

Canton Public Schools

Opening Minds... Transforming Lives

Summer 2020

Celebrating the past, preparing for the future



The Class of 2020 celebrates its commencement at the Shops at Farmington Valley in June. While the graduation exercises were far from normal, the Canton School District found creative ways to make it special. Such creativity continues as the district prepares for the 2020-21 school year. See the following pages for more about the Class of 2020, as well as preparations for the 2020-21 school year.

Our Mission

Our mission is to prepare independent, productive, respectful and responsible citizens who contribute to an ever-changing world. We pursue continuous improvement while honoring our strong educational legacy and traditions. We unite with families and the community to provide challenging educational experiences that promote the intellectual, physical, social and emotional potential of our students.

Our Vision

As a leader among schools and a source of pride in our community, the Canton Public Schools enrich the present and shape the future of its students by opening minds and transforming lives.

Our Values

Collaboration ~ Kindness ~ Integrity

We partner with our students, educators, staff, families and community to: Work together with open minds, creativity and innovation; Look for ways to treat others with kindness and respect; Do our very best, be honest and hold each other accountable.

From the superintendent

The past few months have been very challenging for all of us. Our world has changed dramatically. Our Administrative Team, along with the Canton Public Schools' Reopening Task Force and Working Groups focusing on Teaching and Learning, Staff and Student Health/Wellness, and Systems and Operations have been meeting regularly over the summer to plan for the reopening of our schools on August 31st. The Canton Public Schools' number one priority as we reopen schools is to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for our staff and students. We developed our plan with the following goal in mind: Upon the reopening of the Canton Public Schools, our students will learn and achieve in a healthy, safe, emotionally, and intellectually supportive school and classroom environment. Our students will learn through high-quality engaging instruction delivered by highly qualified educators.

As we prepare for the return of our staff and students, we are committed to:

- Keeping our students and staff safe and healthy by following public health guidelines
- Engaging with our families, staff, and students to determine how we can best meet the needs of the Canton Public Schools' Community
- Focusing on the social/emotional needs of our students, staff, and families
- Providing students with In-person, Blended Learning, and Distance Learning instructional models as needs arise
- Ensuring highly engaging instruction and research-based best practices in all classrooms, both in – person and virtually
- Providing Distance Learning opportunities for families

We value Collaboration, Kindness, and Integrity. With these values in mind, the staff and I look forward to our continued partnership, allowing us to provide students with



Kevin D. Case

opportunities to be creative and innovative. Through this time of transitioning back to full in-person, in school learning, our staff will continue to provide outstanding educational opportunities to prepare our students to be creative thinkers, effective communicators, collaborators, critical thinkers, and compassionate citizens. Please let your child's teacher, principal, or me know if there is anything we can do to improve your child's learning experience. Your feedback is important to us. I wish your families a productive and successful 2020-21 school year!

From the board chair

As the summer of 2020 winds down, I hope you were able to find time to enjoy the summer months with your family and be healthy and well. The 2020-21 school year that is about to begin will look and feel different from any other school year. Covid-19 has changed the way we live, information changes daily, we must be resilient, flexible and adapt to these changes. Our schools are no different. To that end, the Board of Education voted 7-1 to support Superintendent Kevin Case's plan to open schools with a hybrid plan that will phase in our students to a full-time face-to-face model of learning. As a school community, we have a role in supporting our students, so that they can have the most successful school experience possible. We have a role in supporting our teachers and staff so they can be their best for our students. We need to support one another in the decisions we have made as individual families in how to educate our children. We need to support one another by respecting the rules and protocols that have been established to give our students the best opportunity of in-person learning when appropriate. We need to



Julie Auseré

support one another to have a safe, healthy school environment that will focus not just on academics, but the social and emotional well-being of students. Now more than ever, we have to pull together as a community to be resilient and flexible in order to adapt to the changes that will come over the course of this school year. As we begin this school year, let's all remember to breathe--- inhale and exhale. During this time of uncertainty, unpredictability, and general messiness, we can always breathe---inhale, exhale. So, let's all take a deep breath, enjoy the remaining days of summer, savor those moments with our children, take time to just sit still, let the worry and anxiety subside and be in the moment. We've got this..... READY.....SET.....GO!

We will make the most of this school year

Shelby Raymond
Class of 2021

After six months of this pandemic, we're somehow only 24 days away from school starting (at the time of this writing). This will be the first time students are back in the building since March, and many of us, quite frankly, are worried. We recognize the value of being in school. Distance learning last spring showed us that in person schooling comes with benefits: a schedule automatically built into our day; other students to talk to; and teachers immediately available to answer questions. During distance learning, we must build our own schedule; we are isolated from our peers; and

we have less access to teachers. This lack of resources makes it difficult to succeed during distance learning. Students also recognize, however, why distance learning is necessary. The pandemic is not over, and distance learning, while more difficult, seems like the safer option. Even with everyone wearing masks, washing their hands, and physically distancing, even with all of the time, money, and resources in the world, no system is going to be perfect. Students know this. We did not enjoy distance learning, but, as a CHS senior put it, "if it means preventing flu like symptoms at best, and death at worst, I'll do distance learning." This creates a difficult choice for us when picking a schooling option this fall. We all want to be back in school, back to normal, but the school

experience we remember isn't the one we're returning to. More than anything, though, we just want to be safe. So, do we pick in person schooling, where it's easier to learn and be successful, but face a higher health risk? Or, do we pick distance learning, which is less dangerous to our health, but where we have to work much harder to do well? To many students, the blended-learning (hybrid) model seems like the strongest option. It has the resources we appreciate during in person school, while also decreasing the number of opportunities to interact with COVID-19. Unfortunately, this model also places a much greater burden on our teachers, which students want to avoid—they work hard enough as is. Making a decision about what to do

this fall isn't easy, and the choice is different for everyone. In the end, people will go with the option that is best for them and their situation, and shouldn't be made to feel bad about their choice. Even in times as crazy as these, however, some things will always stay the same. The fourth, seventh, and ninth graders are moving into new schools, excited and nervous about what awaits them. The juniors have heard the rumors about how crazy junior year is and are busy bracing themselves for the whirlwind that lies ahead. And the seniors—my class—are getting ready for our last year here in Canton and all of the traditions that it brings—most of the time. This year isn't going to be what any of us expected, but we'll try to make the most of it while we can.

District plans for Blended reopening

The Canton Public School District plans to begin the 2020-21 school year on Aug. 31 with a blended model of instruction that will keep cohorts of students together and reduce building capacity to 50 percent. If all goes well, the district will transition to full-time instruction in four to six weeks, but it is also prepared to move to distance learning model at any point during the school year, should health conditions warrant a temporary or long-term closure of any or all school buildings. With the state of Connecticut's guidance, the district's reopening task force has been meeting since mid-June to develop the three, state-mandated reopening plans. The task force consists of three specific working groups - Teaching and Learning, Student and Staff Health and Wellness, and Systems and Operations. The task force developed three reopening models per state guidance - In Person Learning, the Blended (or hybrid model) and Full Distance Learning. Administrators chose to start with the blended model in conjunction with the Farmington Valley Health District. "While we know that this blended learning model poses challenges for staff, students, and parents, it is the safest way to reopen our schools," Superintendent of Schools Kevin Case said. "Students will have the ability to practice social distancing and allows for the establishment of routines and procedures with mitigation strategies in a more manageable way due to the decreased enrollment of students in the buildings. Our number one goal is to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all of our students and staff." Under the plan, students would be split into cohorts, alphabetically in most cases, with schedule flexibility at the high school. Those in Cohort A would attend school in person on Monday and Tuesday and distance learn on Thursday and Friday while students in Cohort B would do the opposite. On Wednesday during the hybrid model implementation, students would participate in remote learning, meeting with their teacher in a full class, individually or in small group setting, allowing custodial staff at the schools to thoroughly clean each building. The schedule during the weeks of Labor Day and Yom Kippur holidays would be slightly different and students with intensive needs could attend all four days, one of several ways the district is supporting special education students.

As of mid-August, when this publication went to press, administrators planned to transition the district learning, with K-6 beginning full, face-to-face instruction on Sept. 29 and the Middle High School to follow on Oct. 13.

Families do have the choice of opting their children out of face-to-face learning for the 2020-21 school year, which requires filling out paperwork. Parents who opt to then send a student back to in-person learning simply have to provide the school with a week's notice. For those distance learning, K to 6 students will be assigned a distance learning teacher and 7 to 12 students a distance learning teacher/coordinator.

"We wanted to focus strongly on the social emotional needs of our staff, students and families," Case said. "We're committed to providing students with face-to-face instruction, blended learning and distance learning instruction models as needed. We are working to ensure highly engaged instruction and researched based best practices in all classrooms whether virtual or face to face and we will provide distance learning for families who choose to opt out of in-school instruction."

School administrators said all forms of distance learning would involve both synchronous, or real-time, learning and asynchronous instruction, which consists of independent learning with instructional materials, pre-recorded lessons or long-term projects.

Technology is a huge consideration and the district is implementing new software, ensuring that students have access to technology through district provided chromebooks and other initiatives, and providing increased training for students and staff.

The district has also planned for a variety of activities for the fall. While concerts and other special events are on hold, current plans would allow small, socially distant music ensembles and singing group instruction and encourage virtual performances.

The district is also planning to host a fall sports season with guidance from the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (Related story on page 5).

Students will be provided with physical education opportunities, with a focus on teacher-led activities, such as tai-chi, power walk and meditation, that can be practiced individually and focus on life-time fitness.

Social emotional needs are a major emphasis in the district, particularly this year. And schools are continuing

with the collaborative groups at each school that allow students to learn about their peers, discuss societal issues and support a positive culture in socially distanced group settings. The district is also continuing it and expanding focus on resiliency training this year, which are designed to help students navigate peer pressure and other common adolescent issues.

"Social emotional learning is important because it reinforces strong social connections," Case said. "We want to build a sense of community and belonging within the schools' classrooms and the student cohorts and we want to support opportunities with social interactions with peers, even with the constraints of physical distancing, and we will continue to connect with our community health providers for support, along with the Canton Youth Services Bureau which provides support and counseling for our students."

Health and Safety is also paramount this year and the district has also developed protocols for aspects such as face coverings, physical distancing, hygiene, enhanced and frequent cleaning and home health screening.

"We are working to implement a combination of what we are calling mitigation strategies," Case told the Board of Education Aug. 11. "One of these strategies alone won't mitigate the COVID virus but all of these together are maximum ways we can mitigate the virus."

Under state guidelines, with few medically document exceptions, students and staff must wear masks during the day, but will be allotted some outdoor, social-distanced breaks and can take them off to eat lunch, during which they will be seated at least six feet apart. Younger students will eat in their classroom and additional lunch waves have been added to the schedules for middle and high school. Teachers will also wear masks and have access to additional protections such as desk shields.

And while the state is allowing up to full capacity on buses, there will be many safety measures there as well. Working with Martel Transportation, the district is requiring masks, ensuring that students fill the bus from back to front as they are picked up and empty out in reverse. The district is also hoping to hire bus monitors and a bus cohort model will reduce the risk of cross contamination.

Additionally, the district is expecting lower ridership on buses, one of many aspects gleaned through two community surveys. At the same time, it is preparing for increased vehicles



A typical Canton Intermediate School classroom will look like this. In the coming weeks, parents will receive representative visuals for all Canton Schools.

during drop-off and pick-up times. Numerous other steps have been taken to help with safety protocols.

At Cherry Brook Primary School, for example, the district purchased several new desks, putting the preferred collaboration tables in storage for the time being.

Rooms at all schools are being set up to allow at least four to six feet between desks that face the same direction and many larger spaces, such as media centers and cafeterias, have been set up to accommodate larger classes.

There will also be schedule adjustments at schools. In the lower grades, students can generally stay with their cohorts in a classroom while teachers rotate in for specials such as art and music.

The middle and high schools will use 4 x 4 block schedules. Also, longer classes, additional time between classes, and one-way traffic are designed to cut down student traffic in the hallways. Additional time has been built into schedules to provide for safer transitions and other staggered movement and mask breaks.

Additionally, school administrators are taking steps such as opening formerly closed restrooms and ensuring that surfaces are cleaned regularly. Students will clean desks as they leave a classroom and custodial staff has been bolstered and cleanings will take place throughout the day, with a deep cleaning at the end of each day.

The district has also purchased no-touch trash cans and bathroom faucets. Hand washing and sanitizing will be explicitly be taught at the younger grade levels and additional hand sanitizing will be provided in the classroom and throughout each school. Other Health protocols have been established for students staff and families and the district is asking families to take temperatures at home and look for potential COVID symptoms such as fever and chills, cough or shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

See **BLENDED** on page 4

Social, Emotional learning is more important than ever

Social and emotional well-being has been a key priority in The Canton Public Schools for several years but is especially poignant this year as a pandemic and numerous cultural issues have put additional stresses on students and teachers. “Social emotional learning is important because it reinforces strong social connections,” said Superintendent Kevin Case. “We want to build a sense of community and belonging within the schools’ classrooms and the student cohorts and we want to support opportunities with social interactions with peers, even with the constraints of physical distancing, and we will continue to connect with our community health providers for support, along with the Canton Youth Services Bureau which provides support and counseling for our students.”

At the younger grades, social and emotional help will be bolstered by an additional social worker that was included in the 20-21 budget, a position that will allow an in person social worker daily at Cherry Brook and provide increased time at Canton Intermediate School.

The district is also stepping up its efforts around resiliency, taught in partnership with the Farmington Valley Health District. An additional grade level being added each year and now students in 7th through 10th will work on such skills to deal with stress, peer pressure and other common issues.

Juniors and seniors will also receive intelligence and resiliency training and staff will continue learning emotional intelligence academy training, furthering the district’s goal to seamlessly integrate social and emotional well being into every aspect of education.

In developing ways to support students, the district is also delaying the start of school to Aug. 31 in order

to provide 5 full days of professional development.

“As a faculty, we will be discussing strategies and tools during our professional development days about how to help assess and address students’ social and emotional needs as we begin the year,” Kidwell said. “We will continue to work hard to create classroom environments where students can still feel connected and emotionally engaged, despite the physical distance requirements.”

In addition to these and many other overarching initiatives, each school is planning several techniques to help its students navigate the waters.

Cherry Brook Primary School

“Knowing that some of our young students will be entering school for the first time, while others will have not physically been in school since March, our primary goal is to support students so they feel safe and comfortable at Cherry Brook,” said Principal Andy Robbin. “By using ‘Responsive Classroom’ techniques as a guide, students will be a part of building a community that values each other and understands how to support their classmates for a positive culture.”

One support involves morning meetings, during which students greet each other, share about their lives and plans for the day.

Additionally, students will participate in class meetings to revisit expectations and brainstorm solutions for improvement.

“Most importantly, time is dedicated to make sure that each member is valued for who they are as individuals and how they can work together as a group,” Robbin said.

Canton Intermediate School

“The focus for the first several weeks of schools will be developing routines and procedures and helping students feel connected and comfortable,” said principal Rebecca Coiteux said. “This is the priority over academics.”

Strategies Canton Intermediate School plans to employ include:

- All students will have a 20 minute morning meeting or closing circle during their day, every day. This will provide time for community building, reflection, goal setting, and sharing struggles.
- An altered schedule during the first week of school to allow longer and more frequent morning meetings/ closing circles for community building, setting of group norms and expectations, safety training, etc.
- The School Counselor will be increasing the lessons taught to each class to provide more proactive, Tier I support.
- Social Work support is increasing from .5 day per week to two times per week. This individual will collaborate with teachers, do some push in instruction with classes, and provide crisis support to students and families.
- Specials classes, though they may look different now, will offer students an opportunity to enjoy those areas and shine where they have strengths.
- If the district starts with a Blended Learning Model, as planned, Canton Intermediate School students will have a Closing Circle time in addition to the morning meeting.

Canton Middle School

“At Canton Middle School, we will utilize a daily Advisory program to support all students, both in-person and virtually,” said Jeffrey Moore, principal. “This daily check-in will enable each student to belong to a small community within the school, and that community will look out for each other during uncertain times. This will be a primary way for students to bring up and discuss issues and concerns, and the staff leader of that Advisory will identify additional services if they are needed.”

Continued partnership with the health district’s Resiliency Program will provide regular programming to have

structured conversations and activities related to the world we are living in now, Moore said.

And additionally, Canton Middle School will incorporate a “flex period” this year, allowing students to access additional supports without missing class time.

Canton High School

At Canton High School, staff will be encouraged to prioritize students well-being in the first few weeks of school. “As students haven’t seen the inside of a classroom since March 13, there will be an inevitable easing in of how to come back to school, how our new schedule works, and how to prepare for the flip to distance learning at any time,” said Dr. Ruth Kidwell, assistant principal at Canton High School.

Canton High School will also implement the following.

- A social-emotional wellness screening will be sent out to all families to serve as a barometer for how students’ are feeling as they prepare to return. School counselors, our social worker and psychologist, as well as administration will be reaching out to individual families and students to connect and offer support.
- CHAT, the high school advisory, will be maintained every week, with additional CHAT time in the first weeks of school. A focus on social-emotional learning will drive our CHAT lessons this year, with the help of our own staff members and the Farmington Valley Health Department, through their resilience workshops.
- The SAVE club (Students Against Violence Everywhere) was initiated as part of the Sandy Hook Promise. The club is run by a school counselor and school psychologist, and their primary focus is teaching students and staff social-emotional skills while creating a welcoming environment for all. Clubs in general will resume shortly after the school year begins, whether in person or virtually, giving students another layer of involvement in the school.

BLEND

from page 3

Staff at each school will also follow a bevy of health protocols, including looking for signs of illness. The district will follow very specific steps if there a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 and a positive case will result in working with the health district on contact tracing, mitigation strategies and short-term building closure.

This year, school visitation will be extremely limited and campuses, including the track field at the high school, will be off limits to visitors

during the school day.

While health and social and emotional support are paramount this year. The district is also committed to rigorous academics, Case said. Teachers will implore several strategies, such as formative assessments and observation to develop teaching strategies. Grading and report cards will be given.

“We know our students have been out of the classroom for five months and we want their return to school to be extremely rewarding. We want to make sure we ensure every student’s success and every student is engaged

in their learning,” Case said.

And the district is fully aware that plans can change at any moment. Julie Auseré, chair of Canton’s Board of Education, urged the public to be patient and respectful of other opinions and potentially changing scenarios.

And Case emphasized the need for flexibility.

“We need to be able to adjust, adapt. We need to be flexible,” Case said at the Aug. 11 BOE meeting. “We waited as long as we could to make sure we had the most thoughtful plan in place for the return of our students

and staff we’re trying to solve a very complex puzzle with an unclear picture of what the future may hold. There are many possibilities and unknowns that we’ve had to plan for. So, I do ask and I know all of our families have been very patient as we plan for the safety of our students and families who are at the forefront of all of our decisions. We are prepared to provide the best and safest educational experience for all of our students and I will continue to communicate our plan with the latest information and the principals will do so from the school level.”

High School counselors continue to adapt

With the onset of the pandemic this past spring, Canton High School counselors had to be

particularly flexible as they worked to help all students.

“The pandemic is the clearest example we’ve ever seen in the need for counselors to be able to make strong adjustments: to be flexible, nimble, and prepared to shift and/or pivot quickly based on changing needs,” said Deborah L. Schwager, Canton High School’s director of School Counseling. “This past spring, and going forward, counselors have shifted their priority toward allocating more time toward responsive services to meet the needs of our students, and to do so in more flexible ways. We made many shifts beginning in March, and these will continue”

Upon the closure of school in March, counselors knew they needed to quickly determine who needed urgent help. “We developed a quick and simple ‘check-in’ form and set up Google meetings with students and parents who responded with a need for help, and this allowed us to get a kind of overall pulse of our students.” Counselors also knew that the Class of 2020 needed their attention.

“We knew our seniors were highly concerned about their future plans,”

Schwager said. “How could they choose a college, when they never had a chance to visit? What about the financial circumstances that may have changed? What would college even ‘look like’ this fall, a question still outstanding as colleges continue to develop and adjust their plans?”

There were no quick answers and even as of late summer, some students were still shifting their plans, but counselors were able to lay some solid groundwork through events such as a live workshop with admissions personnel from Fairfield University in April, followed by a similar program, with Fairfield joined by NC State, for the Class of 2021, to provide updates and new guidance based on the shifting landscape of higher ed and college admissions.

Providing workshops like these live but recorded for future viewing has already become the new norm

This allowed the team to provide the same spring programming that would have been provided in school. School counselor Jen Theodoratos managed a newly configured Junior Jumpstart, providing resources to The Class of 2021 to get started on their CommonApp, complete their resume, and other previously assigned responsibilities. Counselor Mike Furey led the way in taking the sophomore school counseling curriculum online, in partnership with Finance and

Economics teachers, diving into the financial realities of college planning, with updated information based on pandemic economic forecasts.

In addition to finding ways to deliver curriculum, counselors and families have been challenged to find consistent ways to communicate. Collaboration and strong communication with families and teachers has been more important than ever to ensure student needs are met. We will continue to be in close contact with teachers, who did an amazing job letting us know on a weekly basis who they felt needed help,” she said. “This collaboration was, and will continue to be, key to our ability to best serve our students this fall.”

Additionally, counselors will continue to rely on our SchoolMessenger communication system and online links to inform parents and students about deadlines, tasks, and important happenings. Keeping track of emails when students are applying to college will become a key priority for counselors, seniors, and parents. Looking ahead, the department plans to visit Canton Mastery Project (CAMP) classes, assess seniors’ progress on post-high plans and to offer an individual meeting with each senior. All documents will be available on the web site and the department will host virtual college rep visits. And counselors are also excited to

meet incoming freshmen, find safe ways to deliver transition-based lessons and assure these new high schoolers that counselors will be their partners for the next four years.

Despite the new challenges, Schwager also wants students and families to know that “counselors are always available in case of an urgent need, and families should not hesitate to reach out,” she said. “If your student’s counselor is not immediately available, one of the others will help in the interim. In anticipation of increased individual needs, counselors will set aside additional time for individual urgent needs, in partnership with our social worker and psychologist colleagues. We are here for you.”

School counselors also understand that this year could bring about more changes.

“While we’re certainly living in an extraordinary era with many unique challenges, we lean toward Mr. Case’s ‘growth mindset’ to guide us in our work,” Schwager said. “We know that our students can and will be successful even during trying times! We know that we will all have to maintain flexibility and maintain open-mindedness to address varying circumstances. Despite challenges, we remain excited as always to begin the school year... perhaps more excited. We’ve missed seeing our students.”

District hopeful for a fall sports season

While it comes with modifications, and the possibility of change, the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference’s plan for fall sports was a welcome announcement.

“I’m very excited to hear that the CIAC is trying to have a fall sports season and I know they worked very hard to put together a plan that they believe will be beneficial for student-athletes all the while being as safe as it can be,” said Kim Church, Canton’s Athletic director. “Athletics is such an integral part of the educational experience and I believe with the help of our coaches and student-athletes following the new guidelines and protocols, that we can complete a successful fall season.”

While it acknowledged that plans during the COVID-19 pandemic are always subject to change, on July 31, the CIAC released its plan for an abbreviated season, regional play

and an extended conditioning period designed to allow athletes to prepare for the rigors of sports. Plans for tournaments are also in progress.

Under the plan, small cohorts of up to 15 athletes can work with coaches on conditioning and drills through Sept. 11, when full practices can begin. Scrimmages for most sports would start Sept. 18. Sporting contests would begin Sept. 24 and end the last days of October. Cross Country, Field Hockey, Soccer, Swimming and Volleyball would be allowed 2 games per week, with a maximum number of 12 in the season. Football would be able to play 1 game a week, for a maximum of six. Tournaments would generally take place in the first two weeks of November, with Cross Country on a slightly early schedule of Oct. 31 to Nov. 8.

The plan also contains numerous specifics on practice timelines, hygiene, facilities and social distancing. Following CDC guidelines, masks are generally not required when students are engaged in vigorous

activity but will be worn in situations such as sitting on benches and during interaction with coaches. Coaches and other adults helping at contests are to wear masks.

The CIAC has provided spectator guidelines, but whether or not they are allowed is up to each school and Canton was still developing guidelines when this publication went to press.

The CIAC has also made it clear that the situation is fluid. For example, should the state see a marked increase in cases and the state moved to a full distance learning model, sports would very likely be canceled.

Despite the restrictions and the possibility that things could change; Church is excited that Canton expects to field all of its fall teams.

“Canton should be able to field teams for all of our fall sports, including our middle school sports teams,” Church added. The restrictions put in place will have an effect on how Canton proceeds with athletics, but that is the case with everyone around the state.

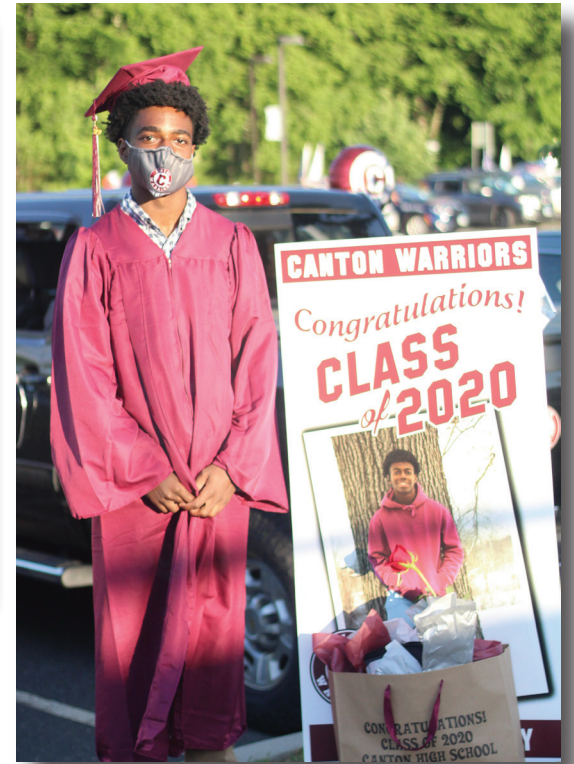
We are all in the same boat and we are all trying to make this work for everyone involved.”

Church also praised the CIAC, which consulted with school administrators, athletic directors, state officials and the Connecticut State Medical Society Sports Medicine Committee in developing its plan.

“I want to thank everyone that was involved with the process, especially the executive director, Glenn Lungarini,” Church said. “We all understand that things may change from day to day but with this being the scenario right now, I am anxious to get things going in the fall.

I think the important point to make with this plan is how it shows the true meaning of what educational athletics is all about. This plan focuses on participation and the social, emotional and physical benefits that interscholastic athletics emphasizes. It will be a short season and a different style post-season but the important thing is that the students are engaging with each other and being active.”

The Class of 2020



The Canton High School Class of 2020 held its graduation June 12, first gathering at Canton High School, where the safe graduation committee and school officials had provided a festive scene. While there, teachers drove around the “circle,” waving at the graduates.

From there, the seniors and their families paraded to the Shops at Farmington Valley, where they enjoyed a combination of an in-person and “virtual” celebrations. Families parked in front of a big screen at the shopping center and enjoyed pre-recorded speeches and “virtual” performances by the Canton High School choir and band, as well as the National Anthem performed by flautist and graduate Alyssa Peters. In addition to the student speeches that can be read on the following pages, the class heard from Superintendent Kevin Case and Board of Education chair Julie Auseré. Students were able to cross the stage and pose for a photo, as their names were announced. Additionally, the seniors gathered for a traditional cap toss at the end.



The Class of 2020



This past spring, Cherry Brook Primary School sent off its 3rd graders with a reverse parade. The 3rd graders drove through the parking lot at school to the cheering CBPS staff. They were greeted by their 3rd grade teacher and given a class shirt!



The Canton Intermediate School Grade 6 Celebration, was held on Tuesday, June 16. There were 115 students in the class. Students' families could choose one of 6 half-hour time slots in which to drive through the CIS driveway to receive a certificate, a gift from the PTO, and have a picture taken. The "CIS Rising Stars" were celebrated and honored by the CIS community.



The Class of 2020

Hi, everyone. I first want to say that I am so honored, humbled, and blessed to be speaking tonight, especially considering the circumstances.

A big thank you to Mr. DiPippo, Dr. Kidwell, Mr. Case, and all the other administrators, staff, teachers, parents, and community members who helped make tonight possible. We do not take it lightly and we thank you for sticking by our sides for the past four years through the good and the bad. Thank you for making tonight our night, even if it is not what we have come to know from years past.

This speech is something that has long been a dream of mine, mostly a pipe dream up until recently when I was lucky enough for it to turn into a reality. It's funny though, to remember all of the times I had thought of this speech, this moment, and this night prior to this past spring. Watching past years' graduations was fun and exciting, but I knew that, of course, my class's graduation would be unmatched and one of the most special moments of my life. I mean, class of 2020, come on. Even the year said so, despite all the corny vision jokes that came with it. I couldn't wait for the night where we all could be celebrated for all that we are – hard-working, strong, vibrant, diligent, and smart. But most importantly, for completing the first chapter of our lives and entering into the next one. I pictured a summer night in June, after a spring senior semester of last laughs and hugs of course among finals and AP tests. I imagined about 25 different versions of this speech all essentially about the usual – life's hard lessons, moving on, and growing up. I know that we all imagined walking across the stage in front of our family and friends like everyone else was able to. But boy did we not know what 2020 had in store for us.

When I got the news that I was to be valedictorian for Canton's class of 2020 it came at a time in late April when I had barely seen anything but my house, my neighborhood, or the inside of my car driving around to nowhere for a solid month and a half. While I was excited to receive this news and proud to be the first female Valedictorian in the past six years, it came at a time where I and many of my classmates were feeling hopeless, devastated, and lost. We were in the limbo of hoping for the

best, but constantly feeling as if the rug was going to be pulled out from under us at any second. We wondered for almost two months whether the Friday of March 13th would be our last day of high school ever, and we never even knew it. And then, unfortunately, on May 5th, we got the news that this bad dream was our reality. We were crushed. It was hard not to feel devastated when you realize how we would never get to sit in our classes again, hug our friends in the hallways again, and maybe never talk to our teachers again. It was heartbreaking to think that we all could've seen most of the people who we have spent the last 13 years growing up with for the last time and we never even knew it. On top of this, we were forced to entertain the possibility that we would lose more – the traditions that we knew we deserved and had worked so hard to get to these past four years. Talk about an extremely bad case of Friday the 13th bad luck. No one across the world knew how to handle the coronavirus pandemic when it first hit. Everyone was scared, shocked, and left without any answers to the suddenly innumerable amount of concerns. Everyone's questions were only met with more for months on end. It was hard to find clear answers or visions of hope. We all had to start finding ways to work through it together however we could. It is unprecedented, and we are still dealing with it today, which we will continue to do for the coming weeks and months. We are hopeful and lucky to have made it through the worst of it.

Of course, we are not the only ones who had to make sacrifices as quite literally all we had to do was stay home, which many of us are pretty good at. There were essential workers out on the front lines fighting every day to keep our grandparents, our peers and our hope alive. And to all of them, all of us in the class of 2020 thank you. We, as high school seniors, were in no way the heroes in this or the ones that deserved the spotlight on our issues, but we were the underdogs in the background hoping for one more month, one more week, one more day to spend at school. For once in our lives, we wanted nothing more than to wake up at 6 in the morning and come to CHS. One more chance to say goodbye. We deserved these last days of our childhood, and we knew it. And then, we lost it. It was not fair for us as 17 and

Valedictory Address

18-year-olds to have our last months, memories, and moments of high school taken from us. These are things that we never should have had to question whether we would get to experience or not. Things that are, or were supposed to be, a given. It was these past months at home where I realized truly how much these magic moments I was in danger of losing, like my high school graduation, meant to me.

It's just as much about the diploma and the walk across the stage as it is about the past thirteen years of hard work as it is about the 113 of us here tonight. Each and every person. It's in these moments where everything comes together – our past, our present, and our future. These are the moments that make up our lives. And in quarantine, I found myself longing for any glance of them I could get, in any way possible. For a couple of days here and there, it seemed possible for things to die down by the end of May or June, especially towards the beginning of all of this. But unfortunately, it wasn't. School was canceled for the rest of the year and I was left with a pit in my stomach and a heavy heart. It didn't feel real, but every senior had to wrap their head around the possibility of receiving their diploma in the mail and having to put their senior prom dress back into the closet without ever being worn.

Yet there is always a silver lining. It took me a little searching to find it, but I realized that this time at home really taught me what it means to take things, people, and places for granted. And I know many others can attest to that. On the large scale, these past few months were about school, graduation, prom and the future. These things are what caused all of us feelings of anxiety and sorrow as we had to spend months thinking about how they were in jeopardy, and then processing how some would be lost. It was hard. We knew that we had taken our normal life for granted, and we still aren't sure when we will really be able to get it back.

However, perspective is everything. We all know what we have lost and that there may be more at stake for us to lose. But if we flip how we all think about this, we can realize that some beautiful things come out of times like these too. In quarantine, my focus and energy was not so



Annabel Hayes
Valedictorian

much always spent contemplating my large scale losses but it instead was turned to doing whatever it took to get through it – one day at a time. It's the little things that got me to the next morning and helped me sleep through the nights – a text or call from a friend or family member checking in, a reassuring quote, a pretty sunset, or even 10 minutes

alone outside listening to music. It is also the little things that we thought of fondly and smiled about when thinking of the next time we could do them normally – going to a friend's house, driving around singing at the top of your lungs with them, giving someone a hug and not letting go. These little things add up to so much, whether we realize it or not. And these little glimpses of love, hope, and happiness are what get us to the big moments in our lives, and what will continue to get us through the hardest times. This is what we need to focus on in the dark to get us to the light. And I think it's safe to say that tonight is the brightest light there has been for many of us in a while.

Our parents, community members, teachers, and administrators poured their heart, effort and time into doing whatever they could to make tonight our night to remind us that not all was lost. It's not a secret that our graduation is not what we expected it to look like. We did not get to graduate together as a class in the usual sense. We didn't get to walk down in pairs and sit right next to each other in the crowd. However, I would like to believe that tonight we have been given something much more special. We have lost a lot because of Corona, but we have been given the opportunity to search for the good. A lot of us have been pushed to furthering our connections with faith, family, and friends and our bonds have grown stronger due to this experience we have shared as a class. Tonight, we have been given a glimpse of how beautiful the world is in the midst of uncertainty and casualty. We are able to see how determined people become to turn horrible things into special moments – in any way that they can. Every single person in this crowd tonight sees us as worth the extra mile. We are so lucky to be in this moment right here and right now and we will

See **VALEDICTORIAN** on page 12

The Class of 2020

Salutatory Address

As a member of “You can’t test my vision on a standard chart because I can’t make out the big E at the top without my glasses” club, I can’t stand the class of 2020 clear vision jokes. The way the 20/20 thing works is that you want a smaller number on the bottom. So really, ever since 2001, our vision has just been getting worse. It really shouldn’t be surprising that it was 2020 when things got entirely unpredictable. I don’t have a lot to say about how to be successful going forward, because that’s a shot against a moving target in the dark. Instead, I’m going to choose the neglected joke: Hindsight is 20/20. As in: In hindsight, I should have started by talking about the marshmallow experiment.

One of the more famous child psychology experiments revolved around marshmallows. Researchers presented children with a marshmallow and told them if they didn’t eat it for 5 minutes, they

would get a second marshmallow. To absolutely no one’s surprise, a great number of the children just ate the marshmallow.

We are taught from a young age to work hard now for a future payoff. Learn to take notes in fifth grade for middle school. Learn to take notes in middle school for high school. Learn to take notes in high school for college. I swear, if I get to college and am told I need to learn to take notes for grad school, I might just drop out.

But still: the message is clear. Focus on your goals, work hard, and there will be a future payoff.

Wait five minutes, and I will bring you a second marshmallow. Work hard for 12 years, and you will graduate high school. You will go to parties and picnics and proms. Senior pranks and skip days. You will run around Canton chasing each other with water guns, because you’ve finally made it, your hard work has paid off, and now you get a second marshmallow.

Which is all well and good until you don’t get the second marshmallow.

Hindsight being 2020, I realize now that I was counting on a researcher who didn’t exist giving me a second marshmallow that was never actually promised. It’s tempting to think that maybe we just haven’t reached the end yet. I mean, for many of us, there’s four years of college to push through. And all of us have to enter the job market at the bottom of our fields and work our way up. So maybe we just have to go through all that, and then we’ll get the second marshmallow.

Alternatively, you can just eat the first marshmallow. [If there’s no researcher, we are not punished for enjoying ourselves now. We can always get more.]

Now, it’s too late to blow off studying to hang out with friends – and I couldn’t honestly recommend that, anyway – but we still have time to enjoy ourselves. The



Matthew Andrews
Salutatorian

summer stretches out in front of us, unoccupied by summer homework and reading, free of college visits and programs.

Released from the obligations of high school, we are left to pursue what we want to do. We can spend time with our friends and family and indulge the capricious whims we may have chosen to ignore. Looking back,

I don’t remember studying for finals in my sophomore year, but instead, going to football games and cheering with friends.

The choices we make now, in hindsight, will not be equal.

To recap: your choices are to eat the first marshmallow, which does not exclude you from any future marshmallows, or to wait for an indeterminate length of time to get a second marshmallow, which may or may not exist.

Personally, I plan to make a s’more.

A special message to the Class of 2020

By Logan Haynes
Class of 2020

Good Evening Superintendent Case, Board of Education Members, Mr. D, administration, teachers and fellow graduates. My speech today is about remembering me and how we learned together.

I want you to remember that as we go out into the world.

First, I want to thank my mom, my dad, my brother Ethan and my sister Megan – who helped me get to where I am today!

I also want to thank my teachers and friends.

Many of you are continuing on to college and jobs.

You are going to meet all kinds of people.

When you meet someone like me, I

want you to remember me.

Remember the time I made you smile or laugh.

Remember when we worked on a project together and got a good grade?

Remember all the times we spent time together. You valued me and I valued you.

Thank you for including me in your day – it was the best time ever.

Remember me and give other people with disabilities a chance to be included.

People with disabilities have a lot to offer to the world.

I ask that you be kind, be a friend or offer an opportunity if one comes up.

Kindness has been a theme throughout our school journey.

I ask you to be brave and be kind to everyone.

People like me just want to have friends, be valued, work hard, be



Austin Kilduff, Charlie Corso and Logan Haynes

included and most of all have opportunities just like you. So, with your 2020 vision - See Me!

Remember Me! When you go out into the world.

I Love You Guys!!!

The Class of 2020

A Farewell message

Class of 2020: we finally made it. We can finally let out that big sigh of relief; all of our hard work has paid off.

All the ups and downs of our many years of schooling have led to this point, and we can now celebrate everything we have accomplished. Although we never envisioned our time in Canton ending this way, it is crucial to remember that, in a time characterized by so much fear and negativity, we will move beyond this great challenge. We should take time to appreciate the things we have and look at the bright side. For instance, I am now able to put on my resume that I have been on FM radio, AND I got to be on a jumbotron. I see this as an absolute win.

Today we gather and celebrate everything this phenomenal class has accomplished. I cannot stress enough how proud I am to be a member of this class; to have grown up with so many compassionate and talented people has truly been a blessing.

There really is nothing like Canton, a community that is so closely knit and filled with opportunities. The memories we have made here, good and bad, will remain with us as we move into the next chapter of our lives, because they helped shape who we are.

Growing up with each other and making memories is something we should never take for granted, because there is something really special about this town. All of the little things that seemed huge, like the Bronx Zoo field trip or the Civil War simulation, make growing up in Canton so meaningful. Who remembers our field trip to Nature's Classroom? Despite the fact that some of us, including myself, got the flu, it was an absolute blast – a chance for our whole grade to really bond. Another experience we all will never forget is our trip to Washington D.C., ESPECIALLY the dance ... Let's leave it at that. I just want to take a moment to brag about how talented and gifted this class really is. And when I say

talented, I mean TALENTED. Our class has contributed to more state and conference championships in the past 4 years than I can honestly count. And let's not forget all of the incredible athletes who have broken their own individual records, and accomplished huge milestones during their time at Canton. Oh and, by the way, during spirit week of our freshman year, we kind of destroyed the seniors in the basketball game, but no big deal. But what makes this class truly so special is the fact that not only do we have talented athletes, but we also have incredible musicians, bright students, and a lot of people you just can't help but smile when you see them. This year's PRISMS concert was a testament to some of the creative minds in this grade, since it was the most ambitious student-run concert in Canton to date, and in my opinion it was amazing, but I am a little biased. Not only do we have talented creative artists and instrumental musicians, but we have incredibly talented choral musicians as well as some phenomenal actors. Additionally, there are students who saw great success in groups such as the robotics team as well as Model UN. There are just so many just so many talented and gifted students in this class that I could go on for hours. One example of a student that has always blown my mind is Jack Freedenberg. I'll walk into school and hear Jack say he got 2 hours of sleep as he starts a ten page paper that is due the same exact day, and I just ask myself, "how is he like, alive?" but guess what, he somehow manages to finish the paper on time, walking into class and handing it in while the papers are still warm from the printer. And here's the kicker, the dude gets an A. I just don't get it. What sets this class apart from others though, is the fact that this class is filled with compassion, and truly cares about their school, their community and their peers. Whether they were involved in a national honor society doing frequent community service, or being a member of groups like

the Leo Club or Rotary, who were constantly reaching out to places in our community and even around the world to make an impact. This past year some people for their Canton Mastery Project decided to solely focus on serving the community and making the world a better place. It's that drive to make an impact and improve the world that makes this class so special.

Okay ladies and gentlemen, now it's time for the deep and philosophical message that I want to deliver to all of you. So buckle up. Literally buckle up; you're all in your cars so it should be easy! Never give up on your dream. Every single one of us were born with a purpose, to make a difference in some way, shape or form. Don't live your life in pursuit of the things that won't last. Famous evangelical pastor and author Rick Warren once wrote, "At some point in your life you must decide whether you want to impress people or influence people". When I think of this class, I think of people who are eager to influence, who are eager to make a difference in this world, and right now the world needs us more than ever. The desire to make a difference starts with a dream in your head; however, you can not pursue that dream until you wake up with a vision, a plan. So I want you to ask yourself, "How am I going to influence people? How am I going to change the world?" Not everything in life will always go our way, and not everything is in our control. And in those times when we feel defeated, it may be easier to just give up, but no mountain worth climbing is an easy climb. We may not be in control of everything that happens in our lives, but through perseverance we can overcome



Carter Gavin
President, CHS
Class of 2020

any obstacle. Singer Jimmy Dean once said, "I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination". I believe what sets apart the influencers from the impressers, is having that determination to adjust your sails and never giving up on that dream, even if it means sailing into a storm.

As Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Far better

it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in that gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat." No matter where the wind takes you, if you keep your final destination in mind, you will surely reach it.

While it is bittersweet to be here, knowing that one chapter of our life is behind us and another is just beginning, one thing I know for sure is that this class and this community will always be a part of who we are.

On behalf of the class of 2020, I want to thank all of the friends, family members, teachers, administrators, coaches, and everyone else who has gotten us to this point. Without all of your love and support for us, we would have never made it to this moment. It was through your guidance and wisdom that we have gained the skills and knowledge we need to succeed in this next chapter of our lives.

To the Class of 2020, congratulations! We finally made it. No matter where you go, never forget where you came from. Never forget who you are and who you want to be. And ultimately, never forget that you have the power to make your dreams a reality.

Thank you.

Jon Bishop appointed Director of Learning and Innovation

For many, the word innovate involves something new. For Jon Bishop, however, the word envelops a much broader concept.

“Innovation is not necessarily about bringing in brand new things to be bright and shiny,” said Bishop, Canton’s new Director of Learning and Innovation.

“It’s about consistently reflecting on what you do, how you do it, where it’s value is and then being able to identify where the best opportunities are to move forward.”

With nearly 20 years of educational experience, Bishop has certainly had some time to think about the matter. For the last five years, he served as the Canton School District’s STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) coordinator, a position which extensively involved improving current offerings, integrating curriculum and launching new experiences. This summer, the Board of Education formally appointed Bishop to his new role, an evolution to the district’s former Assistant Superintendent position.

Some of Bishop’s responsibilities, such as grant writing, communications responsibilities, coordinating and analyzing testing data, and aligning and integrating the district’s curriculum, are traditional assistant superintendent duties.

Bishop will also be responsible for several aspects of technology, including evaluating its use in extracurricular activities, the classroom and other areas.

He will also coordinate World Language, Technical Education and Physical Education/Health Curriculum. Bishop will also have several duties around working with principals and the director of pupil personnel on student support, including social and emotional well-being and individual needs.

And Bishop is excited to keep exploring community opportunities as well. Partially inspired by his own experience growing up with a brother that has special needs, he’s already worked with Favarh, a Canton-based organization that supports those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Bishop said he’s especially interested in exploring more opportunities for experiential learning and integrating disciplines and subject matter, so students get a broader perspective, and “find added relevance, along with

vigor, to what we do.”

And through it all, feedback from students, staff and the public in an effort to continually provide better education, will also be key in his new role.

“A lot of what I’m going to be working to do is to help us to better understand our systems of assessment to provide feedback and feed forward for instruction for kids so that we can make things as meaningful as we can for students, teachers and families,” Bishop said.

His duties will keep his plate full and the pandemic is certainly causing extra work as the district plans for three possible scenarios that could change as the year progresses, but Bishop is determined to find time to spend in classrooms as much as possible when that does become viable.

“I’m going to be in classrooms and with kids as much as I possibly can,” he said. “I still love the craft of teaching and the relationship that’s built between the teacher and the student and I want to have my eyes on what’s happening and my ear to the heartbeat of everything happening as much as I possibly can because I do love working with teachers and kids.”

Bishop discovered a love of education, and community, early in life.

He grew up in Helena, Montana. His dad, Mike, worked for the Environmental Protection Agency and his mom, Jane, was a teacher. The latter, along with other formative experiences, such as helping his brother Andrew and working at summer camps, really stoked his passion for education.

Bishop went on to get his undergraduate degree at Carroll College, receiving a bachelor’s in elementary and middle school education, while focusing on STEM courses.

Carroll College also brought another gift. While completing an extra semester at college, while student teaching, he met his future wife, Kim. She had graduated from Susquehanna University and had moved out to Montana to explore the Rocky Mountains. She had also landed a job in the admissions office at the school. He had mentioned Kim to his mother and somewhat to his embarrassment, his mom called her boss and set up a blind date. It all worked out, however, as the two were married in 2003.

After college, Bishop started teaching for Helena School District #1, starting as a 6th-grade math teacher and then as Gifted and Talented Specialist and Afterschool Program Teacher Coordinator. There he worked on expanding opportunities for students, a focus he had himself. Bishop has participated in extracurricular activities such as student government, activities and ministry while in College, pursued volunteer opportunities such as coaching for Special Olympics and pursuing professional development and advanced degrees in recent years. And even when working for that first district, he knew that he might have to expand his horizons.

“After a few years my wife and I decided to move to Texas just to get a broader perspective on life and experience in education,” he said. He worked for three years as a fourth-grade teacher and Gifted and Talented Specialist at C.F. Saigling Elementary in the Plano Independent School District.

“I purposely moved outside of my comfort zone. In a desire for a long career in education, and a hope to eventually be in an administrative position, I wanted to have as broad a perspective as I could so that I so I could emphasize and strategize as effectively as possible, with whomever I was working with.” Fortunately, that district was also strong in professional development, an experience he said was almost the equivalent of a bachelor’s in professional development.

In 2007, the family, now with one daughter, moved to Connecticut, where Bishop began working at The Master’s School, where he worked for 8 years, in roles that included Math, Science, and Technology Teacher and Program Developer and Director of the Middle School. Bishop found another connection in the state, while working toward his Master’s Degree in Education, Curriculum and Instruction at the University of St. Joseph, where he had none other than Canton Superintendent Kevin Case as one of his professors.

“I met Kevin and was immediately blown away by his thoughtful approach to contemporary education and his commitment to the Canton



Jon Bishop
*Director of Learning
and Innovation*

community and I thought to myself boy that’s a spot that I’d love to find myself in,” Bishop said. And in 2015, he came to Canton as STEM coordinator. In that position, Bishop taught computer science and computer programming classes, developed a robotics programs, worked at revamping curriculum for careers in technical education and while “embracing the core of an outstanding library program but

also bringing in contemporary future ready skills within it.”

Bishop and his family also found Canton to be a place that offered more than just employment, but also a great place for family, which includes Sam, a rising 6th grader and Maggie, a rising 8th grader.

“I moved family here after two years of working, because I loved who I worked with – the kids, the community and the teachers. I wanted my family to be part of that. So, I am all in.”

Bishop and his wife Kim, who works in the college placement office at Miss Porter’s School, have also enjoyed working at a summer camp in Maine each summer.

“Over the years we really enjoyed it. We’ve been blessed to teach and work and also be assistant directors of residential summer camp in Maine, so it’s made a wonderful life for us here in New England,” Bishop said.

Bishop said he’s also been so grateful to learn from both Case and former Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jordan Grossman, who last school year took the superintendent job in Granby.

And, despite the challenges of the position, particularly with the uncertainty surrounding a pandemic, Bishop is excited for the new job.

“When this new position was developed, it was kind of the accumulation of all the things that I have loved and wanted to be able to stretch against and serve with for the entirety of my career in a place that I love and am excited to be able to give back,” he said. “I’m grateful for the opportunity to serve my community. I will continue to do everything that I can to continue to model being a lifelong learner, a hard worker and a valued community member, which are things we all want our students to be able to do as well.”

NEW CERTIFIED STAFF 2020-21

Samantha Card



Cherry Brook Primary School – Music Teacher
Education: Masters of Arts – Music Education – UCONN; Bachelors – Music Education – UCONN
Previous: Stage manager at von der Mehden Recital

Hall, Storrs; Soprano Section Leader at Emanuel Lutheran Church, Manchester; Soprano at Hampton Congregational Church, Hampton

Alison Coddington



Elementary – School Social Worker
Education: Sixth Year Degree – Masters of Social Work from Simmons College, Boston, MA; Bachelors – Social Work, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield
Previously Employed:

Therapeutic Program Adjustment Counselor at Franklin Public Schools; School Social Worker at Carroll School, Waltham, MA; Social Worker at Gifford School, Weston, MA.

Michelle Levesque



Grade 3 – Cherry Brook Primary School
Education: Masters – Early Childhood Education at Saint Joseph College, West Hartford; Bachelors – Elementary Education, Massachusetts State University
Previously Employed:

Long-term sub at Cherry Brook Primary School; Permanent building sub at Cherry Brook Primary School; SRBI Paraeducator at Cherry Brook Primary School

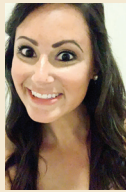
Melanie Drinkwater



Science Teacher – Canton Middle School
Education: Masters – Teaching Science, State University of New York, Stony Brook; Bachelors – Biology, Goshen College, IN
Previously Employed:

Teaching Assistant for Cell Biology, Microbiology, Microbial Biology, and Anatomy at Goshen College – Goshen, IN

Samantha Grobard



Special Education Teacher – Canton Intermediate School
Education: Masters – Special Education, Saint Joseph College, West Hartford; Bachelors – Special Education and Liberal Arts, Massachusetts State University, Westfield State

University
Previously Employed: Paraeducator Simsbury Public Schools, Simsbury; Special Education Assistant at Wheeler Clinic, Plainville

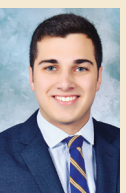
Megan Mason



Grade 4 – Canton Intermediate School
Education: Masters – Reading and Language Arts, Central Connecticut State University; Bachelors – Elementary and Special Education – Salve Regina University
Previously Employed:

VIP Kid as an ESL Teacher in San Francisco, CA; Elementary Classroom Teacher at Farmington Public Schools –

James 'Jack' Schirber



Math Teacher – Canton High School
Education: Masters – Secondary Education in Mathematics – University of Rhode Island
Bachelors – Math/Statistics – University of Connecticut
Previously Employed:

Mt. Hope High School Student Teacher in Math – Bristol, RI; Camp Wannago again, Camp Counselor – Johnston, RI

Kelly DiMartino



Special Education Teacher – Cherry Brook Primary School
Education: Masters – Special Education, Central Connecticut State University; Bachelors – Elementary Education, Mount Saint Mary's University, MD
Previously Employed:

The Webb School in the Valley, Institute of Living – Avon; Elementary Teacher at St. Thomas the Apostle School, West Hartford

Megan Wood



Grade 6 – Canton Intermediate School
Education: Masters – University of St. Joseph; Bachelors – The Culinary Institute of America
Previously Employed: Canton Intermediate School – Started in March 2019;

Grade 6; Torrington Public Schools – Long Term Sub – Grade 4 STEM; Canton Public Schools Building Substitute

Elizabeth Brodbar



Cherry Brook Primary School – Special Education Teacher
Education: Masters of Professional Studies from Manhattanville College, NY; Bachelors of Business – University College Cork
Previously Employed:

Special Education Teacher K-1 at Pine Grove Elementary School, Avon; 4th Grade Special Education Teacher at Baychester Academy, Bronx, N.Y.; Student Support Specialist at Roaring Brook Elementary, Avon; Special Education Teacher K-2 at Urbin T. Kelley Elementary Southington.

Zoe Kramer



Special Education Teacher – Canton Middle School
Education: Masters – Special Education – Saint Joseph College; Bachelors – Sociology & Psychology – Keene State College - NH
Previously Employed:

Special Education Paraeducator – 2013-2019 – at Canton Public Schools

Board of Education 2020 Meeting Dates

- September 8
- September 22
- October 13
- October 27
- November 10
- November 24
- December 8

Meetings start at 7 p.m.

Due to COVID-19 please check www.cantonschools.org to check whether each session will be held virtually or in person.

VALEDICTORIAN

from page 8

remember this forever. We are a small part of this big world but we individually are so special, and I take tonight as a reminder of that. We are not here by mistake or by misfortune or by chance. We were meant to end up here, even if it's not what we wanted originally. Tonight, the Canton community has shown us just this in a pretty awesome way. We are here tonight surrounded by the people we love, thinking of our achievements and our struggles these past 13 years in the place we call home. We have made it, even though for a while it seemed like we never would. We are so incredibly lucky to have such amazing support systems and have had unbelievable opportunities that have pushed us to be who we truly are. Yet despite this, life is sometimes unfair. We all know this well by now, so I end this speech without another recount of what tonight means to us but instead with a reminder of what we must take forward. We have to live for the little things, and we have to keep going for the magic moments. Regardless of what we all had to sacrifice, we still have each other, our families and those we love. This is what life is about. Every single one of us is here for a reason. We are only teenagers and life has both the best and the worst still in store for us, but we are strong. We know that we will make it, definitely with a few bruises along the way, but we will. Hard times lead to some of the most beautiful and unique moments. So find the joy in every day and never, ever take anything or anyone for granted.

Put on your mask, hug your people, and hug them tight.

Thank you.

Board of Education Members

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