

September 24, 2015

Dear Shrewsbury Families,

It is hard to believe that school has been in session for almost four weeks, and we are off to a great start. Thankfully the hot weather has abated and we are now enjoying more seasonable temperatures. I visited all of our schools during the first week and I've had the chance to make additional visits to several, and I am pleased to report that I continue to see students participating in meaningful lessons with educators who are providing engaging instruction. I have been struck by the warm, positive feeling in classrooms and around the school as our staff works to build a sense of belonging and teamwork. Your children are in good hands at school, and please know that we appreciate your support of your child's educational experience. It promises to be a great year ahead in the Shrewsbury Public Schools!

Please note the following informational items below:

- 1) New website
- 2) Recognition for SHS
- 3) MCAS scores released
- 4) School Committee seeks feedback on budget priorities
- 5) Charter school proposal does not advance

1) New website: We have been receiving mainly positive feedback on [our new website](#). We are continuing to add content in an effort to provide the best, most timely information possible. If you have suggestions or questions, please contact us using [this form](#). I want to commend everyone who worked on this project, especially our Director of Information Technology, Brian L'Heureux, and our Executive Assistant for Communications & Operations, Kimberlee Cantin.

2) Recognition for Shrewsbury High School: [Newsweek has again ranked SHS among the top 1% of high schools in the U.S.](#) It is important to recognize that such rankings use different criteria for their lists, and it is impossible to reduce an entire school experience to this data or to try and discern whether various schools with very similar results are really better or worse than one another. That said, it is gratifying that Newsweek's particular data set indicates that Shrewsbury is doing a very high quality job of preparing students for college, and we should be particularly proud that SHS again qualified for the added distinction that students who come from challenging economic circumstances have performed particularly well, given that one of the promises of public education is to provide an opportunity for success regardless of one's socioeconomic background.

3) MCAS scores released: Today the district and school scores from last spring's MCAS tests were released (you can see Shrewsbury's [here](#)). You may recall that Shrewsbury students in Grade 10 took the MCAS in English language arts, mathematics, and science/engineering, while students in Grades 5 and 8 took the science/engineering MCAS for those grades. The district chose to use the new PARCC exams for English language arts and mathematics tests in

Grades 3-8, and those scores will not be released until later this fall. The overall results on the MCAS were similar to past years and continue to be very strong, and we will again be analyzing the detailed data to determine areas of strength and weakness in order to inform our curriculum and instructional emphasis. A detailed testing report will be provided to the School Committee in November. Additionally, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will be deciding later this fall whether Massachusetts students will take the MCAS or the PARCC going forward. I will provide additional updates as we have more information in the coming weeks and months.

4) School Committee seeks feedback on priorities for next year's budget: Last night the School Committee discussed a draft of the [Priorities & Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2017](#). The Committee is scheduled to vote on these at their October 7 meeting. If you have feedback for the Committee in advance of their vote, you can email all members at schoolcommittee@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us or contact members [directly](#). You can always find the latest School Committee meeting information, along with reports and presentations made to the Committee, on our website on the [School Committee page](#).

5) Charter school proposal does not advance: We received word this week that the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education did not advance a proposed charter school to be located in Shrewsbury to the full application stage. The School Committee's letter to the Commissioner, in which they argued that this proposal created redundancies and had the potential to harm our district financially, can be found [here](#).

Thank you for your continued support of our schools. If I can be of assistance to you, please contact me at 508-841-8400 or at jsawyer@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us.

Respectfully,

Joe Sawyer

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