



## Superintendent's Update

May 2, 2017

Dear Shrewsbury Families & Community Members,

Things are very busy in our schools as we enter the “home stretch” between now and the end of the school year. I know firsthand that the spring is also a very busy time for families with many activities outside of school happening as well. Your children’s teachers really appreciate it when parents help keep things on track with regard to structuring time for homework and a reasonable bedtime in addition to other commitments (and this can be a challenge!). As always, your support of your children’s learning is invaluable.

I also want to make all of you aware of a message sent to middle and high school families yesterday regarding the recent Netflix series, *13 Reasons Why*. I appreciate that leaders in our district are reaching out to families regarding the sensitive topics surrounding this show, as we continue to seek ways to ensure healthy school environments where students get the social and emotional supports they need. You can read the message on our website [here](#).

Please also note the following items, including updates on the budget and the assistant superintendent search, as well as MANY student successes:

### **Good news on the budget:**

I am pleased to share positive news about our budget situation for next year, as the budget gap will be able to be closed with only having to progress through part of the proposed “Tier 2” cuts. This is thanks to a combination of factors: 1) improvements in the amount of net funding provided by the state government; 2) more favorable revenue estimates and costs in town government; and 3) lower cost estimates for parts of the School Department budget, especially in out-of-district special education tuitions and vocational-technical high school tuitions.

It is very important to note that these developments were not a result of “finding money” in the budget. Thankfully, a variety of developments were financially positive as the budget process evolved, especially in some areas that can be volatile (and which have gone the opposite way at times in past years). I know that the publication of potential budget cuts is something that creates anxiety, and I’m sorry for the uncertainty this year’s process created for many. However, I felt it was my responsibility to communicate a contingency plan regarding what could happen, so that cuts would not be a surprise if they were required. The margins are thin, as in the context of our total appropriated budget, if net costs and revenues were off by as little as 1% of the total, it would have required us to cut all the way through Tier 3 of our plan.

For specific information on the budget that is recommended for approval at Town Meeting later this month, please see my budget memo to the School Committee [here](#) and the updated tiers [here](#).

### **Assistant Superintendent search update:**

Thanks to the parents who participated in the survey and who have taken part in various parts of the search to date. Based on the feedback after the candidates' daylong visits, two finalists remain for the position: Amy Clouter, Principal at Coolidge, and Jane Lizotte, Principal at Sherwood. Mrs. Clouter and Dr. Lizotte will each be interviewed by the School Committee this week, and I will be making a recommendation for the School Committee to appoint one of these two outstanding leaders to this position at the May 10 meeting of the School Committee.

### **Student successes:**

There are MANY Things to celebrate since the last time I provided you with an update:

- Shrewsbury High School was again cited as a [silver medal recipient in U.S. News & World Report's](#) ranking of the nation's best high schools. It's national ranking of 503 out of over 20,000 high schools is in the top 2.5% in the U.S.; this goes along with a Massachusetts ranking of 23rd out of over 300 high schools in what is by many measures the strongest public education state in the nation.
- The Class of 2017 Senior Scholars were honored at our last School Committee meeting. Congratulations to Erin Bean, Brian Chen, Patrick Chen, Prithu Dasgupta, Subin Jeong, Michael O'Connell, Urvi Savant, Varun Swamy, Laura Townsend, and Aditi Trivedi. You can see short bios of these outstanding students and leaders [here](#).
- Many SHS students were recently honored for giving back to our community through service, including almost 18,000 hours of community service within the past year. Marlie Atlabachew, SHS Class of 2018, was presented with the annual Amy O'Leary Award for outstanding community service.
- Several SHS students were honored for their artwork through the Boston Globe art awards and other local competitions, including Autumn Dauksz, SHS Class of 2017, and Karen Hou, SHS Class of 2018, who were awarded Gold Keys.
- In music, the Oak Middle School Select Choir won the gold medal at the Massachusetts Instrumental & Choral Conductors Association's festival competition for the second year in a row. Dozens of middle and high school performers also qualified for Central Districts and All State, while Johanna Geremia and Akshay Alamuri both were selected to perform in the All-East Honor Choir composed of members from 11 states, Washington DC, and American schools in Europe. The SHS spring musical, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, was exceptional.
- The SHS competition play made it to the state semi-final round and had multiple students honored in the regional competition: Excellence in Set Design: Phoebe Berkeley-Gullion (Class of 2019) , Excellence in Acting: Sam Brownstein & Michaela Kelly (both Class of 2018)
- The SHS Robotics team won the Engineering Inspiration Award in two straight tournaments, and Nial McNally, SHS Class of 2018, was awarded a place as a Dean's List Finalist as an accomplished student leader in robotics
- The SHS Speech & Debate team won fourth place in the state tournament

- Several SHS students advanced to the regional and state science and engineering fair competitions, including Arashleen Pannu, SHS Class of 2019, who earned a second place in the regional fair; also, the Oak Middle School Science Olympiad team members received many awards at their state competition
- Julianne Fay and Emily Radkowski, SHS Class of 2018, earned third place among all MetroWest high school students in the 2017 Holy Cross Manuscript Challenge on Classics Day (for this competition they translated and analyzed an ancient Latin manuscript)
- Julia Schaefer, SHS Class of 2017, won the individual state gymnastics championships in all-around, floor exercise, and uneven bars
- The SHS Boys Ice Hockey team won the state championship
- Wayne Carey Jr., a cross country and track student-athlete in the SHS Class of 2018, has been selected as one of this year's recipients of the prestigious Frank Kelley Adversity Award
- Justice Lane, SHS Class of 2017, was honored with the state Leadership Award & Scholarship by the Massachusetts High School Football Coaches' Association

Also, three members of our SHS athletics coaching staff were named as Massachusetts coaches of the year in their respective sports. Congratulations to:

- Heather Fulginiti – 2017 MIAA Gymnastics Coach of the Year
- Frank Panarelli – 2017 MIAA Girls Ice Hockey Coach of the Year
- Steve Turnblom – 2017 MIAA Boys Ice Hockey Coach of the Year

Obviously, we have much to be proud of, thanks to our students' hard work, our educators' skillful efforts, and your support. Thank you!

Respectfully,

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 Superintendent of Schools  
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