

Strategic Priority Assessment 2012-2016

Engage and Challenge All Students

Key Concepts Associated with this Priority:

- Ensure that all students participate in rigorous learning experiences that require the application of knowledge and skills, with an emphasis on writing across all content areas.
- Empower students to meet future college, military, and workplace demands in a globally connected environment by building proficiency at the 21st century skills of communication, critical thinking, collaboration and creativity.



All students will participate in learning projects that require real world problem solving with clear benchmarks for proficiency.

Over the course of the past 5 years, the district has been engaged in studying innovative project based learning environments and completing a two year goal focused on having all educators apply components of authentic learning to at least one instructional experience. While significant progress has been made, it has become clear that integrating this approach to learning across the district will require on-going attention and resources.

- An Innovation in Learning study group visited various sites recognized for their innovative practices. The team that took part in this study authored a report that includes considerations for the district's long term commitment to deeper learning practices. The educators involved in the visits have gone on to be teacher leaders in supporting their colleagues to engage with project based learning experiences.
- A variety of professional development has been provided to educators to support their efforts to incorporate meaningful
 - An example of teacher-led training on project based learning
 - Project design through use a Project Tuning Protocol
- Teacher leaders built a Project Based Learning Support Center which includes instructional resources, a reflection blog, and a hashtag to follow a variety of authentic learning experiences occurring across the district.
- Student work:
 - Calculus Art Project (SHS)
 - French Google Hangouts Connection Project (SHS)
 - Shrewsbury High School Covers the Classics (SHS)
 - Bird Project (7th Grade Oak)
 - The Keys to Success Project (8th Grade Oak)
 - Tackling Hunger Project (7th Grade Oak)
 - Rules to Live By (6th Grade Sherwood)
 - Wonder Perspective Taking Project (Sherwood Grade 5)
 - Rail Trail Pizza Project (Grade 6 Sherwood)
 - Plastic Bag Project: (Grade 1 Floral)

Communication from Teacher Leaders Tasked to Support Their Colleagues in the Exploration of Project Based Work

Maura Egan

To: All Oak, All Sherwood Cc: Mary Beth Banios, Lisa Daly
Portraits of Innovation - Spotlight Series

Today at 9:50 AM

ME



Dear Oak and Sherwood Colleagues,

Well, the great work continues around here! We have a few more innovative projects and lessons we want to share with you. In addition to the lessons below, you can find more on the [Shrewsbury Innovation](#) blog. The projects below help students to *think globally*! Click on the title to go to the full project description.

I know it's a busy time of year as we push to finish, but when you have a moment, click on the link and check out the work on the blog. Maybe it might lead to an idea for next year.

If you have tried something that you would like to share, I'd love to include it on our Shrewsbury Innovation blog - [fill out this Share Your Experience form](#).

Tweeting? Remember, #shrewsburylearns and share your tweets.

Be sure to check your email for future "Portraits of Innovation - Spotlight Series." If you have questions about how your practice meets our PBL district goal or any other questions about our Portraits of Innovation, feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

Maura Egan

Oak Middle School

[Grade 7: Global Issues](#)

Content: World Geography

Teacher: Shawn Thomas

GLOBAL ISSUES PROJECT

LINK: [HTTPS://GOO.GL/X3D3R7](https://goo.gl/x3D3R7)

Essential Question:

What steps can we take as middle school students to inspire others to take action?

[High School French: French Google Hangouts Connection](#)

Teacher: Heather Leger



Full implementation of the Shrewsbury Writing Project to ensure students achieve high levels of proficiency in written communication across all content areas.

The Shrewsbury Writing Project has been fully implemented with writing across the curriculum initiatives at every level.

Shrewsbury High School

Every department at Shrewsbury High School teaches writing and communication skills. An example of articulated curriculum is found below. Over the past five years, departments have adopted common assignments to assess writing. Teachers used professional development and department meeting time to create these common assignments for various courses. Each year educators use common rubrics to assess each assignment, reflect on the data, and then collaborate with members of their department to use the data to inform their instruction.

- The math department's common writing assessments focus on problem solving and communication skills.
- The English and social science departments' writing assessments include having students read, analyze and synthesize pieces of literature or primary sources into their writing.
- The science department focuses on common labs for their writing pieces.

Media and Information Literacy Skills

Identify/Access	Middle School	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
• Cite information – plagiarism issues	I/R = 5,6,7,8	I/R	R	R/M	M
• .com, .net vs. .gov (advanced searching strategies)	I = 7,8	I/R	R/M	M	M
• Arguments and Counter-arguments	I = 6, 7, 8	I	I/R	R	M
• Types of information in certain source types - Primary and secondary sources - Introduces the term	I = 8	I	I/R	R	M
• Order of research	Teacher guided	I	R	R/M	M
• Formulate thesis statement and find resources to back them up	Teacher guided	I	I	R	R/M
• Note-taking – expose to a variety of note-taking	Paraphrasing is hard	I	I/R	R	M
• Learning how to generate key words / how to find information/ filtering info	Not exposed to databases	I	R	R/M	M
• Using an advanced search	Media Specialist lesson	I	R/I	R/M	M
• Understanding how Google works	Teacher Guided	I	R	R/M	M
• Asking Questions → general vs. specific information	I = 6, 7, 8 Teacher guided	I	I/R	R	R/M

I = Introduce Skills

R= Reinforce Skills

M= Master Skills

Middle Level

Content area teachers design and administer a variety of writing experiences for students in their content areas, specifically Argument and Expository writing and research. Authentic writing is integrated across content areas and there are an increasing number of assignments designed for public audiences.

Examples include:

- 5th Grade Social Studies - Argument about who started the Revolutionary War
- 5th/6th Grade Science - Students working with the Claim, Evidence, Reasoning model of argumentation in science.
- 7th Grade Social Studies - Students write arguments supporting their solution to a 3rd world need.
- 7th Grade Science- Should GMO's be labeled?
- 7th and 8th Grade Math - All students use common language and rubrics to develop their written communication and arguments in mathematics.

Elementary Level

At the elementary level, through the collaborative work of the instructional coaches and grade level teams, a cohesive and aligned curriculum has been implemented PreK-4 across all of the district's elementary schools. Writing development builds from year to year through the use of writing organizers that grow in complexity over time; this results in an ever increasing sophistication of a student's writing.

Organizers to Match Each Genre

Grade 2 Poetry Wheel of Craft

Heart
• Feelings
• Emotions

Imagery
• Show don't Tell
• Descriptive Details
• 5 Senses

Subject

Focus
• Attention to topic
• Clear

Sound/Rhythm
• Repetition
• Rhyme

Grade 2 Narrative Writing Diamond

Engaging Beginning
• Action
• Sound
• Thought/Question
• Dialogue

Setting
See, Hear, Touch, Smell, Taste

Main Event
• Slow the action down to stretch out one small moment
TDACS
• Thoughts/Feelings, Observations, Actions, Dialogue and Sounds
• Elaborate using descriptive language and sentence variety
• Identify your story in logical order

Extended Ending
• Memory
• Feeling
• Decision
• Wish
• Hope

The Grade 2 Opinion Pillar

INTRODUCTION: Tell your reader your topic.

OPINION: Tell your opinion about the topic.

REASONING: Give reasons for your opinion.

CONCLUSION: Repeat your opinion.

The Grade 2 Informative Pillar

INTRODUCTION: Introduce your topic.

FACTS: Give facts or information to support your topic.

CONCLUSION: Repeat your topic.

All educators will participate in collaborative professional development in teaching 21st century skills and successfully apply this in the classroom.

Shrewsbury educators have engaged in a wide range of professional development activities designed to enhance the teaching of 21st century skills with focus on transfer to the classroom. Below please find a sampling of the types of courses, workshops, and other learning opportunities that have been afforded to staff during the 5 year strategic priority time frame. An emphasis has been placed on building self-directed learners both in and out of the classroom.

Summer Institute Offerings

- The Advanced iPad Classroom (2013)
- The iPad Classroom (2013, 2016)
- Teaching Elementary Grades with Technology (2013, 2016)
- Developing Leadership to Influence Change (2013, 2015)
- Passion Driven Leadership in a Digital Age (2014)
- The Google Infused Classroom (2014)
- Utilizing technology to Improve Teaching and Learning in Secondary Mathematics (2014)
- Video Creation in the Classroom (2015)
- The Innovative Classroom: Project Based Learning, Games and Learning, and iBooks Author (2015)
- Integrating Schoology into Your Professional Practice (2015, 2016)
- Inquiry & Project Based Learning: Integrating Technology to Support Meaningful Student Learning (2016)
- Cultivating Creativity (2016)
- Improving the Quality of Student Work Through Critique and Revision (2016)
- Leading Innovation in the Classroom - Making Significant, Positive Changes (217)
- Navigating the Complexities of On-Line Information (2017)
- Cultivating Creativity Through Problem Solving in Secondary Math (2017)
- Developing Curriculum for 21st Century Learning in Secondary English (2017)

During the 2015-16 school year the Shrewsbury Public Schools designed a new innovative approach to educator learning: Professional Development Pathways. This approach was the result of collective designing and planning by the district Professional Development Committee, coaches, coordinators, directors, and administrators. The Pathways approach launched in the fall of 2016 as educators were invited to follow a learning pathway of interest and to use the knowledge that they gained from the pathway study to create an outcome that was valuable to their work with students. Representative outcomes of this work can be found in the slide deck below.

We worked to communicate with families about the importance of building a love of literacy in early childhood and the importance and benefits of reading for at least 20 minutes per day.

After surveying families about their reading routines at home, we launched a social media campaign, #bealreads20 through facebook, twitter and instagram where we posted monthly challenges for young readers to participate in.

We hosted a literacy night, Popcorn & Pajamas, which included a book swap, story readings by teachers and local author, April Jones Prince, as well as parent education about literacy. We will be hosting another night, Camp Reads-A-Lot, to kick off and build excitement for summer reading.

We are expanding our literacy advocacy and enthusiasm outside of our classrooms by:

- *Partnering with the Shrewsbury Public Library
- *Partnering with Home Depot to install a Beal Book House lending library in our new school garden
- *Encouraging a love of reading while promoting global citizenship by participating in the Heifer Project Read to Feed read-a-thon.

Our SURPRISE was how far we were able to take our learning and work when given the autonomy to do so.

One CHANGE IN PRACTICE we made was more frequent communication with families about ways they can support their readers at home.

FELLOW EDUCATORS CAN BENEFIT by finding others to work with who share your passion. By working together we were able to share and build off of our unique strengths and achieved more than we ever could have individually.

#bealreads20 *Community Focused Literacy Initiative*

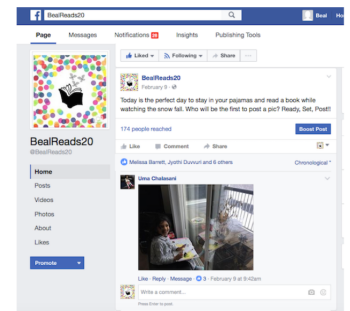
Pathway Highlight: Home and School Partnerships for Learning



A group of Kindergarten teachers are participating in the Home and School Partnership for Learning Pathway this year. Their work has been focused on reminding parents about the value of reading at home and encouraging this practice. As part of their Pathway work, these educators designed and implemented a family literacy night. Among the various activities planned for the evening were opportunities for students to hear their teachers read their favorite books and to select a few new books to bring home and enjoy. Kudos to the dedicated team of educators that put together this wonderful evening for families: Melissa Barrett, Sara Biadasz, Heather Downs, Becky Dumphy, Katie Knott, Michelle Neddo, and Beth McInerney



Melissa Barrett, Sara Biadasz, Heather Downs, Katie Knott, Beth McInerney, Michelle Neddo



February Break Challenge

LOVE

Take a picture reading a book
you love,
with someone you love,
or somewhere you love!

#bealreads20

Please click [here](#) to see full slide deck.

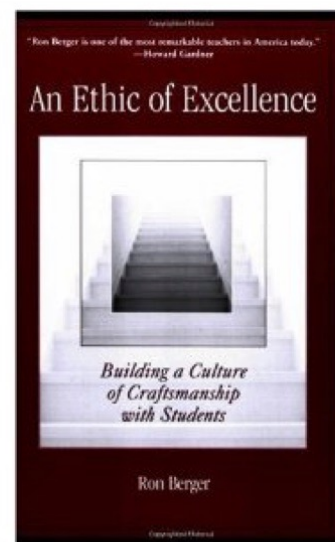
Teacher Leaders with Strong Instructional Practices Lead Collaborative Learning Experiences for Their Colleagues

Design for Meaningful Learning

August 21-24 & Pre-Institute



Please join four of our Shrewsbury teacher leaders for an exploration into the design of meaningful learning experiences for students. After attending High Tech High's Winter Residency and integrating many deeper learning practices into their own classrooms, these educators have developed a course designed to support Shrewsbury teachers in integrating a project based approach to their instructional practice.



Course Overview

Participants will be immersed in interactive sessions that examine how to design for meaningful learning. Participants will gain an overview of the components of meaningful design. Workshops and break-out sessions will focus on project launch, critique & revision, design for one student, student agency, community connections, exhibitions of learning, assessment, and reflection. Participants will have time to develop and refine lessons and/or projects that will utilize some or all of these design components.

For additional information and course agenda please click [here](#)

Instructors:

- ▶ Elin Dolan, Oak Science Teacher
- ▶ Kate Lewis, Oak ELA Teacher
- ▶ Amy Prior, SHS Math Teacher
- ▶ Justin Winn, SHS ELA Teacher

When: 8/21-8/24 (plus Pre-Institute)

Who: Educators in Grades 5-12

Where: Sherwood Middle School Media Center

Time: 8am – 3pm

Credits/PDPs: Qualifies for 3 internal graduate credits and 67.5 PDPs

Registration is now open on ShrewsburyPD

90% of students, parents, and educators will agree that student learning experiences are engaging and that students participate in appropriately challenging coursework that meets their needs.

In June of 2016, a survey was sent to parents, students, and educators to ascertain their perspectives on the level of engagement and appropriate challenge in our schools. There was a small discrepancy between the perspectives of educators and those of students and parents. Several of the comments suggested that the district's work on more authentic learning experiences may enhance the levels of engagement and challenge our students experience.

Engagement Question:

To what extent do you agree that student learning experiences in the Shrewsbury Public Schools are engaging? An engaging learning experience is when students are actively involved in learning about a topic in ways that generate enthusiasm, motivation, or interest.

Strongly Agree or Agree	
Parents	85.85%
Students	87.43%
Educators	94.71%

Appropriate Challenge Question:

to what extent do you agree that academic coursework is appropriately challenging to students?

Strongly Agree or Agree	
Parents	84.47%
Students	85.57%
Educators	90.73%