



Superintendent's Update

January 30, 2018

Dear Shrewsbury Families & Community Members,

We have just hit the halfway mark of the school year. Much has been accomplished, and it has been a pleasure to visit classrooms in our schools and see students who are engaged in meaningful experiences and who are enthusiastic about what they are learning, as well as to witness our students' many positive experiences in the visual arts, performing arts, academic competitions, and athletics. I am especially proud of our students' community service – please see a news item below for more information about that.

Our high school students are receiving mid-year feedback, and I am asking for you to provide me with the same. **I would greatly appreciate it if you would complete a very short survey (about two minutes) that provides me with your perspective on my work as superintendent and how I can improve.** I would like to utilize this information at a leadership team meeting on Thursday morning, so I ask that you please complete the survey by 6:00pm tomorrow (Wednesday). **Click [here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SuptFeedbackParentCommunityJan18) to go to the survey** or cut and paste the following link into your browser. Thank you in advance for your feedback!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SuptFeedbackParentCommunityJan18>

Please read on for news regarding our SHS students being recognized for their community service, an update on the Coolidge principal position, information on my recent State of the District report, our district's vision for its graduates, our final strategic priorities and goals for the next five years, district and school feedback we received through the Thoughtexchange process, and an update on the Beal building project.

SHS students collectively receive Community Service Award from the Shrewsbury Education Foundation:

I am proud that our SHS students have collectively performed over 109,000 hours of community service since the school introduced the "10,000 Hour Challenge" in 2011.

Thank you to the Shrewsbury Education Foundation for recognizing our students for this extraordinary commitment to helping others. Check out [this short video](#) created by SHS students to learn more about how their community service is not only helping others, but also how these experiences enhance their own lives as well.

Update on Principal at Coolidge School:

Last evening, I communicated to the Coolidge community that I am removing the “Interim” from Mrs. Tiffany Ostrander's title and appointing her as Principal of Calvin Coolidge School. This was not a difficult decision to make, as the feedback from staff, parents, and students was overwhelmingly positive. Mrs. Ostrander, who previously was assistant principal at Floral Street School for five years, has served in the interim role this year after the previous Coolidge principal, Mrs. Amy Clouter, was appointed as the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment.

State of the District:

Earlier this month, I presented my annual State of the District report to the School Committee. My assessment of the current state of the Shrewsbury Public Schools is summarized in the following five points:

- 1) Our students continue to demonstrate success by traditional measures, and community satisfaction with the quality of our schools is high.
- 2) We have articulated a bold, shared vision for the characteristics we wish for our students to develop as a result of their education in Shrewsbury.
- 3) We have developed an ambitious set of strategic priorities and goals that will guide the direction and focus the energy of our district and our schools for the next five years.
- 4) Realizing our vision, priorities, and goals will require the resources to do the job.
- 5) Empowerment is the key.

Click [here](#) to see the full State of the District report and/or the presentation slides.

Our vision for our students articulated in our *Portrait of a Shrewsbury Graduate*:

In late December, the School Committee unanimously approved a final version of our *Portrait of a Shrewsbury Graduate*. Please click [here](#) to take a look at the final version, which is illustrated by a terrific interactive graphic created by Alexandra Lekas, a student in the SHS Class of 2018. I am excited to begin working towards this compelling and comprehensive vision of the skills, attitudes, and dispositions that our community wants our children to develop during their time in our schools.

2018-2022 Strategic Priorities & Goals:

The School Committee also unanimously approved a final version of our districts Strategic Priorities & Goals for the next five years. The four strategic priorities are:

- 1) Space and resources to support effective learning
- 2) Learning environments where everyone's success matters
- 3) Enhanced well-being of all
- 4) Connected learning for a complex world

To see the goals associated with each priority, please click [here](#). These priorities and goals will serve as an effective road map for the next five years in order to help us continue to improve the quality of our students' education.

Thoughtexchange data available:

Thank you to all of you who participated in the feedback exchange in December that was conducted by Thoughtexchange. This organization has created a detailed, interactive website that provides an overview of what you appreciate about our schools and where you are looking for improvement in the future. Click [here](#) to view the actual feedback at the district level and by individual school. This was a rich data source that heavily influenced our *Portrait of a Shrewsbury Graduate* and strategic priorities, which reflect much of what you said was important.

Beal Building Project:

The Beal Building Committee recently met and unanimously approved the submission of the initial "Preliminary Design Program" to the Massachusetts School Building Authority for their review (click [here](#) for a slide presentation summarizing this information). The architects and project manager have worked closely with SPS staff to develop a preliminary plan for the kinds of academic spaces needed for our instructional program for a school of 790 students in grades K through 4. The two remaining sites are also both being reviewed for suitability, and a recent special Town Meeting vote has given the town the ability to file special legislation with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to potentially procure the Glavin Center site as a possible location for the new school (on Lake Street near Route 9, site of a former state home for developmentally disabled adults owned by the Commonwealth). The other potential site is the Allen Farm property on South Street between Route 9 and Route 20 (previously purchased by the Town of Shrewsbury for commercial development). The School Committee will hear a presentation from the architects on the Preliminary Design Program and take a vote regarding its support at its meeting tomorrow evening at 7pm (Wednesday, January 31).

Fiscal Year 2019 Budget:

I will be making my initial budget recommendation for next year at tomorrow evening's

School Committee meeting (Wednesday, January 31). This meeting will include a presentation on the Beal project, a vote to approve the SHS Program of Studies for next year, a discussion of a draft calendar for next school year, and then the budget presentation. As always, the meeting, which takes place at 7pm in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall, will be broadcast live on SELCO Channels 29/329 and streamed live on the Shrewsbury Media Connection website.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools so that we can provide the best preparation possible for our community's young people, so that they are equipped to thrive in the future.

Respectfully,

Joe Sawyer
Superintendent of Schools