



Report to the School Committee 2023-2024 Talent Acquisition

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Introduction

Shrewsbury Public Schools encountered one of the two most difficult hiring seasons to date in filling professional teaching and specialist positions to the District (hiring for the 2022-2023 school year being the other). In some past years (prior to the pandemic) we were able to post a position and have numerous applicants to review, but the new reality is that we are continuously active in building relationships with department heads and career counselors at colleges and universities, posting positions to an ever-expanding list of recruitment sites, and attending job and career fairs in order to attract candidates. Although ultimately we had relatively the same number of applicants as last year, it took more “hustle” to find those candidates. In addition, the number of quality of applicants has declined, as fewer licensed teachers apply for open positions.

However, we were successful in finding strong candidates for 54 professional positions available due to resignations, retirements, and transfers, and of those, 10 of which are where current educators transferred to a different assignment. Our 44 new hires to the district are outstanding, bringing in many different experiences and pathways to the profession, including career changers, early in career, and career educators. We also hired six leaders for the district, including the Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, Principal of the Beal School, an Assistant Principal for Oak Middle School, and three new Reading Specialists to support our Literacy Initiative.

Currently we have six open professional positions that we have not yet been able to fill for the full school year. For these positions we are utilizing substitutes, assisting non-licensed candidates with obtaining emergency licensure where possible, and where necessary with an

existing teacher planning lessons and overseeing their work. We also have hired retirees from both our district and other districts as long-term substitutes to assist us in educating our students. These positions are: licensed Moderate Special Education Teacher at Oak, School Psychologist at Floral Street, half-time elementary Music Teacher at Beal, Science Teacher at Oak, Speech Language Pathologist at Oak, and a part-time Physical Education Teacher at Spring Street School. The substitutes we have procured to cover these positions so far are due to the creativity and resourcefulness of the District Leadership Team in trying to give students the best education possible. We are committed to autumn job fairs at various universities to potentially bring mid-year graduates to our District beginning in January 2024, as well as to begin sourcing activities for the 2024-2025 school year. The most difficult positions to fill right now are for School Psychologists and Special Education Teachers. Additionally, we are currently hiring two long-term substitute English Language Education teachers, one each for Beal and Floral Street, with funds to assist in educating the homeless student population.

Hiring for paraprofessional and other positions also continues to be a year-round activity, with challenges in finding qualified applicants. Since July 1, 2023 we have hired 40 paraprofessionals, of which 19 were ABA Technicians. We also have a number of hires in process. One challenge we have faced this fall is a delay in receiving background check results, which is impacting all districts in Massachusetts.

We continue to try to find ways to increase the diversity of our staff. For the 2023-2024 school year 19% of our new hires self-reported as being in diverse federal categories, with 11.36% of our new professional hires self-reporting in these categories. For the 2022-2023 school year 23% of our new hires self-reported in diverse federal categories, with 13% of our professional hires reporting in these categories. This result indicates a small decrease in our ability to fill open positions with diverse candidates, in part, because we struggled to find qualified candidates in general and in part because we continue to have a non-diverse application pool. Overall, we had a majority-white application pool across all roles, totaling 66.8% of all applicants. 18.2% did not report their race or ethnicity, with 6.2% reporting as Hispanic or Latinx, 5.46% as Asian, and 1.22% as Black or African-American.

We have appointed six finalists to district leadership positions, 54 staff (including transfers) to professional positions such as teachers and specialists, 1 staff as our new Retail Manager for the RISE program, 40 staff to paraprofessional positions, 1 staff to an IT position, 1 staff as an administrative assistant and 1 staff as the registrar. In total, we have hired 104 people into regular positions for the current school year. Last year the total was 136 people. This count does not include hiring for food services, extended learning programs, less than full year long-term substitute teachers (for leaves of absence due to illness, parental leave, etc.), and

day-to-day substitute teachers. It also does not include hiring for positions that started prior to July 1, 2023 or applicants that are currently “in process” (either not yet started or not yet on payroll reports).

District Leadership Team

The following leaders were appointed for the 2023-2024 school year:

Christian Girardi, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

Bachelor of the Arts in Music, Wesleyan University

Master of Leadership and Educational Administration, Worcester State University

Kristen Gasper, Principal of the Major Howard W. Beal School

Bachelor of Science in Education, Lesley College

Master of Education in Special Education, Rivier College

Educational Leadership Program, Fitchburg State University

Michelle Dillon, Assistant Principal for Oak Middle School

Bachelor of Biology and Music Education, College of the Holy Cross

Master of Arts in Teaching, Clark University

Master of Educational Leadership, Boston College

Vanessa Colleran, Reading Specialist

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and Special Education, Boston University

Master of Education, Language and Literacy, Simmons College

Susan Drenzo, Reading Specialist

Bachelor of Science in Education, Westfield State University

Master of Early Childhood Education, Worcester State University

Master of Special Education, Fitchburg State University

Certificate of Study, Reading Specialist, Fitchburg State University

Heather Mistretta, Reading Specialist

Bachelor of Arts in the History of Mathematics, Science, and Philosophy, St. John's College

Teacher Certification in Moderate Disabilities, Worcester State University

Master of Education in Moderate Disabilities, Worcester State University

Teacher Certification in Reading specialist, Worcester State University

New Hiring-Professional Staff

The 54 (including the 10 transfers) professional education staff includes 1 transfer for the district as a whole (Clinical Coordinator), 2 transfers for the RISE program for 18-22 year old students, 12 new hires for the high school, 21 hires and 2 transfers for the middle level, and 11 new hires and 5 transfers for the elementary level. We did not hire new teachers at the preschool level for this year.

As the School Committee has long known, the teacher selection process in Shrewsbury is rigorous, and through the hard work of our District Leadership Team, as well as educators, parents and students who volunteered to be part of selection meetings or demonstration lessons, we have adhered to our standards.

The process includes phone, remote, or in-person interviews with principals, department directors, curriculum coordinators/instructional coaches, teachers, parents and central office administrators, and sometimes students, depending on the level. It also includes thorough background checks and demonstration lessons.

We continue to use www.schoolspring.com as a sourcing tool. We also advertised positions through www.IMDiversity.com and Indeed.com and the “Handshake” tool at various colleges and universities, and asked applicants to apply directly to my email address.

We had a total of 1026 external applicants for our professional positions from all sources. This means that 4.38% of those who applied to our professional positions from an external source ultimately received a position with us for FY 24. Last year, for FY 23 4.76% of those who applied to our professional positions ultimately received a position with us. For FY 22, it was 2.47%, for FY 21 it was 3.92%, for FY 20 it was 2.16%; in FY 19 it was 1.60%; in FY 18 it was 1.00%.

New Hiring-Paraprofessional Staff

To date we have hired 40 staff to paraprofessional positions. Para positions netted 419 applications (151 from SchoolSpring). For the first time, the majority of our paraprofessional applicants came to us via Indeed, rather than SchoolSpring. We hired 9.5% of those who applied to our paraprofessional positions in FY 24 to date, 16.8% for FY 23, 15.3% for FY 22, 11.7% in FY 21, 8.8% in FY 20, 7.0% in FY 19, 8.0% in FY 18. We are still experiencing the phenomenon of “ghosting”, both at the interview stage and at the appointment stage of the process.

New Hiring-Retail Manager

For the first time in Shrewsbury Public Schools' history, we have hired a Retail Manager, to manage the *Maple & Main* retail business that will be part of the RISE program; this role also involves effectively working with our ages 18-22 students in the RISE program.

New Hiring-IT Positions

We hired 1 staff to an IT Support Specialist position this year.

New Hiring-Registrar/Administrative Assistant Positions

We have hired 1 Registrar (Central Office) and 1 Administrative Assistant (Spring Street School) for 2023-2024

New Educators

Shrewsbury High School

Andrea Anderson, Moderate Special Education Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Worcester State University
Master of Severe Special Education, Fitchburg State University

Katherine Arsenault, Biology Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Biology Education, Siena College
Master of Education in Secondary Education, Providence College

Erin Blette, Special Education Teacher
Bachelor of Arts in English, Coastal Carolina University
Master of Teaching English and Moderate Special Needs, Northeastern University
Doctorate in Education Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Leadership, Northeastern University

Gulderen Gunduz Deniz, Mathematics Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, Eskisehir Anadolu University, Turkey
Master of Secondary Education in Mathematics, Old Dominion University

Julia Duquette, Moderate Special Education Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Worcester State University

Jennifer Goodrich, Mathematics Teacher

Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, West Virginia Wesleyan College

Bachelor of Arts in Education, West Virginia Wesleyan College

Master of Teaching Mathematics, Providence College

Robert Hassett, Spanish Teacher

Bachelor of Arts in International Relations, History, and Spanish, Syracuse University

Doctor of Jurisprudence, New England School of Law

Matthew Martucci, Visual Arts Teacher

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Illustration, Ringling College of Art and Design

Amanda Mullen, Spanish Teacher

Bachelor of Arts in Spanish for the Professions, Worcester State University

Master of Education, Worcester State University

Christopher Ryan, Business & Computer Science Teacher

Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Nichols College

Master of Business Administration, Nichols College

Master of Adult Learning, University of Connecticut

Monika Sudyka, Mathematics Teacher

Bachelor of Science in Mathematics in Secondary Education, Worcester State University

Caryn Wardwell, Music Teacher and Band Director

Bachelor of Arts in Music Education, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Master of Music Education, Teachers College at Columbia University

Sherwood and Oak Middle Schools

Jill Goyette, BRYT Academic Coordinator

Bachelor of Arts in English, University of Massachusetts, Boston

Master of Education in Special Education, Framingham State University

Anne Johnson, Structured Reading/Special Education Teacher

Bachelor of Arts English, Nazareth College of Rochester

Master of Literacy, College of Saint Rose

Olga Pineda, Music Teacher and Orchestra Director
Bachelor of Science in Marketing Management, De La Salle University, Philippines
Bachelor of Science in Music Education, Saint Scholastica's College, Philippines
Master of Marketing, De La Salle University, Philippines

Oak Middle School

Rachel Adamsky, Grade 8 Science Teacher
Bachelor of Arts in Geosciences
Teacher Residency in Earth Science and Biology, Newton
Master of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Caitlin Alayan, ELC Coordinator/Special Education teacher
Bachelor of Elementary Education and Liberal Studies with a concentration in Cultural Diversity, Westfield State University
Master of Science in Severe Special Needs Education, Simmons College
Certificate of Advanced Educational Studies in Applied Behavior Analysis, Western New England College

Winston Andraca, Moderate Special Education Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Health and Physical Education, Montclair State University
Master in Teaching Special Education, Montclair State University

Kelly Balezos, Grade 7 Science Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Geology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Master of Secondary Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Matthew Fall, Moderate Special Education Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Secondary Physical Education, Westfield State University
Master of Special Education, Cambridge College

Abigail Moon, Visual Arts Teacher
Bachelor of Arts in Art History, Clark University
Master of Arts in Teaching Visual Art, Smith College

Daniel Regnier, 7th Grade English Teacher
Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education, Framingham State University

Julie Rhyhart, Speech Language Pathologist
Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Pepperdine University
Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology, Worcester State University

Jill Shah, Grade 7 Science Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Carnegie Mellon University
Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering, University of Maryland, Baltimore

Sherwood Middle School

Keren Albiston, Intensive Special Education Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Rutgers University
Master of Special Education, Rutgers University
Master of Administration in Education, Concordia University

Molly Bates, Grade 5 Math and Science Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and Mathematics, Assumption University

Olivia Dean, Grade 5 Math and Science Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Elementary Education, Bridgewater State University
Master of Mathematics Education, Boston University

Courtney Delaney, Physical Education Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science, Fitchburg State University

Stuart Grimes, Grade 6 English Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher
Bachelor of Arts in History, George Washington University
Master of Middle School History Education, Lesley University

Cassandra LaCoy, Grade 6 English Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Psychology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Master of Elementary Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Leighann Orr, Grade 6 English Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher
Bachelor of Arts in Literature, Worcester State University
Master of Elementary Education, American International College

Jenna Reynolds, Grade 5 English Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher
Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education, Skidmore College
Master of Special Education, Regis College

Ariel Sloan, Grade 6 Math and Science Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Worcester State University

Calvin Coolidge School

Danielle Grillo, Grade 2 Teacher
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Master of Business Administration in Management, Wagner College
Master of Elementary Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Bay Path University

Stephanie Hubert, School Adjustment Counselor
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Providence College
Master of Social Work, Boston College

Ashlee Procacini, Grade 2 Teacher
Bachelor of Elementary Education, Framingham State University
Bachelor of General Studies/Interdisciplinary Studies, Fitchburg State University
Master of Education in Elementary and Moderate Disabilities, Lesley University

Floral Street School

Andreia dos Santos Lucas Gutierrez, English Language Learner Teacher
Bachelor of Arts in Translation Studies, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil
Technologist in Management Processes, University of Marilia, Brazil
Master of Education, Worcester State University
Master of Education in ESL, Worcester State University

Katie Mancini, Grade 4 Teacher
Bachelor of Elementary Education, Rhode Island College

Meghan Walsh, ELC Coordinator/Special Education Teacher
Bachelor of Arts in Sociology/Social Work, Saint Anselm College
Certificate of Study in Applied Behavior Analysis, University of Massachusetts, Boston
Master of Education, University of Massachusetts, Boston
Master of Severe Special Education, Bay Path University

Lauren Wilson, School Psychologist

Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Endicott College

Master of Science in Educational and School Psychology, University of Southern Maine

Major Howard W. Beal School and Walter J. Paton School

Danila Heitz, Moderate Special Education Teacher

Bachelor of Arts in Education, Multidisciplinary Studies, Cambridge College

Master of Special Education, Grade K-8, Cambridge College

Major Howard W. Beal School

Carly Kadlik, School Adjustment Counselor

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Framingham State University

Master of Education in School Counseling, University of Massachusetts, Boston

Spring Street School

Kelly Palumbo, Moderate Special Education Teacher

Bachelor of Science in Communication Disorders, Worcester State University

Master of Education in Teaching Students with Special Needs, Elementary, Wheelock College

Professional Transfers

- Aimee Bunn, Clinical Coordinator for the district, from Floral Street School
- Erin Hruskoci, RISE Program Special Education Teacher, from Walter J. Paton
- Kristi Menard, RISE Program Special Education Teacher, from Oak Middle School
- Douglas Kershaw, Grade 7 ELA, to Oak Middle School from Sherwood Middle School
- Jacqueline Lawson, Grade 7 Science, to Oak Middle School from Sherwood Middle School
- Allison Campbell, Grade 4, to Major Howard W. Beal School, from Spring Street School
- Allyson Feeley, Special Education Teacher to Walter J. Paton School, from a dual assignment that included Major Howard W. Beal School
- Rebekah Landers, Special Education Teacher to Major Howard W. Beal School, from Walter J. Paton School
- Carrie Sullivan, to Major Howard W. Beal School, from Walter J. Paton School
- Jennifer Wilson, to Calvin Coolidge and Floral Street Schools, from Sherwood Middle School

New Retail Manager, RISE Program

Jennifer Tabor, previously paraprofessional at Parker Road Preschool and small business owner

New Paraprofessional Staff

ABA Technicians

Benjamin Ayres

Kaydance Bergeron

Alyssa Betancourt

Larissa Bryant

Shamar Burrell

Heanneah Casey

Gabrielle Demers

Jessica Derosiers

Lesley Engvall

Caitlin Ethier

Leanna Giang

Jamaliz Jimenez-Vargas

Susan McKay

Jennifer Natoli

Tattianna Roque

Julie Santiago

Christina Tizzano

Christina Tomaiolo

Caitlin Wood

Child Specific Assistants

Amanda Balaparya

Courtney Ducasse

Laura Gregory

Suraia Hossen

Allison Kilham

Sunitha Kondabathini

Rajalakshmi Mahalingam

Emily McManus

Sarah Perreault

John Sweeney

Instructional Assistants

Colleen Brownstein

Lauren Ellerbrook

Gabriela Garza Aguirre

Kacey Hubley
Deborah Mazejka
Elizabeth Mitchell
Laura Ore
Susan Shea

Media Assistant

Kaylee Lambert

Special Education Paraprofessional

Barbara Gauthier
Amanda Salvaggi

New Information Technology Hires

Zachary Baldino, IT Support Specialist, Spring Street School

New Administrative Assistants/Registrar

Jennifer Brown, Administrative Assistant, Spring Street School
Kevin Escalante, Registrar, District