



Superintendent's Update

April 12, 2019

Dear Shrewsbury Families, Community Members, & Colleagues,

As we head into April Vacation, it seems safe to say that we are past the point of needing any more snow days (although there's a blizzard in the midwest, so let's hope I'm not jinxing things...). Our students have been engaged with many great learning experiences while also enjoying some special spirit activities this week – check out the Twitter feed at the hashtag [#ShrewsburyLearns](https://twitter.com/ShrewsburyLearns) for some great photos!

Assuming no more snow days, the **last day of school will be Friday, June 14** (for kindergarten it will be Wednesday, June 12, with preschool dates varying by session). It has already been a very successful school year in many ways, and I'm sure that will continue through the spring. Check out the updates below for information on student achievements as well as some great news regarding resources we will have next year.

Updates

- Excellent news on grant & sponsorship funding
- Recent student achievements
- Video on social and emotional learning

Excellent news on grant & sponsorship funding:

I am pleased to announce that we have recently confirmed several new sources of significant grant and sponsorship funds to address key strategic priorities in the years ahead. **This funding is over \$1.5 million in total, with \$460,000 of that to be invested next year alone!** These include:

- **A \$1 million grant (\$100,000 per year over ten years) through the MA Department of Public Health** for [mental and behavioral health programming](#). This grant will be primarily focused on providing mental and behavioral health counseling at Sherwood Middle School.
- **A \$100,000 grant (\$10,000 this year and \$90,000 next year) from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education** for mental and behavioral

health support. This grant will be primarily focused on providing mental and behavioral health counseling at the elementary level.

- **A \$50,000 grant for biotechnology and a \$20,000 grant for computer science** through the STEM Career Pathway Capacity Grant program, overseen by the MA Executive Office of Education in conjunction with the STEM Advisory Council (co-chaired by Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito) and the Governor's Workforce Skills Cabinet. These grants, made through the Project Lead the Way program, will expand biotech and computer science offerings at Shrewsbury High School.
- **A \$400,000 partnership over five years with [Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union](#)** to pilot a new [Colonial Connections program](#) to increase access to experiential learning and build career awareness across the school district, while providing capacity to build strong partnerships between our schools and families, businesses, non-profit organizations, and institutes of higher education.

The personnel, materials, equipment, and training these sources of funds will provide will make a significant, positive difference for our students in key areas of need. I am grateful to our staff who worked to procure these funds and to the agencies and organizations who are providing them. This is truly excellent news for our schools!

Recent student achievements:

- **SHS Speech & Debate State Champions (Again)!**: Congratulations to the SHS Speech & Debate team, who won the state championship for the second time in the past four years! In addition, several members of the team earned a record-breaking seven individual state championships!
 - Team President, Paulina Hruskoci, in Original Oratory AND Programmed Oral Interpretation
 - Leah DeHaemer in Dramatic Performance AND Prose Reading
 - Sophia Peng in Informative Speaking
 - Haleema Siddiqui in Poetry Reading
 - Jessica Peng, Lanna Wang, Dan Stameris, Max Evers, Pranav Vadlamudi & Reeya Kansra in Multiple ReadingCongratulations to all of the team members and coaches on an extraordinary season!
- **SHS Student Council earns several honors**: The SHS Student Council earned Gold Council Status at the state level for the first time and at the national level for the second straight year, they won a "top ten" projects award at the state level, and their faculty advisor, Ms. Becky Moisan, was named the Massachusetts Student Council Advisor of the Year. Great student leadership!
- **More Division I State Champions in indoor track**: Congratulations to the SHS

Boys 4 x 800 Meter Relay Team Division I State Champions: Shaun Daley, Jr., Max Evers, Anthony Pikula, and Cameron Riley. These runners unselfishly gave up competing in individual events at the state meet in order to focus on this team event, and they surprised the “experts” with a gold medal run!

- **Visual Arts successes presented at School Committee:** Visual Arts Department Director, Pam LeBlanc, and several SHS students presented information about our superb Visual Arts program to the School Committee this past week. Check out [this slide presentation](#) for examples of extraordinary artwork that is being shared across the community.
- **Destination Imagination team success at states:** Eight teams from Shrewsbury Public Schools competed at the Destination Imagination State Tournament. Four teams qualified to represent MA at the Global Finals, including an elementary team who won first place! This team, comprised of Rajat Krishnan, Aditya Venkateswaran, Andrew Perrault, George Kosheff, and Tyler Boehnke, won first place in the engineering challenge and were also awarded the highly coveted Da Vinci award for exceptional creativity. Click [here](#) for a list of teams and photos. Exceptional results!
- **Oak & SHS band and choir music festival awards!** Bravo to the Oak Select Band, Oak Select Choir, SHS Mixed Choir, and SHS A Cappella Choir on earning silver medals and to the SHS Treble Choir on earning a gold medal in the Massachusetts Instrumental & Choral Conductors Association music festival! The hard work of practicing to master instruments and voices paid off – outstanding!

Video on social and emotional learning:

One of our [strategic priorities](#) is to promote the “enhanced well-being of all,” including the goal of **“creating a common understanding of the benefits of the skills, habits, and mindsets of social and emotional learning.”** In case you missed it: We recently recorded a new episode of the *Superintendent’s Update* TV show where three of my colleagues explain what social and emotional learning is and the steps we are taking as a school district to address this important dimension of education. Click [here](#) to view my conversation with Meg Belsito, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Amy Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment; and Dr. Jane Lizotte, Principal of Sherwood Middle School.

I wish everyone a restful, enjoyable Patriots Day weekend and April school vacation week, and happy Passover and happy Easter to all who will be celebrating!

Respectfully,

Joe Sawyer
Superintendent of Schools