



## Superintendent's Corner Shaping good students and good people

DR. JOSEPH M. SAWYER  
SUPERINTENDENT

In 1980, the Shrewsbury School Committee adopted its policy on the "right to study controversial issues." This policy reads:

*Teachers are responsible for encouraging students to search after truth and think for themselves. Students have four basic rights with reference to the study of controversial issues in the classroom:*

- 1. The right to study controversial issues which have political, economic, or social significance on which, at their level, they should begin to form judgments.*
- 2. The right to study under competent instruction in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice.*
- 3. The right of access to all relevant information freely available in the school and public libraries.*
- 4. The right to share and express their ideas and opinions on controversial issues, and within a forum of fair and open discussion, grow in their understanding of the difficult and*

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- Road Scholars 10th anniversary



Pictured above is Julia Schaefer, Shrewsbury High School state champion gymnast. See page 4.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,”

~ Nelson Mandela ~

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Pictured above is the Shrewsbury High School state champion Boys Ice Hockey team. Photo by Rick Marchand.

## Our fiscal situation

MS. SANDRA FRYC  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR

The word efficient describes how educational services are provided by our school district. Due to the work and dedication of school administration, educators and parents, the students of Shrewsbury Public Schools receive an education that prepares them for college and the work force. The School Committee is dedicated to supporting and furthering the district's mission and strategic priorities and advocates strongly for funding each year. We also believe it is important that the annual School Department budget information is transparent and provides details regarding the cost of public education in our community.

Structural funding issues continue to overshadow the School Department budget process. School Committee Vice Chair, Dr. Dale Magee, stated, "After seven years on the committee it was apparent that we were confronting the same problem year after year and needed a bigger picture. By looking at trends we see that we can predict and prepare for the future." A significant portion of the School Committee's work this past year involved providing the public with insight into the school budgeting process. Dr. Magee and another

School Committee member, Mr. John Samia, formed a subcommittee with goals of:

- Providing a high-level fiscal management tool that projects future school department financial information based on historical, current and assumed future financial conditions
- Identifying near and longer-term trends that will impact the Shrewsbury Public Schools
- Facilitating discussion among stakeholders in the community regarding the future of public education in Shrewsbury

The Fiscal Projection Subcommittee work was broken into three segments: funding, costs, and a five-year fiscal projection. Funding for schools is a combination of state aid, local contributions from taxes, fee revenue and grants. State aid and Federal grants have basically been flat for a decade. Fee revenues have nearly doubled in the past ten years, which means this revenue has become significant to the annual School Department budget. Growth in property tax revenues combined with basically flat increases in other revenue areas means that all inflationary pressure shifts to the town appropriated budget.

The cost of education, even in well managed districts such as Shrewsbury and the state as a whole, increases by 3% to 4% each year. Un-

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Superintendent's Corner

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complex problems they face as citizens in today's world.

The wisdom of this policy remains relevant today, with the only key difference being that our students now have much greater access to information through the Internet than what was then mainly available in libraries. I am struck by the assertion that learning about controversial issues is not considered to be merely an opportunity that should be provided to our students, but their right.

There have been many periods in our nation's history where there have been significant divisions among American citizens regarding important issues, and there is no doubt that we are living in one right now. Given the proliferation of information through online sources and the prevalence of social media, I believe that it has never been more important for our schools to teach our students how to discern the credibility of sources, weigh the validity of arguments from both *pro* and *con*, and build a strong understanding of such issues in order to form their own judgments.

This work will differ depending on the age of the students, with the ultimate goal being that our Shrewsbury High School graduates will enter the world beyond high school with the ability to think critically for themselves, make sound judgments based on solid evidence, and communicate their perspectives effectively and respectfully. If we are successful in this, Shrewsbury alumni will be inoculated against propaganda and ideological "groupthink," regardless of the source and its place on the political spectrum. Ultimately, our graduates will have different perspectives on controversial issues, because there are typically no easy, clear solutions to such disputes. Our job is to give our students the skills and knowledge to form their own perspectives, especially by developing their capacity for

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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

Tara Gauthier  
Designer

Creating an inclusive middle school team

SARAH POWERS  
GRADE 7 SPECIAL  
EDUCATION TEACHER

As a district, we are working to make learning real and engaging for our students. On the 7 Green team, we want to expose our students to experiences and skills that will transfer into making them successful members of society; teaching skills they will be able to put into practice one day as well as helping them develop characteristics of strong community members. In the real world, we communicate and collaborate with all types of learners. All learners can bring something different to the table and we want our students to be ready for that world. After all, the classroom is a microcosm of the world.

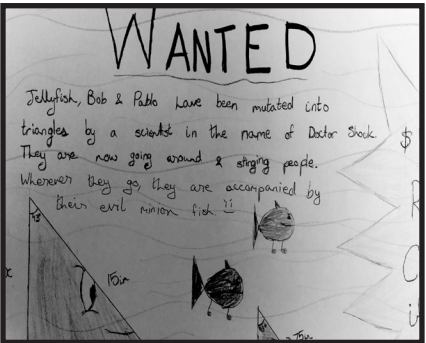
A few of our team members had the opportunity to visit various schools around the country that are implementing innovative teaching practices. Among those schools, one common theme we saw was the idea around incorporating all learners. These schools built communities celebrating each individual's learning differences. This inspired us to create heterogeneous groupings more consistently throughout the year. Each year, our team's population is comprised of a diverse group of learners, especially when it comes to those with special

needs. As a result, flexible programming provides an individualized education for everyone.

Our team has worked to create an inclusive environment in our various interdisciplinary team projects throughout the year. Creating learning experiences that combine subjects allows students to have more time with a topic. The learning process requires time and repeated exposure to understand the content. In a traditional schedule, students are asked to shift their brains in 40-minute increments from one subject to another, compartmentalizing their learning. For instance, when writing in content specific classes, students don't think to use skills they have practiced in English. To encourage generalization of learning experiences, we dedicated the final period of the day to collaboration on group work. Having two, sometimes three blocks a day to work with one broad topic gives all students the time to truly engage in their learning in a way that incorporates a broad array of skills. The team English Language Arts teacher, Sue Andrews, stated: "Creating interdisciplinary projects gives our students the ability to better generalize information across content areas." Through one topic students are not only learning the required curriculum standards and how they connect, they engage in practicing their 21st-century skills. They are able

to see the connections in their learning and how these skills transfer into real world problem solving.

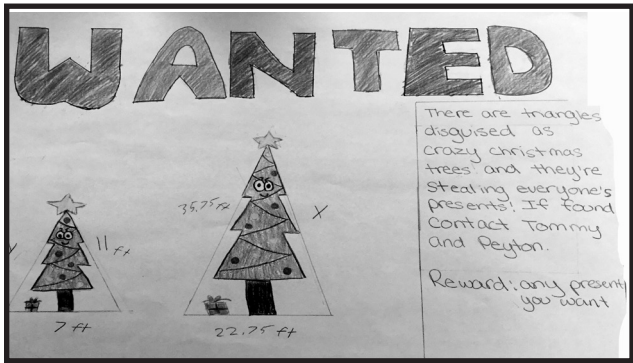
This trimester we are partnering with the Mass Audubon Society at Broad Meadow



Brook to create field guide materials for their annual fundraising event called the "Bird-a-Thon", which takes place on May 12-13. The event encourages people to get out in their communities to identify and count local birds. Each student will engage in the design thinking process to analyze existing field guides, assess the needs of the participants of the Bird-a-Thon, brainstorm, prototype, and ultimately create their own materials for the event. Design thinking is an approach to problem-solving that mimics the process that engineers engage in while coming up with innovative solutions to complex challenges. This project allows students to become experts on ecology concepts, research skills, and a particular bird. In addition to mastering content in both Science and English Language Arts, this type of project makes learning real and purposeful for students.

Through collaborative planning, we have combined our special education and general education classrooms at various points throughout the year. Through these practices this year, we have seen a more inclusive team environment. Students are able to learn from each other, as well as be positive models for others both academically and socially. They are learning to work in different environments with a variety of people, which has taught them more skills in being adaptive.

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Elementary celebration of reading

WENDY BELL  
AMY CLOUTER  
CHRIS GIRARDI  
LISA MCCUBREY  
BRYAN MABIE  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

March is a long and sometimes dreary month. Yet while conditions may be iffy outside, you can always count on cozying up with a good book. At the Elementary level, Dr. Seuss' birthday kicks off an annual celebration of literacy. This year the fun continued well past March 2nd. Read on to learn more about how our youngest learners celebrated their love of books.

Beal:  
One of the most rewarding parts of being a Kindergarten teacher is teaching students how to read. Students enter Kindergarten with a variety of literacy skills, and it is the teacher's job to identify and build upon these skills in a programmatic way to teach children how to read. Although

staff at Beal are highly skilled and work hard each day to grow children's love of reading, we acknowledge the critical responsibility of parents and families to instill the love of reading and its importance in all aspects of learning. Thus, Kindergarten teachers across the district work hard to build relationships with families that include supporting a home and school partnership to instill a strong literacy foundation and love for reading.

This year, seven teachers from Beal Early Childhood Center (Melissa Barrett, Sara Biadasz, Heather Downs, Becky Dumphy, Katie Knott, Beth McNerny, and Michelle Neddo) are crafting a professional development experience that focuses on building these literacy partnerships with their families. They are working to:  
1. Develop a year-long program that surveys student and parent perspectives on reading at home.  
2. Develop programs and monthly challenges to bring excitement to reading.  
3. Create social media networks

such as #BealReads20 to share and communicate their love for reading  
4. Hold literacy nights (one in January and one coming up in May) to bring the community together to model reading, share strategies, and allow our student to take home books to build their personal libraries, all of which are being collected through donation by the teachers. This group has also built a relationship Heifer International's Read to Feed program and with Shrewsbury Public Library, where they are taking behind-the-scene tours of the library and are collaborating on a summer challenge called '100 books of summer', where students will be challenged to read 100 books and can visit the library to earn a prize when they do so.

Parent education and communication has been a large part of the work this group has done this year. Surveys found that many parents struggle to find the time or are unclear how to read

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# Celebrations of Learning at Sherwood Middle School

JANE LIZOTTE  
PRINCIPAL  
SHERWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL

One of our school and district goals includes *re-designing and implementing one or more existing learning experiences for students that includes creating multiple pathways to demonstrate learning, providing opportunities for students to share their thinking and collaborate with others, and sharing work with an audience beyond the teacher and classroom*. During the course of the school year, several teams at Sherwood Middle School (SMS) have actively engaged in this important work. Below are some examples of learning opportunities that have been shared with students, faculty, families, and community members during “Display Days” at Sherwood Middle School.

**“Food For Thought”**  
6 Purple

(Paula Carney, Jonathan Butler, Paige Quinn)

After reading *Pharaoh’s Daughter* (a book about a girl who faces challenges trying to figure out her cultural identity), students began to learn more about their own personal culture identity through interviews and research of their heritage and ethnicity. Following the interviews, students wrote cultural biographies. Parents were invited into the classroom to hear what students had learned about their heritage, and ways in which these characteristics and knowledge define a culture.

Students presented their biographies, shared topics they explored, including some questions they continued to wonder about, and engaged in discussions about how some of their cultures have transformed into American culture. The second part of the project included finding a recipe at home that represented their culture. The students are creating a digital cookbook with these recipes to share with families at Sherwood.

**Wonder: Perspective Investigation**

5 Green (Hannah Hopkins) and 5 Yellow (Alicia Tinsley) ELA Classes

In the Fall, fifth grade students read the book *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio. This book is written from the perspective of many different characters. While reading the book, we discussed perspective and how it affects the way the story is told. After reading *Wonder*, we talked about how perspective is

connected to our own lives: we have different perspectives from everyone around us, including parents, friends, and teachers! We wanted students to take their knowledge of perspective in literature and apply it to their own lives so that they could better understand differences in perspective and how it can affect our own thoughts and relationships.

Students each chose someone in their life they wanted to interview in order to learn their perspective on an issue or topic. Together, students developed interview questions; then interviewed their chosen person. After this interview, they thought about what they learned: *How did their perspective change after hearing someone else’s perspective? Why is it important to learn others’ perspective?* Students then turned this analysis into an interview.

The final piece of the project was a visual representation of perspective. Each student created a papier-mâché mask and painted a symbolic representation of the two different perspectives: their own perspective, and that of the person they interviewed. Students were very creative in using images and color to portray different thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

The project culminated in a sharing of learning with families, classmates, and the greater Sherwood community. Students explained their masks, what they learned in the process of doing this project, and why it’s important to learn and understand the perspectives of those around us. We had many adults and students come in to see the amazing work that our students on 5 Green and 5 Yellow did!

**Product Development, Marketing, and Sales at Sherwood Middle School**

Students in 6th grade mathematics classrooms were abuzz this year, as students worked diligently to create business and marketing proposals for a panel of Flatbread Company executives and SMS Cafeteria managers and personnel. Students were charged with the challenge of creating an award winning recipe that could be created and offered for sale. Under the leadership of mathematics teacher, Anne Egan, 6 Gold students partnered with Rail Trail Flatbread Company in Hudson, MA. Students worked together in small groups to research trends and competition. They relied on information they had gathered from their Social Studies Farming Project to include arguments for including non-GMO and grass fed ingredients, as they justified the added cost required and social responsibility. Students

analyzed prices and quality of ingredients to determine profitability, using their knowledge of proportional reasoning (ratios, rates, percentage), in an effort to create and present a business proposal and a commercial advertisement that would sell a panel of judges from the industry to create and offer their flatbread recipe in their restaurant. On presentation day, students dressed for success, armed with their iPad and spreadsheets, excited to present their pitch! They confidently stood together and shared the responsibility of explaining their presentation. The panel of judges offered feedback in the form of praise and critical feedback, as they probed the students’ understanding of the work they had done. Three winners were chosen by the judges. One recipe was chosen to be offered for sale and highlighted on the menu at the restaurant. Students worked with the head chef as he made any modifications that may have been necessary. The Mexican Delight Flatbread is now a top seller at Rail Trail Flatbread Company.

The following is an excerpt from Rail Trail’s Facebook page: “We recently went to Sherwood Middle School to judge a business competition amongst the students! Today some of those students who won came in to try the flatbread which is on special now :) We believe it is so important to teach the language of business and entrepreneurial skills to the youth! Thank you for letting us be a part of that!”

One student, Alexa, commented, “I really enjoyed how this project was a real world experience. It was cool being able to see when some of the skills we use and learn in math are helpful to us in life. For this project, we were asked to create a flatbread and buy the ingredients from Peapod through Stop and Shop. Then we had to find the cost of the ingredients to make one pizza. We had to create a presentation to present to Rail Trail Flatbread Company and explain how we got the costs of one pizza. We also had to include our sale price of the pizza and how much money or profit we would make. In addition we created a commercial to “sell” our flatbread to the judges. It is so amazing to know that the flatbread I helped design is now on the menu. “

Chase, another winning student, shared, “Eating the flatbread was very enjoyable, since I was one of the people who came up with it, even with some minor tweaks to the recipe, I really enjoyed it, and so did everyone else. Everyone was buying it so it could be a menu option maybe in the future!” Shalom, the final team member and winner of the

**Fiscal**

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like other industries, education services cannot be outsourced or eliminated. Our district educates close to 6,200 students every day. In fact, Shrewsbury preschool through grade 12 enrollment increased by 64% from 1995 to 2016, an increase of 2,427 students. Increased student population, mandates and often unpredictable special education needs all contribute to the annual volatility in our budget.

Our educators are a key factor in the exceptional results our district reports each year. Roughly 80% of the School Department budget is made up of personnel costs. The average salary increase for our teaching staff was 4% over a 5-year period. Shrewsbury teachers have a 13-step salary track. Currently, roughly 50% of our teaching staff is at top step and only receive an annual cost of living increase. We have received criticism that teaching salaries are the reason the School Department has a structural funding issue each year. Our hiring process includes assessing the current labor market to ensure we are competitive and able to attract strong candidates; and concrete data refutes the argument that Shrewsbury’s teachers’ salaries are the cause of the ongoing structural funding issue. Contained in the Shrewsbury’s 2016 Per Pupil Expenditure (PPE) Report under the sub-group “Teachers,” the PPE State Average is \$ 5,831.96 and SPS is \$ 5,087.39, which is a difference of \$ 744.57. SPS ranks 243 out of 314 districts, with #1 being the highest PPE in the state. From a percentage standpoint, SPS is at 23%, where 100% is the highest per pupil expenditure on teacher salaries and 1% is the bottom. Our community expects strong public schools and our teachers, who are at the forefront of education services, deserve to be compensated fairly for their work.

**“Our educators are a key factor in the exceptional results our district reports each year.”**

Another area of volatility is special education costs. Between 2008 and 2016, (SPED) budget volatility ranged from -4% to +20% with an average annual increase of 7%. Special education has multiple sources of revenue, but aid from the federal government is flat; state aid from the “Circuit Breaker” special education reimbursement program provides a buffer, but it does not protect from inflation. Again, the volatility and inflation is born by our town. Special education is a high inflation service. Regulations and state control of out-of-district tuition rates leave little to no control by the local school district.

The second part of the fiscal projection involved a five-year fiscal projection for FY2018 – FY2022. This high level five-year projection assumed sustaining the existing education program, meets mandates in a cost effective manner, incorporates terms of collective bargaining agreements, and projects costs based on the actual FY2017 run rate and best guess estimates. The outcome of this exercise is that SPS will face a widening structural deficit over the next five years. The projected cumulative deficit for the 5-year period is \$18.4 million. With personnel costs comprising 80% of the school department



Fiscal

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budget, significant headcount reductions would need to occur to close the structural deficit. If the structural deficit was closed solely through headcount reductions, by FY 2022 there would have to be a cumulative reduction of 112 full time equivalent positions. A personnel reduction of this magnitude would result in much larger class sizes and a severely compromised education program.

The fiscal projection project is not a budget request, but rather a tool to facilitate discussion regarding the ongoing structural funding issue faced by our community. Without additional revenue, Shrewsbury will continue to face significant deficits over the next five years. We should not expect state and federal revenues to increase to a point that would close the structural deficit. It is important that our community understands that without additional resources, the School Department cannot provide the high quality public education that the Shrewsbury community expects.

The entire fiscal projection work done by Dr. Magee and Mr. Samia can be viewed on the School Committee page on the town website.

**“What will our community do to solve the structural funding dilemma that jeopardizes the future quality of public education in Shrewsbury?”**

A frequently asked question is, “Didn’t the successful Proposition 2.5 override in 2014 solve the school funding problem?” Mr. Samia’s response to that question is, “While the successful 2014 override helped provide much needed resources to our schools, it did not solve the town’s structural deficit. Simply stated, the town does not have enough revenue to fund the modest cost increases necessary to carry our existing school program forward.” Unfortunately, in Fiscal Year 2018, the School Department is looking at cuts that will reduce programming, staff and opportunity to our students. Data, at the state and local level, continues to support that Shrewsbury is a well managed school district; however, volatility and inflation are predictable factors that destabilize future budgets. The ability to provide the same level of education services continues to remain challenging in light of limited funding and increased demands.

On January 25, 2017, Dr. Sawyer asked the essential question, “What will our community do to solve the structural funding dilemma that jeopardizes the future quality of public education in Shrewsbury?” The answer to this question is not one for just the School Committee or the School Department to answer. The solutions need to be generated by the elected and appointed boards in our town, as well as the community. We all need to decide how the Town of Shrewsbury will prioritize educational services in light of the ongoing structural funding dilemma.

SHS Student Council makes a difference

MEHER GANDHI  
SHS CLASS OF 2019

At the end of each school year each class elects five representatives to be a part of Student Council (StuCo). These 20 elected members of Shrewsbury High School (SHS) meet every Thursday of the school year for two hours. Within StuCo, a smaller executive board comprised of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian meet for an extra hour to make more in-depth decisions. Members of the executive board (Liz Ray, Subin Jeong, Laura Townsend, Brian Chen, and Meher Gandhi, respectively) also head different committees made up of other StuCo members, leading to more efficient meetings. “There isn’t a day where I don’t think about Student Council,” says President Liz Ray, who has taken on a very large amount of responsibility. Every week, Liz will run through an hour-long agenda during a general meeting, after which, the council will spend time writing cards or making posters for teachers and staff at SHS. Finally, the meeting will end with students splitting up into their five committees.

StuCo is able to put together many events throughout the year, ranging from trivia questions on the morning announcements, to two spirit weeks filled with different themes, to a free Movie Night open to students and the community. Many of these events contribute to the Class Cup Competition, a competition between each class at SHS. Each grade must do well at spirit rallies, attend musicals and plays held at SHS, create a successful lip dub, and have impeccable attendance as a part of the Class Cup. The grade who wins receives a large trophy at the spring

spirit rally. Over the past few years, this competition has led to a significant amount of participation, as students are determined to beat other grades. It has also led students to spend more time with their classmates and get involved in many activities. The Class Cup Competition upholds the overall message that Student Council would like to deliver to students: “Join the Build.” After looking at feedback from students and making observations, the phrase “Join the Build” became the theme for the 2015-2016 school year in an effort to increase unity between the students and SHS. The message was so important to StuCo that it is being carried out through the 2016-2017 school year as well.

StuCo has been able to attend the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils conference in Hyannis for the past four years. In both 2016 and 2017, StuCo has been able to receive the Silver Council of Excellence Award for work done throughout the year. A large part of this success has been the Student Council advisor, Becky Moisan. Mrs. Moisan, a math teacher at Shrewsbury High School, has been an advisor for the past four years, dramatically changing the dynamic of meetings and events. “Meetings would be 10-15 minutes long. Sometimes, we would be able to catch the bus after our meetings,” said former Student Council President, Liam Monahan, referring to StuCo meetings his freshman year, “Mrs. Moisan came and changed Student Council completely.” Mrs. Moisan’s hard work and dedication to StuCo led the council to give her the well-deserved nomination for the Advisor of the Year Award. She has been able to not only

fulfill her duties as a math teacher, but also spend hours of her time each week doing Student Council-related tasks while maintaining a smile across her face and a funny, sarcastic personality at all times.

Other award winners within Student Council include the Unsung Hero Award, which is given to a student that demonstrates enthusiasm and leadership, and works very hard with little recognition. The executive board nominated sophomore Caroline Birney to receive this award for the gargantuan amount of time she spends organizing the Kids’ Night Out fundraisers, while always having an inspiringly positive attitude that makes everyone’s day. The Commonwealth Award winners were nominated due to their outstanding leadership shown in in their council. The winners (nominated by the council) were seniors Liz Ray and Subin Jeong, and sophomore Meher Gandhi.

As the school year comes to an end, Student Council is already beginning to plan out the 2017-2018 school year, as they have been chosen to host the annual Fall Central District of Massachusetts Association of Student Councils Conference and take in hundreds of student council members from around the state for hours of leadership training. Student Council looks forward to another year of building a community at SHS, and would like to thank the teachers and students at Shrewsbury High School for their unwavering support.



Pictured above is Shrewsbury High School gymnast Julia Schaefer, who is the individual state gymnastics champion in all-around, floor exercise, and uneven bars.



contest, stated, “I feel that it was hard picking and choosing different ingredients that have to correspond well together and taste. I cannot believe the reaction we got, at first we thought this would be one little project, but now it blew up into this wonderful opportunity. We thought that we were only presenting in front of a panel of judges to get critical feedback on profit and how to run a business. Now we are in this wonderful newspaper. We have checked the Rail Trail Flatbread Co. website and they had nothing like the Mexican Delight™ they had lots of Hawaiian flatbreads and things along those lines. We wanted to be original... We have a Google Slides™ presentation and it shows the ingredients, the pricing, and why you should buy the flatbread.”

**Poetry Project Showcase  
(The 6 Red Team: Brett Corey, Ginger Rekemeyer, and Caitlin Daley)**

The idea of this showcase started off small and slowly

progressed into a larger project. The base concept of it came from an idea that was displayed on the Project Based Learning cards obtained from High Tech High, a school in California that was visited by the Innovation Team. The premise of the project displayed on the card was intriguing. Students were invited to study a specific poet, gain knowledge of his or her style, and mimic that poet’s style by writing a poem using a similar style and themes as those used by the poet. Once the students had performed this task, they were asked to provide evidence of their mimicry by writing a paragraph, identifying the style and or theme that they mimicked and how they mimicked it. They were also asked to create a small piece of art representing the poems they created.

The students accomplished a great deal of work during our poetry unit. As a group, we decided it would be best to include some of the other pieces created for display, so parents and family members could gain

with the Kindergarten student. The teachers in this group are sharing resources with their families around topics such as ‘bookmarking’ and ‘retelling’, and helping families with developing routines about reading every night. The relationships that are being developed between home and school are showing great results as testimonials state that students who weren’t reading at home are reading every night, students are bringing in books to school that they are passionate about sharing with their classmates, and students are already bringing in books to donate to the book swap in May.

This partnership will culminate their work with the grand reveal of a Beal Book House lending library this spring. Students will work together to draw architectural designs of an outdoor lending library, and the teachers will work with Home Depot and Beal volunteers to build the Beal Book House. This will be placed in the new Beal garden, which will be accessible to all community members. To learn more or follow the ongoing work of this group, please join them on:  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/BealReads20/](http://www.facebook.com/BealReads20/)  
Twitter: @bealreads20  
Instagram: bealreads20

Floral:  
Each year, students at Floral Street School celebrate National Read Across America Day, a day that marks the birthday of one of the most well-known children’s authors spanning generations of readers- Dr. Seuss! On March 3rd, Floral Street School hosted a Community Reading Day where classes welcomed guest

readers from the local community, including firefighters, town officials, and retired Floral teachers. Classes also gathered together at School Meetings to recommend their favorite books to each other, re-enact scenes from a favorite book, and sing songs about the joy of reading.

This year, several Floral classes decided it would be important to spread the joy of reading outside of the school walls. Second grade students in Mrs. Richard’s and Mr. Avery’s classes enlisted the help of all Floral first and second grade students to design bookmarks featuring a favorite book that they would recommend to other readers. These carefully-crafted bookmarks were then delivered to the Shrewsbury Public Library, where they continue to be handed out to children who visit the library to check out books.

Floral students in third and fourth grade classes focused on spreading their message about the joy of reading to a different audience – grocery shoppers! Students in Mrs. Bisceglia’s and Mrs. Peterson’s third grade classes reached out to managers at the Price Chopper and Stop and Shop with their idea to decorate paper shopping bags with messages about the importance of reading. Every third and fourth grade class was invited to participate in this project, which is currently underway. Once the bags are decorated, they will be returned to the local grocery stores and provided to customers when they purchase their groceries. Keep an eye out the next time you shop; your groceries just may be loaded into a bag made especially for you by a Floral student hoping to inspire you to pick up a book and read!

District-Wide Author Visit:  
On March 8th and 9th, students

# Learning

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a more extensive understanding of the many steps involved in this learning process. The poetry displays included several other small projects completed by the students, in addition to an interactive keynote that was displayed on their iPads explaining information regarding their work. Students wrote poems explaining the “best part of them” inspired by an activity that a colleague created. They also wrote poems focused on perseverance, inspired by the New England Patriots’ improbable comeback against the Falcons in the Super Bowl-all of which were displayed on the poetry board for parents and relatives to see during the display day.

Parent feedback regarding the project and invitation into the classroom was very positive. They enjoyed seeing the artistic side of their children, something that is not always visible at home. They appreciated the opportunity to be able to come into the classroom and connect with the teachers. Student feedback was also positive, as students felt

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# Reading

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at Coolidge, Floral St., Paton, and Spring St. schools welcomed New York Times award-winning author Gordon Korman to Shrewsbury. Mr. Korman has written over eighty books for children and adolescents, including the *Swindle* series, the *Everest, Island*, and *Masterminds* trilogies, and has authored books in the 39 Clues series. In fact, Gordon’s first book, *This Can’t be Happening at McDonald Hall*, was published when he was just thirteen years old. Mr. Korman inspired our students to find their passion and to write about what they love. He spoke of his love for old movies and connected several of his books to old movies that he enjoyed. As part of his presentation, Gordon Korman read aloud from one of his newest books, *Slacker*, whose main character was inspired by Korman’s own teenage son. As he read aloud an excerpt from the book, students were hanging onto every word. After the presentation, there were many students wanting to get their hands on the book in their classrooms or the library to read it. Bringing in a famous author sparked interest and built much excitement around reading in all of the elementary schools.

*The more you read, the more you know  
The more you know, the smarter you grow  
The smarter you grow, the stronger your voice  
When speaking your mind or making a choice.  
~American Reading Association*

Although the weather is warming, taking time to read remains one of the best ways to support your child. We hope we’ve inspired you to explore new resources!

# Team

CONTINUED from page 2

Our attempts at inclusion are not limited to project-based learning. We strive to find opportunities within the curriculum throughout the year to combine our special education and general education classrooms. We have found that teaching practices and strategies we use for specific groups of students are beneficial for all students.

Recently, we finished a whole class read of *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer. The unit was designed using student led discussion and project work, which allowed for individualized access points for all students. Small group discussions increased the understanding of the content, while students individually wrote journal entries from the perspective of the main character. Additionally, they created research-based projects to broaden their knowledge of the Malawian Culture, and the life of the main character. Shawn Thomas, the geography teacher on the team, shared that this style of learning has helped him really embrace student choice. When allowing students more choice and opportunities for exploration, we are able to provide a level of challenge for all learners as well as opportunities to expand beyond the requirements for our high-achievers.

In creating project-based units within our math curriculum, we have seen similar results. Combining classes provides more opportunities for the students to learn from each other while working together. Kate Tinsley, the team Math teacher noted: “Through these projects, we are able to provide all of our students with meaningful learning experiences at individualized access points.” Along with the rest of the 7th grade teams, this past trimester, students created blueprints for a local storefront property that was being sold. They were to create a design that incorporated all the furnishings and functional pieces required for their business. Students researched options and measurements of the items they would need within their building design and created accurate drafts of their potential business plans. The final step of the project was to scale their draft to fit the required blueprint measurements. Students utilized the math unit skills in proportional reasoning to find their accurate measurements. This was a multi-step process that required significant amounts of collaboration and critical thinking. Practicing their 21st-century skills, the students were able to utilize the strengths of their teammates, as well as learn from one another, in building on their own skills. We’re looking forward to our next project within the math curriculum. Students will use the design thinking process to prototype a robot that will be beneficial to an Oak Community Member in their day to day life. Through this project, students will master skills in analyzing two- and three-dimensional figures, more specifically the concepts of volume and surface area. This process will provide an opportunity for student growth in being critical thinkers and problem solvers. Just as important, they will practice their empathizing skills with a building community member.

As a team, we are working to provide our students with engaging and authentic learning experiences. We find students are more engaged in their learning when they understand that there is a purpose to their work. As Elin Dolen, the team science teacher, put it: “Our goal is to get every student to the top of their mountain.”



Superintendent's Corner

CONTINUED from page 2

strong reasoning.

Our policy rightfully indicates that this education must take place in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice. I think that this not only speaks to our schools' responsibility to be appropriately neutral regarding political matters, but also to ensure that our articulated core values are taught and honored, especially when it comes to issues such as treating others with respect. It is important to note that, regardless of what anyone who represents any particular political party or viewpoint might say or do, our expectation is that members of our school communities will act in accordance with the time-honored values of treating others with respect, consideration, honesty, and integrity.

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to visit a sixth grade student exhibition of learning at Sherwood Middle School, where students presented projects on "rules to live by." After completing research on the "rules" that a famous leader of their choice lived by, these students then created their own. Many focused on hard work and perseverance in pursuit of one's goals, but I was struck by how many also cited the importance of acting with kindness, respect, and courtesy.

Our students need this kind of education more than ever. Unfortunately, they are growing up in a world where too many, especially adults who should know better, don't follow the rules of common decency and respect, and instead use the availability of social media as a means to post insults and/or untruths that few would ever utter to someone in person. Almost worse is when others then validate this attention seeking with judgmental comments, without having any knowledge of the truth. Maligning others, with no sense of fairness or respect, has become all too common. My disgust with this behavior, however, is tempered by the recognition that people who act this way are a minority, and countered by the hope I gain from students and educators who are demonstrating the opposite. As one sixth grade student, Gabriela Cardoso, wrote for her project:

*I want to remind myself that the way I treat others is a reflection of who I am. The way I act around my family and friends shapes my character, and my attitude and actions ultimately form my reputation. Therefore, I try to be kind to each and every person I meet, so I can positively impact their day.*

I think you'll agree that that's wise advice from a sixth grader. It reminds me why it is so important that our schools and community work together not only to help our children to become good students, but also to become good people.

*Note: This column represents a combination of some of my recent writing and public comments on this topic.*

2017-2018 bus registration

STEVE ROCCO  
TRANSPORTATION, SAFETY, AND  
SECURITY COORDINATOR  
SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Please note that 2017-2018 Shrewsbury Public School bus registration began on April 3rd, and will continue through June 30, 2017.

All Shrewsbury Public Schools, Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School, St. John's High School, St. Mary's, Montessori School, and Al-Hamra students who wish to use bus transportation are REQUIRED to be reg-

istered each year, regardless of whether fees apply. (This includes families who have reached the family cap.)

Students that attend private schools in Shrewsbury or Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School can register online. The private school online registration can be found on the Shrewsbury Public School Website under the Transportation Department section. The online application can be found under "Private & Vocational School Transportation Registration".

Students that attend Shrewsbury Public Schools can register using their Powerschool Parent Portal account

**Important Notice:** Powerschool/Bus Registration will be closed for all Shrewsbury Public Schools, Private Schools, and Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School Students during the interim July 1-August 8, 2017. Families will not be able to register for the bus during this timeframe. If registration is not completed by June 30, 2017, a \$50.00 late fee per student (\$150.00 family cap for the late fees) will apply.

Beal project moving to feasibility study phase

PATRICK C. COLLINS  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR  
FINANCE AND OPERATIONS  
BEAL EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER  
BUILDING COMMITTEE MEMBER

Our community has demonstrated good stewardship of its capital assets and it is now time to address the 1922 Beal School and our long-term space needs at the elementary level. In the spring of 2015 the Board of Selectmen and School Committee made application to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to address the Beal facility deficiencies and our kindergarten through grade four space shortage. The Beal Project was one of 26 accepted into the MSBA pipeline in January 2016 amongst an applicant pool of 97 projects statewide.

Since that time, the Beal Early Childhood Center Project has successfully advanced from **Phase 1: Eligibility Phase into Phase 2: Forming the Project Team**. Continued movement through the building pipeline with the MSBA came as a result of completing many tasks

but most importantly with the \$1.2M appropriation vote at the December 5, 2016 Special Town Meeting. This funding will be used to complete the Feasibility Study and Schematic Design Phases.

On February 15, 2017 the MSBA Board of Directors voted to enter into a Feasibility Study Agreement that provides for 50.16% state reimbursement (approximately \$600,000) of the \$1.2M cost of the Feasibility Study and Schematic Design Phases.

The Beal Building Committee is now in the process of hiring an Owner's Project Management (OPM) firm and expect that process to be completed in the May/June 2017 time period. Once an OPM is on board, the Building Committee will then hire an architectural firm and this should be completed by Fall 2017 which will allow the Feasibility Study to begin in earnest.

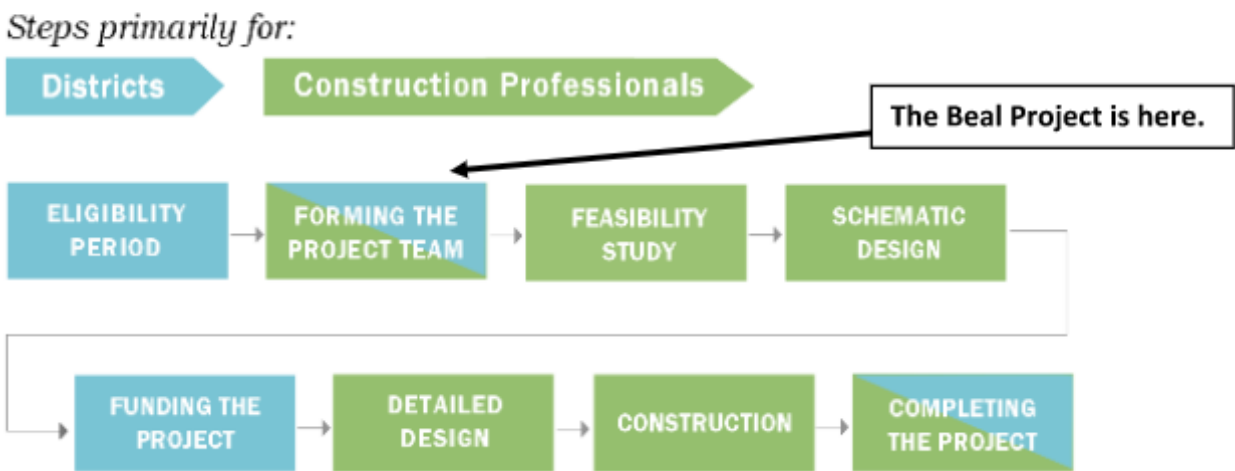
The OPM and architect are hired using competitive procurement processes required by state law. The MSBA must

also approve the Building Committee's recommendation for an OPM and architect as part of the overall process.

Building or renovating a school building with MSBA financial support is a multi-year and highly-regulated process. But we are confident that the process will explore multiple options weighing educational goals with cost-benefit analysis that will result in a positive long-term space solution for our kindergarten through grade four student population.

More information on the project can be found at the Beal Building Committee website at: <https://shrewsburyma.gov/716/Beal-Early-Childhood-Center-Building-Com>

MSBA Building Process





# Ten years running for Road Scholars race

KATHLEEN KEOHANE  
MICHELLE BISCOTTI  
COORDINATORS OF DEVELOPMENT  
AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

We could not have asked for a more beautiful day or a better turnout for our 10th annual Road Scholars Race! It was a sunny day, well into the 60s, and for the almost 500 runners, strollers and walkers who came out to run the 5k or 1 mile, it was a wonderful way to spend time with family and friends. Together we raised over \$9000 for the Shrewsbury Public Schools Colonial Fund.

Over the past 10 years, the Road Scholars Race has had more than 3,000 runners raise over \$70,000 for The Colonial Fund to support innovative projects in Shrewsbury schools that would not be funded through any other means.

We rely solely on volunteers to manage the race and we could not have had a successful event without the help of the following people: Thank you to Lynn Sun, Jena and Haley Adams, Sharma Addepalli, Alison and Jake Kiefer, Dr. Anjum Muneeb and her family, Beth, Emma and Julia Casavant, the students from Sherwood’s Student Voice and our road guides (Jane Lizotte, Lisa McCubrey, Pat and Andrea Collins, Karen Gutekanst, Bryan Mabie, Missy Hollenback, Sarah Matthews, Preston, Lena and Brett Karp, Amy Clouter, Amy Russell, Lisa Pashou, and Erin Ryan). Thank you also to our wonderful Shrewsbury Police Department for helping with traffic on Oak St. and Maple Ave during the race and to MECTA (Massachusetts Emergency Care Training Academy) who

provided first aid services. A special thank you to Dana Canzano who manages our website and online registration and takes photos at the race.

We would like to recognize our local sponsors and ask that you help us to thank these generous businesses by visiting or contacting them in the near future: Dunkin Donuts, Avidia Bank, Price Chopper, National Facility Service, State Representative Hannah Kane, All Access Physical Therapy (who also announced the start of the race), Flaherty Physical Therapy, Committee to Elect Beth Casavant, Committee to Elect Missy Hollenback, Lakeway

Business District Association (who helped us purchase our new race banner for Maple Ave), Greendale Physical Therapy and “Say Cheese” Gourmet Grilled Cheese.

We could not have provided snacks and drinks without the generosity of our in-kind sponsors as well: Polar Beverages who provided bottled water; Raw Revolution who provided organic energy bars; Marathon Sports who provided our bibs, gift certificates for winners, the inflatable Finish Line and a very convenient location for picking up the bibs, as well as a 20% discount for runners; and Wegmans who provided bananas, oranges and granola bars.

We are grateful to all of you who participated in our race! For pictures and links to finishing times, please visit [www.shrewsburyroadscholars.org](http://www.shrewsburyroadscholars.org). Also, be sure to like our Shrewsbury Road Scholars 5k/Fun Run Facebook page and check in with the Colonial Fund website (<http://schools.shrewsbury.ma.gov/future/>) to see how we will be spending the funds you have helped us raise.

If you are interested in sponsoring our race next year, please contact Race Directors Michelle Biscotti and Kathleen Keohane at [development@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:development@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us). We will be looking for mile marker sponsors, a water table sponsor and a sound sponsor, in addition to race and table sponsors. Sponsorships start as low as \$100!

## Learning

CONTINUED from page 5

a sense of pride in their work, because it was accomplished entirely by them. Students completed this display in class with minimal home involvement. Overall, the experience was extremely worthwhile for students, parents, and teachers alike!

**5 Orange “Sail America”  
Travel Expo**  
(Ms. Maureen Martin, Ms. Laura Ryan  
and Ms. Sue Hirsh)

**Project Description:**  
Students worked in pairs to demonstrate their understanding of the economy, government, religion and geography/climate of a colony. Pairs then prepared presentations taking on the role of travel agents trying to sell trips to their assigned colony in the New World. The students created infographics, travel commercials, and other visual models, that represented the positive qualities and characteristics of their assigned colony. Students also designed discounts and incentives to attract “clients” to their travel booth.

**How did students benefit from this approach?**  
Students became the “experts” for their colony. They were able to quickly recall factual information and share that information in a professional manner with teachers, parents and peers. Students were given the opportunity to be creative, dramatic, independent thinkers.

**Farming Project**  
**6 Gold & 6 Blue**  
Ms. Cristy, Ms. Macchi, Ms. Daley,  
Ms. Easson

“How does farming affect the lives of people, both past and present?” is the question that students on 6 Blue and 6 Gold were asked to answer in connection with their social studies unit on early man. The question focused on early man’s pivotal shift away from a hunting-gathering lifestyle to a more settled agricultural lifestyle.

To introduce the project, farmers from the Community Harvest Program in Grafton came into Sherwood to explain their job as farmers, discuss some of the tools and problems farmers face today, and share their mission of volunteers growing food for the hungry. 6 Blue and 6 Gold teams also plan to visit the farm in the spring to acquire a first-hand farming experience and learn more about their community program.

Though the content connected to the social studies curriculum, students honed their ELA reading and research skills as they navigated through a text set of different resources to guide their research, gather facts and answer the essential question. Text sets included websites, videos, nonfiction articles and their social studies textbook. In addition to the essential question, students were also asked to think critically about the food they eat each day and generate their own original personal question about food, then research and answer their question. As it turns out, many students were curious about GMO’s and food safety.

To pull it all together, students were tasked with creating an original project of their choice to demonstrate their understanding of the essential question. A plethora of ideas was generated which included original games, recipes, dioramas, newspapers, comic strips, chatterpixs, blogs, keynote presentations, posters, brochures, and live television broadcasts.


In the final phase of this project, students practiced their public speaking skills, collaborated with each other to prepare their presentation, and then eagerly shared their new knowledge and original masterpieces with parents and administrators in a “Celebration of Learning Day”.

Student Projects link: <http://bit.ly/sherwoodprojects>

Link to Display Day Photos: <http://bit.ly/sherwooddayphotos>








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Statement of Non-discrimination

Shrewsbury Public Schools is required by the Massachusetts Department of Education to publish an annual statement of non-discrimination. This notice serves to meet that requirement. The Massachusetts Equal Educational Opportunity statute, General Laws Chapter 76, § 5, ensures that all students have the right to equal educational opportunities in the public schools. The Shrewsbury Public School District is committed to ensuring equal educational opportunities for all students, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation or disability. The Shrewsbury Public Schools are in compliance with state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment. The following laws apply: Massachusetts General Law Chapter 76, § 5, which states, "No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in the admission to a public school or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and course of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation." Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 is a Federal statute which states, in part, "No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program receiving federal assistance." This requirement not to discriminate in educational programs and activities also extends to employment. Ms. Barb Malone, is the Title IX Coordinator, Director of Human Resources at (508) 841-8400. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, provides that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in be denied the benefits of or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Title VI provided for equal access and prohibits discrimination in the assignment of students to classes. It also prohibits discrimination in ability grouping or tracking students. The Shrewsbury School Committee's Policies #316 and #645 deal directly with the issues of harassment. Copies of these policies are available in the Principal's Office at each school or through the Superintendent's Office, located at 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545. Further information may be obtained by contacting Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources @ 508 841-8400. The following grievance procedure, which was approved by the Shrewsbury School Committee, is to be used for all issues relating to harassment or discrimination involving student and/or staff: 1. The Shrewsbury Public Schools does not and will not knowingly discriminate against any student or employee on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. All reports of harassment or discrimination will be taken seriously and investigated in a timely fashion. Reports will be held in the utmost confidence. Any individual who believes he/she has been the subject of harassment or discrimination should immediately report the incident, either verbally or in writing to an administrator, adjustment counselor, guidance counselor, or teacher. The principal must be notified in all cases of harassment or discrimination. All cases of harassment involving a staff member will be reported to the Director of Human Resources. An administrator will first meet with the parties involved in an attempt to resolve the issue informally. If the complainant is unable to meet with the alleged harasser, the administrator, teacher, or counselor may assist the complainant in drafting a letter clearly describing the incident (behavior, where and when it occurred), how the complainant felt, and a request that the behavior stop immediately. Any letter should be signed by the complainant, sent to the alleged harasser and is kept on file by the school administrator. The alleged harasser may be encouraged to apologize, personally or by letter or to write a letter refuting the allegations. In cases of alleged harassment requiring formal investigations, the following shall be implemented. The complainant shall have the support of a staff

member of his/her choice and the alleged harasser will also have the opportunity to select representation (union representative, attorney, teacher, etc.). An administrator from the appropriate level will complete an investigation promptly and make a decision regarding the allegations. In serious cases, where alleged harassment does not stop following a warning, appropriate disciplinary sanction may be imposed, up to and including suspension or dismissal. If the conduct violates the law, the incident will be reported to the appropriate authorities by the school administration. Retaliation or threats of retaliation are unlawful and will not be tolerated. In all cases of harassment or discrimination, the investigating administrator will make a final disposition and issue a written report, which will be maintained in the school files. If the complainant cannot utilize the procedure detailed above because the alleged harasser is involved in the procedure, the complainant should contact the Superintendent of Schools. Complaints about the Superintendent of Schools should be made to the Chairperson of the School Committee. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal statute which states, in part, "No otherwise qualified individual, shall solely on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." This requirement not to discriminate in educational programs and activities also extends to employment. Each school has a designated Section 504 Coordinator. Initial inquiries relating to Section 504 should be directed to the building-based Section 504 Coordinator who can be contacted through the principal's office. Further information may be requested by contacting Ms. Margaret Belsito, Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel, the district's Section 504 Coordinator at (508) 841-8400. The following grievance procedure should be used to report discrimination under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Acts of 1973: To fulfill its obligation under Section 504, the Shrewsbury Public Schools recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding personnel and students. No discrimination against a person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs or activities of the Shrewsbury Public Schools. The school district has a specific requirement under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which includes the responsibility to identify, evaluate and if the child is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to free and appropriate educational services. Questions about eligibility or services should be first directed to the building-based coordinator. If a parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school, he/she has a right to a hearing, first with the district's Section 504 Coordinator, and secondly with an impartial hearing officer. The district's Section 504 Coordinator can be reached at 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545 or by phone at (508) 841-8400. The Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel, the district's Section 504 Coordinator, who will provide a written report of the district's findings, will hear all grievances in a timely manner. If a parent or guardian is unsatisfied with the results of the review, they may contact one of the agencies listed below. For grievances not resolved at the Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel level, a review by an impartial hearing officer may be scheduled. Individuals with grievances are not required to use the Shrewsbury Public School's grievance procedure. Written complaints may be filed with the following agencies: Massachusetts Department of Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148, (781) 338-3000; United States Department of Education Region 1 - Office of Civil Rights, 8th Floor, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02203 (800) 368-1019; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, John F. Kennedy Federal Building, 475 Government Center, Boston, MA 02203 (800) 669-4000; Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, One Ashburton Place, Room 601, Boston, MA 02108 (617) 994-6000.



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