



## Superintendent's Update

June 21, 2018

Dear Shrewsbury Families, Community Members, & Staff,

It is hard to believe it is the last day of the school year. We have much to celebrate, as thanks to the skill and dedication of our educators and support staff, the strong support of our parents, and the efforts of our students, many successes were achieved in academics, student government, the visual and performing arts, academic competitions, robotics, speech and debate, and athletics. There are many reasons to be proud of our schools, and I'm pleased to report a few more to you in this update.

What makes me most proud, however, is the work that has been done to help our students become better people. In my opening remarks to staff at the start of this school year, I said, "We must be politically neutral, but we must *not* be morally neutral. Therefore, we must actively ensure that our students and our parents know and understand our core values, and we must actively work to shape our students' character regarding universally accepted principles of respect, kindness, truth, fairness, and just treatment. We must be clear through both our words and our deeds that hate, discrimination, and intolerance have no place in our schools." We opened the year in the aftermath of the Charlottesville white supremacist march, and we close the year as our nation grapples with the ongoing crisis of thousands of children having been separated from their parents and being placed in detention facilities at the southern U.S. border. Regardless of differing political viewpoints on immigration policy and law, I feel it's important to state that, as an educational leader, I believe that these actions have been harmful to these children and are in direct violation of the values of respect, kindness, fairness, and just treatment that our country espouses. How a nation, state, or local community treats children – all children – is a sign of its collective character. I am glad that the federal government is changing its approach in response to the moral outrage that has come from across the political spectrum, and this whole situation reminds me yet again why it is so important to ensure that our schools not only develop our students' academic skills, but also help them understand and apply the values that our community and our nation hold dear.

In [my remarks at the recent graduation ceremony of the SHS Class of 2018](#), I made the point that toughness does not equate with being uncaring. I told the graduates this: *Being empathetic, honoring differences, and considering others' perspectives are signs of strength. As the late, great basketball coach, John Wooden, once said: "There is nothing stronger than gentleness." Don't confuse being tough with being callous, which is a problem every generation in our society is struggling with these days.* As we head into the summer school vacation, I will be thinking about how we can best work to ensure that our schools produce students who not only can think, but who are also thoughtful.

I hope all of you have a fun and safe summer season, and I thank you for your continued hard work and support of our schools. Please read on to learn more about recent student successes and a list of educators beginning a well-earned retirement.

Respectfully,

Joe Sawyer  
Superintendent of Schools

**Destination Imagination team wins global competition:** 1,400+ teams from countries and affiliates around the world participated in the world's largest celebration of creativity, Destination Imagination's Global Finals. Shrewsbury High School's secondary level team "Shrewsbury Iced Lattes" comprised of freshmen Aabia Hasan, Diyala Bera, Divya Raghunathan, and Sneha Ramesh were awarded first place in the "Inside Impact" service learning project. The team competed against 67 other teams from different countries around the world and earned first place for their innovative project and presentation. Bravo!

**SHS musical wins best overall production:** Congratulations to all involved with this past spring's SHS musical, *All Shook Up*, which was honored with the top award at the recent Mount Wachusett Community College Theatre at the Mount's "TAMY" awards for excellence in school musicals. In addition to winning "Best Overall Production," other awards presented to SHS were:

Aly Uy - Best Supporting Actress  
Sophie Silverio - Not You Average Chorus Member  
Best Stage Crew  
Best Technical Excellence

**State science fair first place winners:** Congratulations to SHS sophomore, Zoe Rudnick,

who earned a first place award at the high school state science fair at MIT for her project *Robot Navigation for the Exploration of Lunar and Planetary Surfaces*. Congratulations as well to Oak Middle School 8th grader, Diya Satanur for earning a first place award in the middle school state science fair for her project *Helping Hands: Speech Disorder in Kids Age 2-6*.

**SHS Student Council wins national recognition:** The Student Council at SHS, known as StuCo, was named a 2018 National Gold Council of Excellence by the National Student Council. These students are outstanding leaders who worked hard to earn this recognition, which is based on meeting a set of demanding criteria.

**SHS track state and New England champions:** Congratulations to the SHS relay team of Joe Young, Joey O'Brien, Dasani Prideaux, and Chris Matthews who won the 4 x 100 meter relay at both the state and New England championships! They went on to finish 14th at nationals in the 4 x 100 and 4th in the nation in the 4 x 200! Additionally, Joey O'Brien won the state championship in the 200 meter sprint and Coach Ian Butterfield was named Massachusetts State Track Association Coach of the Year. Outstanding!

**Retiring educators:** Recently, several retiring educators were honored by the School Committee. Please join me in congratulating the following educators, all of whom can go into retirement secure in the knowledge that their work made a positive difference in the lives of the children they served. They are:

#### Teachers

Allen Beer, Technology Education, Oak Middle School  
Lauren Cacela, English, SHS  
Janet Duggan, Grade 6, Sherwood Middle School  
Deborah Friedman, Speech & Language, Paton School  
Susan Hirsh, Special Education, Sherwood Middle School  
Martha Kinback, Grade 1, Spring Street School  
Mary Beth Leifer, Grade 4, Paton School  
Joanne MacLaughlin, Kindergarten, Beal Early Childhood Center  
Patrice McCabe, Grade 5, Sherwood Middle School  
Janet Pope, Media Center, Sherwood Middle School  
Rosann Silver, Kindergarten, Spring Street School  
Stephen Winters, Special Education, Oak Middle School

#### Paraprofessionals

Barbara Andreano, Media Center Aide, Floral Street School

Barbara Andrukonis, Child Specific Aide, Spring Street School  
Laura-Kay Cosenza, Child Specific Aide, Sherwood Middle School

Cafeteria Staff

Mary Ricker, Cafeteria Manager, SHS

Congratulations and best wishes to all for a happy, healthy retirement!

Happy summer, everyone!