



Superintendent's Update

January 20, 2016

Dear Shrewsbury Families,

I hope that 2016 is off to a great start for you. Here's hoping that these snowstorms keep arriving on days when school is not in session!

Please read on for important information about our school district on the following:

1. Presentations on next year's school calendar and budget at tonight's School Committee meeting
2. "State of the District" report
3. New TV episode on creativity at Oak Middle School
4. Student and alumni successes
5. Thank you from the Colonial Fund

1) Tonight's School Committee meeting:

There will be two key topics covered at tonight's School Committee meeting. First, the district's Calendar Committee will make its report on **recommendations regarding next year's school calendar**. This will be followed by the presentation of **my recommendation for the district's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget**. The meeting, which takes place at Town Hall at 7:00pm, will be broadcast live on SELCO SETV Channels 29/329 and streamed on the [Shrewsbury Media Connection website](#). I encourage you to attend or watch from home.

2) State of the District:

I recently presented my [my annual State of the District report](#) to the School Committee, which focused on four key points:

- I. Our students are thriving in schools that provide excellent educational experiences within respectful and purposeful cultures.
- II. Our educators are succeeding in advancing our strategic priorities through collaboration and innovation.
- III. Our school facilities are strong overall; however, there is inadequate space in the early grades and some buildings are in need of significant investments in infrastructure.
- IV. Our district, like all public school districts, is subject to demands for performance, mandates for compliance, and pressures for addressing societal issues — but must operate within a fiscal environment where many costs are unavoidable, yet financial resources are both structurally limited and unrelated to performance.

You can read the full report [here](#) and review the accompanying slide presentation [here](#).

3) TV show on creativity at Oak Middle School:

The most recent episode of Superintendent's Update show on Channels 29/329 will begin showing and is also available for viewing on the web by clicking [here](#). This is a special hour-long episode where Oak teachers Elin Dolen (Grade 7 Science) and Kate Lewis (Grade 8 English Language Arts) present several examples of ways that our students are learning important content and skills in creative ways made possible through digital learning. I was very impressed with the quality of what our students are doing, and I encourage you to take a look.

4) Student and alumni successes:

- Recently the students in the new mathematical modeling course at SHS, which is a college level course beyond Advanced Placement, competed in the world [High School Mathematical Modeling Contest](#), and **all three SHS team entries earned "meritorious" rating for their papers**. The teams had 36 hours to analyze a real world problem with voluminous data and use mathematical modeling to propose a solution. This was an outstanding result for the first time ever competing in this high level competition.
- The **SHS Quiz Team advanced to the "Sweet 16"** on [WGBH's High School Quiz Show](#), and they will be competing this weekend against Chelmsford High School on an episode that will air on Channel 2 on February 27. Good luck to team members Gokul Ajith, Patrick Ryan, Mounith Madadi, Stephen Przybylek, Sangeeth Vishnu, and Albert Xu. I had the chance to attend one of their practice sessions, and they are ready to go!
- Quiz Team member **Gokul Ajith, a senior at SHS, also was recently honored by the national ACT organization for earning a perfect score of 36 on the ACT test**. This score was achieved by only one tenth of one percent of almost 2 millions students who took this college admissions test! Congratulations, Gokul!
- SHS Class of 2015 graduate **Celine Chandra was one of only 16 students in the world to earn every possible point on her Advanced Placement Studio Art Drawing Portfolio exam**. Last year out of 4.5 million AP exams taken by over 2.5 million U.S. students, only 322 students earned every point possible. Congratulations, Celine!
- Many national news organizations picked up the story of the ["3D Beastcam" that was recently developed at UMass-Amherst](#). Two SHS alumni, Kasey Packard Smart (2011) and Dylan Briggs (2012), who are majoring in Mechanical Engineering and Biochemistry, respectively, were part of this research team that created, designed, and obtained a provisional patent for this 3-D modeling device. You can read more about Kasey and Dylan's invention and watch video [here](#). **Congratulations to these two recent SHS alumni, who both took coursework in tech ed and engineering at both Oak and SHS, on their very impressive achievement!** If you have information on accomplishments of Shrewsbury alumni, please drop me a note at jsawyer@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us. We know that Colonials are doing great things out in the world, and we'd love to share these stories!

6) Thank you from the Colonial Fund:

A sincere thank you to all who donated to the Colonial Fund during the year end appeal. Thanks to your generosity and Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union's \$5,000 donation plus additional \$5,000 in

matching funds, **the total received was \$22,936!** We will be using these funds to support innovative educational practices that will help our students thrive both now and in the future. We're targeting these investments to help develop the kinds of 21st century skills that will result in more success stories of Shrewsbury alumni creating new inventions like the one cited above!

Thank you for your continued support of our schools. If I can be of assistance to you, please contact me at 508-841-8400 or at jsawyer@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us.

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