



Superintendent's Update

February 8, 2019

Dear Shrewsbury Families, Community Members, & Colleagues,

This has been a sad week for our school district, as two outstanding former SPS school leaders recently passed away: Dr. John P. Collins, who served as Superintendent from 1978 until his retirement in 1994, and Ms. Ellen Meyers, who served as a Special Education Teacher, Assistant Principal at SHS, and as Director of Special Education & Pupil Personnel Services for the district until her retirement in 2008.

There were several poignant thoughts shared about each during their respective funeral services, and the themes were remarkably similar. They were fierce advocates for doing what was right for students, and they communicated their passion respectfully and professionally. Outside of their jobs, they utilized their skills as educators to make a positive difference for others who faced tremendous challenges: Ellen, through her work on behalf of the Tourette Association of America, and Jack, through teaching prison inmates about the philosophy of Thomas Merton. They were both deeply committed to their families and were leaders in their respective faith communities. Anecdotes told as part of their eulogies made it clear that they not only connected intellectually with others, but – more importantly – they connected emotionally with people because of their unconditional belief in their inherent worth. It is notable that no one reminisced about the excellence of their technical skills as leaders (although this is true); rather, it is clear that their legacies are extraordinary because of the way their lives were spent valuing and helping others with compassion and love. They are inspiring reminders that the human dimension of our work that is remembered in the heart is what counts in the end.

Updates

Please note the following information:

- National School Counseling Week
- Chinese New Year celebration
- Recent student achievements

National School Counseling Week: We celebrate our school counselors this week for their outstanding contributions to our students. School counselor is a role many of us would have known as “guidance counselor” when we attended school, but has grown in scope beyond preparing students for college and careers to include many aspects of students’ well-being at school. Their work is critically important to our students’ success, and deeply appreciated.

Chinese New Year celebration: Last Sunday several of our middle school and high school Mandarin Chinese language students performed in the annual festival held by the Massachusetts Beijing Chinese Language School to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Happy Year of the Pig to all of our students and families who celebrate!

Recent student achievements:

- Congratulations to our **SHS Esports team, who won the first ever state championship in “electronic sports,”** i.e., multiplayer team video gaming, by defeating Newton North High School in the finals held at Gillette Stadium! The players (Varisra Upatising, Jack Doyle Thomas Wang, Gerry Dang, Jerry Du, & Tristan Duerk) and Coach Steve McKinstry will be recognized at the School Committee meeting on Wednesday evening, February 13.
- Several SHS visual art students received **awards at the Secondary Art Competition at Anna Maria College**. Congratulations to Teresa Chen (2nd place in watercolor, 3rd place Best in Show), Abena Gyampo (3rd place in drawing), Arimita Padam (2nd place in drawing), Catherine Samia (2nd place in photography), and Araceli Valdez (1st place in painting)!
- Eight SHS Colonials senior student-athletes signed **national letters of intent to play Division 1 or Division 2 athletics** in college next year. Congratulations to Drew Campanale (football at Franklin Pierce University), Delaney Couture (women’s ice hockey at Providence College), Nate Hautala (football at Stonehill College), Phoebe Johnson (field hockey at Bryant University), Chris Matthews (track at UMass-Amherst), Joey O’Brien (track at UConn), Cam Schaefer (football at St. Anselm College), and Anna Zerwas (volleyball at St. Anselm College)!

Thank you for reading and for your support for and contributions to our community’s public schools.

Respectfully,

Joe Sawyer
Superintendent of Schools