family—Jeff Svendsen had just walked into the scene of a robbery. The officers kindly explained



*Pictured above (left to right) are student authors Vishnu Angiras and Ananya Arvind, Shrewsbury Police Officer Jeffrey Svendsen, School Resource Officer Alicia Brownell, Shrewsbury Firefighter Michael Guarino, Shrewsbury Fire Lieutenant David Muntz, and student author Jaisuria Satish Babu.*

what was going on, and moved Jeff out of danger. He never forgot that moment. Impressed with the professional manner in which the officers handled his situation, he was moved to research policing as a career.

Officer Svendsen credits the resources at the Shrewsbury High School for helping cultivate his interest in this field. Specifically, he points to former school resource officer, Mark Hester. As Svendsen recounts, “I remember talking to him, and having conversations with him. When I applied [to be a police officer], I reached out to him. He was the one big influence in helping me transition from high school [to policing]”. Additionally, his school experiences helped prepare him for the job. By helping with the school accreditation process and interning at the guidance office, among others, Officer Svendsen learned valuable leadership skills. To him, “sports was a big thing”. He was a varsity athlete for basketball and baseball and explained how his experience helped him stay cool under pressure and manage stressful situations. For high schoolers who are starting to look into careers and college, Mr. Svendsen stresses that they keep an open mindset. For him, the path was clear and straightforward, but for many of those close to him, that was not the case. “You don’t need to know what you want to do. Have a plan, and come up with a backup plan”, he concludes.

Shrewsbury Police Officer Jeffrey Svendsen attended Spring Street Elementary School, Sherwood Middle School, Oak Middle School, and Shrewsbury High School.

**Shrewsbury Fire Lieutenant, David Muntz**  
Written by Ananya Arvind

Shrewsbury Fire Lieutenant Dave Muntz didn’t always plan on becoming a first responder. After graduating from Shrewsbury High School in 2003, Muntz attended Salem State

University, aspiring to study history and go into teaching or law. Growing up, Muntz’s brother-in-law worked for the fire department, which inspired him to change his career path in college and become an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). He thanks Shrewsbury Junior High for getting him first-aid certified, which helped him as he started off as an EMT and eventually became a paramedic. He also commends Shrewsbury Public Schools for helping him build the courage to make this career shift. Muntz’s high school class was the first to graduate from the new high school building. Along with a renovated building layout and an indoor track, the new high school offered a supportive environment and a variety of opportunities to explore student interests.

Higher education was strongly encouraged during his time at SHS, and classes such as woodshop and senior capstone exhibition allowed students to unleash their creativity. Muntz himself was a part of Shrewsbury High School’s theater department and indoor track and cross country teams - activities that he participates in recreationally today. Although the school was relatively new, he claims that the faculty and staff were committed from the start. The guidance department was composed of resourceful counselors who were especially helpful during the college application process. Other faculty members organized trips across the US and the world for World Languages and Performing Arts students.

Clearly, Shrewsbury High School has built off of this strong foundation as it now offers even more diverse opportunities 20 years later. These first responders not only fulfill their duties, but also inspire the next generation to make meaningful contributions to their community. Muntz and his department make annual visits to our local elementary schools (Mr.



# World Language Books

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

Over the past year a significant investment has been made in all Shrewsbury Public Schools media centers to include a larger selection of books in the native languages of our students. \$10,000 was allocated from the Colonial Fund, and a total of over \$3,000 was allocated from school PTOs to help fund their own individual media centers. Still, more is needed.

Why do we need “World Language” books? According to Shawna Powers, Director of Instructional Technology & Media Services, “Over one-third of our students speak a language other than, or in addition to, English at home.” In fact, dozens of different

languages and dialects are spoken by students in our district. Ken Almeida, Director of World Languages, adds, “A 2022 Home Language Survey conducted in Shrewsbury High School English and ELE [English Learner Education] classes revealed that 45% of the 1,325 students surveyed indicated that they come from a home where a Language Other Than English (LOTE) is spoken. The same survey captured an inventory of more than twenty LOTEs, with Portuguese being the primary language.” Other languages spoken by our students include Chinese, Tamil, Spanish, Hindi, Arabic, Urdu, Telugu, Gujarati, Russian, Vietnamese, Armenian, Korean, French, Japanese, Bengali, Kannada, and Haitian Creole.

“Access to books in a

student’s home language helps to foster a sense of belonging, provides opportunities to see their home culture represented in their school media center collection, and offers the potential to strengthen home language skills. Grade level literacy in a home language is a strong predictor of the rate at which a student will learn and retain English,” writes Ms. Powers.

By purchasing more books in the native languages of our students, we enable more families to read school media center books to their children and connect with their home languages. Additionally, more students may see themselves reflected in media center books. We hope to provide English Learners with print access to translated texts of current and classic literature, build a collection that mirrors the diversity of the student body of Shrewsbury Public Schools, and offer opportunities for more Shrewsbury students to access texts representing our global community.

Providing a variety of appropriate books has been challenging. Hilary Clegg, Media Specialist at Sherwood Middle School, advised “In Brazilian Portuguese, there were many books that I

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# Mock dig at Sherwood Middle School

**ROBERT DUNN**  
*Curriculum Coordinator Social Studies Shrewsbury Middle Schools*



Grade six students are pictured above participating in the mock dig at Sherwood Middle School.

This fall five hundred sixth grade students had an opportunity to get their hands dirty, digging their way into archeology! The annual mock dig at Sherwood Middle School (SMS) was held in October. Each student was able to dig, sift, sketch, and catalog artifacts they found just outside the front door at SMS. Afterwards they analyzed the small objects they found in order to learn about the process archaeologists use to interpret the past.

The skills and understanding the students acquired are directly connected to their ancient history curriculum. The activity also serves as hands-on, team-building experience. Thanks to all the grade six teachers, who have gone out of their way to make this activity possible!



Anne Marie Turner and Susan Shaughnessy (shown left to right), Media Aides at Floral Street School, are pictured with some of the World Language Books available to students.

## Alumni spotlight

*CONTINUED, from page 4*

Muntz attended Spring Street School) and run a booth at the annual Spirit of Shrewsbury Expo. The next time you see a firetruck coming down the road, thank our first responders for being there when we need them, and Shrewsbury Public Schools for helping shape them into the people they are.

**Shrewsbury Firefighter, Michael Guarino**  
Written by Jaisuria Satish Babu

Communities have a great influence on the lives of the families and individuals who reside there. Like plants that flourish more easily in a garden with good soil and plenty of sun and water, individuals have a better chance of thriving in welcoming communities. Michael Guarino is a firefighter in Shrewsbury, who always sought to serve his town and the community. Firefighter Guarino graduated from Shrewsbury High in 2006 and also attended Beal School, Spring Street

School, and Shrewsbury Junior High School.

While growing up and being an active member of the Shrewsbury community, Mr. Guarino believed that Shrewsbury had a rich history and plenty of trusting connections to support him along the way. In terms of high school, he was always thankful for the culture and spirit that it embodied. By being part of the first freshman class in 2002 when the new building opened, Mr. Guarino was open to a variety of opportunities and a diverse sense of support that carried his goals into the career he is in right now. When asked about how SHS supported his life experiences that led him to his current position, he said: “So I was kind of stewing on this question, but something that really helped me was the mentor-mentee programs that the school offered. They were really great- between guidance counselors and a few selected teachers that really went above and beyond to help all kids get more socially acclimated and more socially accepted.” The experiences that Firefighter Guarino

received from the mentor-mentee program at SHS also helped him transition to his military career and fire department career. In addition to that, he believed that the program inspired him to give back to the community and become immersed with the culture and community that was shared with everyone.

In terms of his career, Mr. Guarino always aspired to get into the military and fire department career. Most importantly, he saw the fire department as an opportunity to be the first person there to help. When asked the reason for his decision to become a first responder, he said, “We help people because at that moment in time, it’s their worst moment, and I like to be the problem solver. Those qualities came from the foundational experiences that I got at Shrewsbury High School.” Reflecting back on his experiences at SHS, he advises students to “[live] up to the core values that Shrewsbury has and pick up some cornerstones like family, and some external ones like education, to build up a beautiful path towards success.”

## 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



# Class of 2022 is #Seal of Biliteracy Strong!

**KENNETH ALMEIDA**  
*Director of World Languages*

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) website describes the Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy as “an award provided by state approved districts that recognizes high school graduates who attain high functional and academic levels of proficiency in English and a world language in recognition of having studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation.” Shrewsbury High School (SHS) students participated in this new program in the 2021-2022 school year. When asked about Shrewsbury’s preliminary data on the Seal of Biliteracy recipients at the Virtual Summer Conference for World Language/ELE (English Learner Education) Directors, DESE’s World Language Support Specialist Andy McDonie replied that the figures were “impressive”. The SHS Class of 2022 garnered a total of 47 Seal of Biliteracy awards. There were 137 applicants to the program, some of whom participated in more than one language. One hundred and five (105) participants were World Language students enrolled in an SHS course and 32 were students who identified their home language as one other than English. Thirteen (13) languages were assessed. The largest group in World Languages was Spanish and in LOTE (Languages Other Than English) was Portuguese, with 50 and 11 students participating respectively. Consequently, those two languages were awarded the highest number of Seals in their categories - 17 World Language students earned the Seal in Spanish and six LOTE students were awarded the Seal in Portuguese. In total, 31 World Language students earned the Seal accounting for 61.9% of all recipients; seven of which earned the Seal with Distinction. Sixteen (16) LOTE students earned the Seal, accounting for 38% of the total recipients; four of which earned the Seal with Distinction.

The LOTEs that earned the Seal with Distinction were Chinese (one student), Spanish (one student) and Tamil (two students). The World Languages making the Seal with Distinction were French (four students), Spanish (two students), and Chinese (one student). Preliminary AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages) testing results in World Language students for the class of 2023 indicate a higher number of participants earning the Seal of Biliteracy through AAPPL testing, pending MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) data verification. Twenty-three (23) World Language students from the SHS Class of 2023 are estimated to earn the Seal of Biliteracy based on AAPPL test results,

CONTINUED, see page 7

# Second Annual Community Partnerships Breakfast

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

For the second year in a row, Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) and the Shrewsbury High School (SHS) School Counseling Department invited local business partners to participate in a discussion regarding career exploration opportunities for our high school students. The meeting was held in October with six students, seven businesses, one School Committee member and 11 SPS staff members attending.

The breakfast meeting brought together some local businesses, SHS administrators and students, with the goal of having an active discussion on creating internship, job-shadowing and career exploration opportunities for high school students. This is part of our continuing effort to explore, create, assess, and expand **Career and Trade Exploration Pathways, Community Partnerships, and Early College** opportunities at SHS. The *Portrait of a Shrewsbury Graduate* illustrates the importance of innovation and leadership, and students need to be given a sense of autonomy, choice, and responsibility by participating in work and life experiences about which they are passionate.

The meeting began with the requisite introductions and an overview of our goals, then quickly became energized, as the students started sharing their experiences and ideas.

Clara Tran, class of 2023, participated in job shadowing at the Worcester Red Sox (“Woo Sox”) during April break, 2022. She shared how much she appreciated her experience, writing in a comment earlier, “I enjoyed learning

about how unity and communications play a key role in things such as the Woo Sox marketing team.”

Luiza Saldanha, class of 2023, happily reported to the group that after she had shadowed various departments at the Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union, she was offered a job for the summer, which she eagerly accepted.

Kevin Dong, also class of 2023, participated in job shadowing at Nyla Laboratories in Worcester. He mentioned that he “really enjoyed the experience” being shown around the lab and learning more about the testing that Nyla Labs was performing that day.

The students’ stories resonated personally with Mr. Jeff Abbott from Creedon Catering and Ms. Kathy McSweeney from Lamacchia Realty (both SHS alumni and community partners) who shared their own stories of starting one career after high school and then changing careers several years later. Ms. Courtney Sibinich added that her high school job led to her career and current job at Salmon Health and Retirement.

Because the morning’s discussions were centered around students’ interests, we invited two seniors and a junior to give their perspective on what careers would be of interest to them. Drew Conant (’23), Jack Gregory (’23) and Alicia Kim (’24) personally requested opportunities to further explore business, the environment and real estate.

In a recent survey sent out to all students, we learned that our high school students have a wide variety of interests, including science, real estate, and music.

In connecting students who

are eager to explore, with businesses who are looking for loyal employees, Shrewsbury Public Schools envisions a “school to career” model which could help local business partners find and retain reliable workers while also developing those workers for future career growth, and longevity, within a company. Students would have the opportunity to:

- build their skills and possibly try new positions within one company, while also considering post-high-school options.
- create complex, high-quality work for an authentic audience, with an emphasis on critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration.
- develop independence after graduation, including exposure to career choices and development of skills in financial literacy.
- gain access to experiential learning and career awareness and to enhance learning in the STEAM fields (science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics).

As our students seek to learn about potential careers, they will gain an understanding of the skills and knowledge needed to reach their goals. Students will be better able to make informed decisions about their future, during and following their academic careers.

If you have a business that is interested in providing opportunities for students to explore their careers, please scan this QR code or complete this form, <https://forms.gle/D254QCKpXzxztKQ99>. Thank you for supporting our students!



# Successful back-to-school supply drive hosted by Shrewsbury High School

**NAVYA SHARMA AND CAELEY GALE**  
*SHS Class of 2025*

Thank you Shrewsbury residents for helping to make our back-to-school supply drive a resounding success! In August 2022, Shrewsbury High School students collected school supplies from donors at the Staples retail store in Shrewsbury. Over 500 new items were

donated which included crayons, markers, pencils, tissues, hand sanitizers and a plethora of other supplies which were donated to the classrooms of Grafton Street Elementary School in Worcester. They also collected enough in monetary donations to buy 450 notebooks that were used for the school’s literacy initiative.

Early in the first week of school, the Community Service Learning Board members sorted the supplies into 20 buckets, one for each classroom teacher at the school. On Friday, September 9th, Student Council and the Community Service Learning Advisory Board members visited

CONTINUED, see page 7



# SPS welcomes two new principals

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

Earlier this year I was pleased to announce that two highly qualified individuals had accepted offers to become new principals at Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) for the 2022-2023 school year: Ms. Hallie Burak at Oak Middle School and Dr. Scott Mulcahy at Walter J. Paton School.

In my communication to Oak families and staff I noted that “Ms. Burak’s deep level of experience as an assistant principal at a large middle school, and her leadership qualities that we learned about through the search process, give me a high degree of confidence that she will be successful in this important leadership position.” Ms. Burak holds a master’s degree in English from Lesley University and a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Rochester. Prior to her role at SPS, Ms.

Burak served as an English language arts teacher, as the head English language arts and reading teacher, and as an assistant principal (since 2013) at O’Donnell Middle School in Stoughton, Massachusetts.

Dr. Mulcahy holds a doctorate degree in education from Creighton University, a master’s degree in leadership and educational administration from Worcester State University, a master’s degree in school psychology from the University of Hartford, and a bachelor’s degree in psychology and elementary education from Stonehill College. Just prior to coming to Shrewsbury, Dr. Mulcahy was the assistant principal of Nelson Place Elementary School in Worcester, Massachusetts. Before that he served as an assistant principal at the elementary level in both the Harvard and Sudbury Public Schools, and as an elementary and middle school teacher in the Hudson

Public Schools. In my communication with the Paton community I described Dr. Mulcahy as “a superbly qualified school leader whose experiences, approach, and core values make him an excellent match for the Paton community”, adding I was “highly confident that he will be very successful as Paton’s new principal.”

The search process for both positions was rigorous, and feedback from SPS staff, families, and students informed the decision-making process. It resulted in the hiring of two highly skilled professionals to lead Oak Middle School and the Walter J. Paton School. Since they began their work on July 1, Ms. Burak and Dr. Mulcahy have been working hard to get to know their new school communities and to learn about strengths to build on and needs to address. Please join me in welcoming these educational leaders to Shrewsbury!

## World Language Books

*CONTINUED, from page 5*

could confirm were translated into Brazilian Portuguese, but could not get...For other languages, such as Haitian Creole, Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, etc., it was difficult to find appropriate titles at all...” To help find appropriate books to purchase, she noted, “I surveyed parents to learn about books in their home languages that they loved as children, and found a few titles that way, and I also found helpful staff members who translated the book information for me and helped me choose some books.” The high level of collaboration among the media specialists and other educators across the district has enabled the success of this project.

Although we have made significant contributions to all of our media centers, there is still a need to have more variety and a greater selection of these books available to students. Every media center has seen an increase in demand for more World Language books, and new languages are added each year as students move into the district. However, funding is limited, so media centers rely on grants, parent contributions and PTO funding.

If you would like to contribute towards the purchase of more of these books, please send a donation through SchoolPay, <https://www.schoolpay.com/pay/for/Donation-to-Shrewsbury-Public-Schools-Co/ScSYNEJ> or contact Kathleen Keohane at [kkeohane@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:kkeohane@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us). Thank you!

# Math Workshop and station teaching at Sherwood Middle School

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

Several middle school teachers participated in the Summer Institute course, *Guided Math Workshop*, offered in 2019 and 2022. Teachers learned how to structure their math blocks to include station rotations and offer a variety of small group, partner, and independent learning activities.

Many Sherwood Middle School teachers use the reference book, *Math Workshop*, by Jennifer Lempp, to guide their workshop planning and implementation.

During *Math Workshop*, a teacher leads a focus lesson for the whole class or a

small group of students, then circulates among the stations to check on student progress through the day’s “math menu.”

Here are some testimonials from students who were asked: “What do you like about math class?”

*Math workshop gives us*

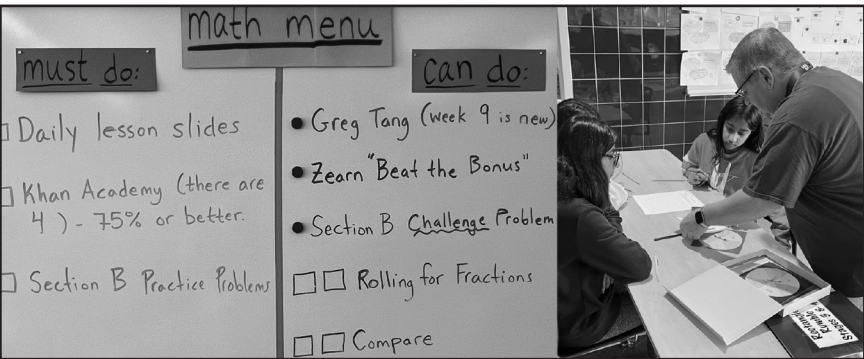
*opportunities to do different things.*

*Math stations are fun, not boring.*

*During math, we have the chance to work in a small group with a teacher.*

*Sometimes we play a math game or solve a puzzle with a partner.*

*We get a chance to work independently and practice what we’ve learned.*



The image above includes an example of a “math menu” alongside a photo showing Grade 5 Teacher Gary Chalmers working with students.

## Biliteracy

*CONTINUED, from page 6*

eight more than those receiving the Seal on the same assessment from the class of 2022, representing a 53% increase. In addition, five students from the current senior class have scored “Advanced” on the AAP-PL test, qualifying them for the Seal with Distinction. It is worthwhile to note that these students from the class of 2023 were tested as juniors. Additional time and Professional Development for staff will be needed to adjust practices and curriculum in the SPS World Language Program to achieve higher levels of proficiency overall.

## Supply drive

*CONTINUED, from page 6*

the Grafton Street School in Worcester to deliver the school supplies and to read books to the students. Student Council Historian, Connor Duffy, explains his time with the Grafton Street School Kids this way: “We made connections with the kids that will last a lifetime. The kids thoroughly enjoyed the activities through storytelling, crafts, and group games. There were nothing

but bright and smiling faces when we walked into the room with buckets of new school supplies.”

Without the generosity of many donors and the hard work of the high school volunteers this collaboration would not have been possible. The success of this collaboration was so impactful that the Student Council will be holding another service day for Worcester Schools during the week of December 5th.



Community Service Learning Advisory Board members and volunteers (left to right) Yesha Patel, Swathi Kannan, Aditi Dosi, Anaiya Meraj, Mell Borges, Allie Moore, Navya Sharma, Kayla Bailey, Aanya Gupta, Cathy Nguyen, and Kenneth Nguyen are pictured above organizing school supply baskets.



# New Superintendent's Award created

## DISTRICT

On opening day for staff, August 29, 2022, Superintendent Dr. Joseph M. Sawyer recognized a number of individuals for their extraordinary service to Shrewsbury Public Schools. This year a newly created award was presented in honor and remembrance of Shrewsbury High School Mandarin Teacher Ms. Chin-Huei Yeh, who passed away unexpectedly in August 2022. World Languages Director

Kenneth Almeida was the first recipient of the *ChinHuei Yeh Award*, which will recognize one educator annually for "outstanding dedication to students, colleagues, and the education profession". The other 2022 *Superintendent Award* winners recognized on opening day were: Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations; Charlene Costello, Teacher, Maj. Howard J. Beal School; Elizabeth Caforio, Teacher,

Floral Street School; Susan Shea, Paraprofessional, Walter J. Paton School; Erin Kennedy, Special Education Team Chair, Sherwood Middle School; Linda Weir, Paraprofessional, Calvin Coolidge School; and Amy Russell, Paraprofessional, Sherwood Middle School; 2022 *Thomas Kennedy Award* winner Noelle Freeman, Director of School Nursing; and 2022 *Jayne Wilkin Award* winner Liza Trombley, Director of English, Shrewsbury High School.



The Superintendent's Award winners are pictured above with Dr. Sawyer as follows: front row, left to right: Susan Shea, Linda Weir, Noelle Freeman, Elizabeth Caforio, and Erin Kennedy; back row, left to right: Amy Russell, Charlene Costello, Kenneth Almeida, Dr. Sawyer, Liza Trombley, and Patrick Collins.

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