

Canton Public Schools

Opening Minds... Transforming Lives

Spring 2019



Photos by John Senecal

Canton High School presents 'Legally Blonde'



To see more photos of 'Legally Blonde, 'The Musical' held March 15 to 17 go to page 6.

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

As you will read in this Spring edition of the Canton Public Schools' Newsletter, Opening Minds... Transforming Lives, the Canton Public Schools continue to be a Lighthouse District, where our students and staff shine brightly and a District to which other School Systems throughout Connecticut and the world look to in order to replicate our success. Our District continues to be recognized for outstanding achievements in all areas of our academic, athletic, and arts programs.

As you may be aware, we have been focusing on our work in the area of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). Research has demonstrated that students and adults who apply Emotional Intelligence skills have improved social interactions, are more successful in their endeavors, and are generally, happier and more optimistic. What are some examples of the Emotional Intelligence skills we are referring to?

Self-Regard: the ability to like and have confidence in yourself.

Self-Actualization: the ability to set meaningful goals and work toward betterment and fulfillment.

Emotional Self-Awareness: the ability to know what you are feeling and why.

Emotional Expression: the ability to share, communicate, and to be transparent with your feelings.

Assertiveness: the ability to put your needs, thoughts, and opinions out into the world.

Interpersonal Relationships: the ability to establish and maintain mutually satisfying personal relationship.

Empathy: the ability and willingness to take notice and be sensitive to other people's needs and feelings.

Social Responsibility: the tendency to contribute to the welfare of the greater community.

In order to prepare our students to be college and career ready following high school graduation, we are working

to ensure that our students have opportunities to practice these skills throughout their Canton Public Schools' experience.

As you will read in this publication, our outstanding staff continues to work tirelessly to create a learning environment where each of our students is engaged and challenged in various educational experiences that in alignment with our mission, promoting each student's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional potential.

As a School District, we believe that:

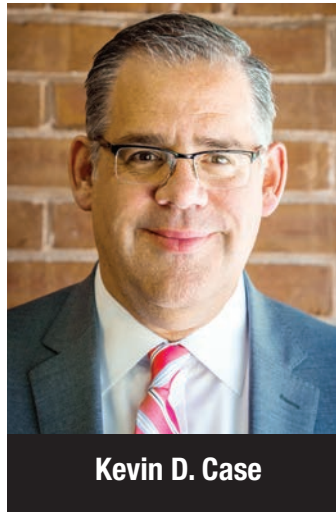
~ All students will successfully master Canton's Community Expectations for Learning.

~ All students benefit from high quality resources and experiences that foster intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth.

~ All students flourish in a safe and healthy learning environment that values differences while respecting cultures, abilities and perspectives.

~ All children are entitled to a childhood

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 opportunities to be creative and innovative. 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. ■



Kevin D. Case

from the board chair

Happy Spring! We are to that time of year where the flowers are blooming and everything is new again.

As our students and teachers work towards completing the school year, the Canton Public Schools newsletter gives you a glimpse of what has been happening in our schools. Our students continue to shine not just academically, but in the arts and athletics as you will see in the pictures from the CHS musical "Legally Blonde" and the winter sports update. As you will read throughout the newsletter, several curricular initiatives are in progress, including:

- ~ Technology plan update to ensure appropriate integration and balance
- ~ Art standards update
- ~ Training teachers in Next Generation Science Standards
- ~ Evaluation of early childhood education
- ~ Adoption of Illustrative Math in grades 6 to 8
- ~ Increasing suicide awareness

Another major board initiative this school year has been to evaluate and determine



Julie Auseré

the need for a district School Resource Officer. You can read the update on this effort on page 3.

The proposed Board of Education budget is \$26,584,943 which is a 2.51% or \$650,710 increase over current year spending. The increase allows our district to maintain class size policy, meet contractual obligations and to address some needed capital improvements to maintain a safe and healthy school environment for our students.

On behalf of the Board of Education, I want to thank you for your continued support of the Canton Public Schools. Please plan to attend the town hall meeting on May 13th to vote on the budget. As always, I welcome any questions or comments as your feedback is important to us. ■

Junior year: A time of growth both in and out of school

BY JULIA MELTON
Class of 2020

"Between clubs, sports, homework, spending time with friends and family, and just having downtime, it's really difficult to balance everything while getting a good night's rest," said Lauren Eschenbrenner, a current junior at CHS.

Canton High School students are all very ambitious and proud of their accomplishments both in and out of school. Pressures of college have just begun mounting up, and while these will later be in the forefront of their minds, for now it is the issue of getting through SATs, AP exams, daily classes, and all types of extracurriculars.

Students are working harder and longer for their goals to the



future. Oftentimes it can be difficult for teachers to understand all of the commitments that these students are facing, especially when they have multiple tests or projects assigned on any given day. This, of course, does not stop students from trying to put their best foot forward and give each and every teacher their best effort in all of their endless obligations.

Julia Langou, a current junior at Canton High School, looks back at her experience taking the SATs and explains how she "felt very prepared and not nervous." She hopes that other students who will take them again or sophomores next

year plan to do the same. "Nothing feels better than going in feeling like you're going to do amazing!"

Langou, as well as many other juniors, looks to spring break as an important time to plan for the future, and think about how it will be spent taking college tours.

Although there are many things that juniors can be proud of, many 16- and 17-year-olds have begun branching out past the walls of Canton and furthering their lives. More than half of 16-24 year olds have a job, and many students in Canton have multiple jobs or work long hours throughout the week and weekends.

Morgan Giblin, a junior who is involved in sports, clubs, and difficult classes, while proud of that, said her greatest accomplishment was actually "being able to pay for my own car." She knows the importance of her studies, as

she is currently in three AP classes, but that has not stopped her from holding a job as well. With students spending an average of 3.5 hours on homework each night nationwide, pairing all of her commitments with work has been both "academically and emotionally challenging."

As these three look back on their experience, they feel proud and excited about what is to come their senior year. Lauren Eschenbrenner's top advice for sophomores is to just "stay on top of your work no matter what level of academic classes you're in and know the importance of taking breaks."

As juniors continue to persevere through the rest of this year, they can look forward to the adventures of senior year: applying for college and in the end, fighting "senioritis" until walking across the stage for graduation. ■

District continues to look at SRO Issue

Educators continue to look at the idea of adding a School Resource Officer (SRO), a position administrators feel would bolster security efforts, enhance mental health support, streamline school related law enforcement duties and agency referrals, while serving as a community liaison, positive role model, and law enforcement educator.

In November 2018, the Board of Education, in cooperation with the Canton Police Department, held a public forum on the idea of an SRO, followed by several discussions on the topic and an additional forum in later January. In the process, board members heard from School Resource Officers in Simsbury and Region 10 (Harwinton and Burlington), as well as school staff members, including Deborah Schwager, Director of School Counseling, who advocated the position as a key part of the district's mental health team.

The SRO would patrol school and surrounding properties, assess threats, coordinate staff professional development programs, act as a liaison to the principal in investigating criminal law violations at school or on school property, work to divert juveniles from criminal activity, and provide traffic control and presence at the beginning and end of the school day. The job description also includes collaboration with school staff in areas such as an annual safety report, coordinating referrals to outside agencies, developing

positive interactions with students, and participating in school activities, student organizations and athletic events.

The officer would also help develop classes in law-related education, Fourth Amendment rights, criminal procedure, and help educate students about crucial topics like bullying, dating violence, social media use and conflict resolution.

The SRO would cover the Canton Middle/High School campus, as well as Cherry Brook Primary and Canton Intermediate schools.



Gene Torrence, SRO for Region 10, talks to the Canton Board of Education about the program.

Superintendent Kevin Case said the district has a great relationship with the Canton Police Department, but would benefit greatly by having one person who understands the unique needs of the school population and would have

the extra time to devote to getting to know students and develop relationships.

“The true benefit is to have one police officer whom the district can work with and who knows our policy, procedures and how we operate,” Case said.

In recent meetings, board members voted to take additional time to educate the public on the role of the SRO; solicit feedback from other districts, parents, students and staff; explore potential alternatives, such as security guards; and

how the public views the idea of the SRO, and how people feel about current safety measures and feel about alternatives, or additional positions, such as armed or unarmed security guards.

“This is a plan to gather additional feedback to find where our community stands, not only with a school resource officer position, but overall with our school security and safety,” Case said. “We want to get student perspective, we want to get staff perspective, and we want to get parent perspective.”

To that end, administrators, by May 31, plan to facilitate focus groups with Canton Middle and High School students, facilitate parent meetings at all schools, facilitate staff meetings at all schools, and administer a survey to families on school safety and security.

Results from the focus groups would be provided to the board on June 11. Additionally, the board will hear an annual update on district safety at that meeting.

On Sept. 24, the Board of Education will review the results of the family survey, receive further details on how other districts employ armed and/or unarmed security guards, and look over a draft memorandum of understanding between the Canton Board of Education and the Canton Police Department.

On Oct. 22, the board would consider whether to vote or take other action on an SRO and/or other safety modifications. ■

flush out details on how the person would integrate with the district and the police department. While to board will make a final decision, community feedback is critical. As part of the process, administrators will not only gather information on



The Harlem Wizards were back in town Jan. 15 generated some \$8,200 for the Canton Athletic Booster Club. Here Leon “Space Jam” Sewell leads some post-game dancing.

Wrestling squad finds success and so much more

With little public visibility, the Canton High School wrestling squad

has quietly become a success story, with a head coach whose roots in the sport and community run deep.

Josh Bristol, who wrestled for Canton from 1998 to 2004, came back to the program in 2013, first as a volunteer and then as head coach, and has helped build upon a strong foundation that led to one of the most successful seasons in Canton wrestling history.

This year, the team went 20-3, won the North Central Connecticut Conference tournament for the third consecutive year and won its first NCCC League Championship since 2002. The squad finished 6th in the Class S championships.

Additionally, the team entered wrestlers in every one of the 14 weight classes at the Class S State open, a great feat for a small school, and had a school record-breaking six Class S State placers — senior co-captain Brian Connolly, senior co-captain Braydon Fluckiger, senior James Pelehach, sophomore Matt Webb, junior Austin Kilduff and freshman Ethan Titus.

Additionally, co-captains Brian Connolly, Donovan Mackin and Ethan Titus were named All NCCC wrestlers.

“I love seeing my guys succeed,” Bristol said. “I really do love watching these guys work hard and then seeing their hard work pay off. I’m every one of their biggest fans.”

With a steady roster of 20 this year, the team has done it without intense recruiting, teacher coaches, or even a youth feeder program.

“It’s word of mouth,” he said. “It’s making sure the kids have fun and they try to drag their friends and teammates from other sports into it. I think it’s just making sure kids are having a positive experience on the team.”

Wrestlers work hard six days a week, two hours a day during the week and at least one weekend match or tournament, from the Monday after Thanksgiving through mid March.

“I ask a lot,” Bristol said. “I expect you to work hard, I expect to be ready.”

A wrestler is on the mat for six minutes, or as much as 8 ½ if there’s trip overtime, one reason for the hard work.

“That’s why I push the guys,” he said. “I want them to have success.”

But there’s something even more important at stake, life lessons.



Bristol is flexible with those kids who have other interests, such as music or Model U.N. If someone missed wrestling time for good reason, he said, it’s OK. But Bristol doesn’t want to see anything other than that each wrestler’s best.

“You want to win and that’s the goal, but I really respect kids that can go out and give everything they have and really try to win and when they fall short not be crushed,” he said. “I think mentally that’s one thing you can get from wrestling – to win and lose with grace.”

Athletic coordinator Kim Church said it’s great to have alumni return to spread a love for sports and life lessons. Bristol not only coaches high school, but promotes the sport at the middle school level through an intramural program.

“It’s great to have somebody who really cares so much about the kids and their development as human beings as well as athletes in our program,” Church said.

And wrestling certainly meant a lot to Bristol, who wrestled for Canton in grades 7 to 12.

“I was bad at all the other sports. I tried everything growing up – soccer and baseball and basketball — and I just didn’t have that kind of athleticism,” he said. “I’m not a fast runner. I don’t have good hand-eye coordination so when I finally discovered wrestling, it was something that really clicked with me. I wanted to be competitive. I wanted to play a sport.”

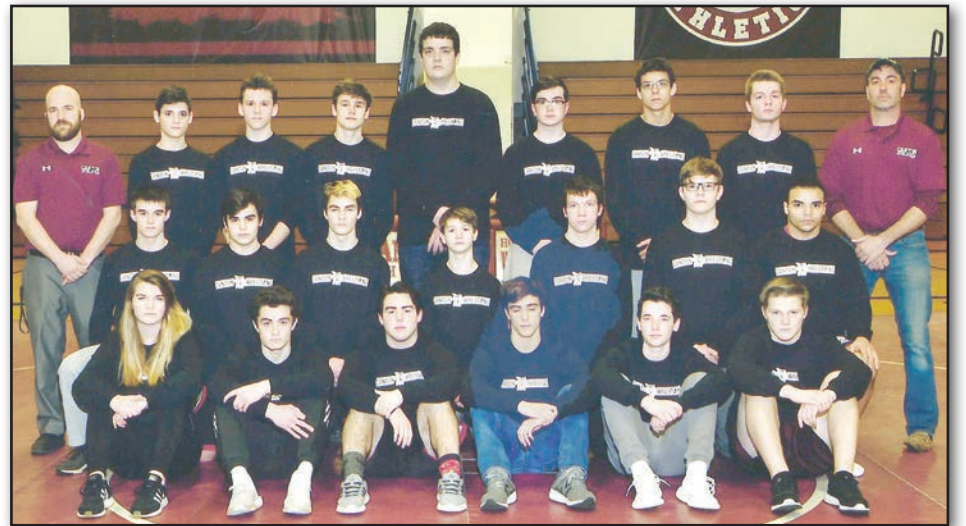
And he found it kept him focused.

“Wrestling meant a lot to me when I was a kid,” Bristol said. “It was more than anything what kept me out of trouble and kept me on a good path. ... For me it’s kind of paying that back forward, making sure the kids that come through my room and decide that’s where they want to have a positive experience and a positive influence in their lives.”

After graduating from Canton High School in 2004, Bristol went on to study Theater, Film and Media Studies and Philosophy at Saint Mary’s College in Maryland. He went on to work in the theater as



Assistant Coach Josh Kaplan, left, and head coach Josh Bristol, along with other coaches, have helped the Canton wrestling squad find success.



The Canton wrestling squad with head coach Josh Bristol, left and Rich van de Bogart, an assistant coach who is also a Canton wrestling alum.

an actor and scenic carpenter.

He wrestled for his college club team for a year and later stayed active with Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and Judo.

But it was actually Josh Kaplan, a star wrestler during his time in Canton from 1999 to 2002 and former High School head coach and current assistant coach, who encouraged Bristol to start coaching. Bristol was considering coaching at Hamden Hall when he ran into Kaplan.

“He told me it was the greatest thing ever and I should absolutely do it and that’s what sealed it for me,” Bristol said.

In 2013, Bristol returned to Canton and to the family farm, where he still works in the summer.

Fresh off the Hamden Hall experience he volunteered for the Canton team in the 2013-14 school year and again the next year under Kaplan. When Kaplan had to step back due to increasing work demands, Bristol took over as head coach. And at his side are two other Canton natives and former high school wrestlers in Kaplan, and

Rich van de Bogart, who wrestled for Canton High School from 1983-86. The coaching team is rounded out with parent Doug Titus.

Bill Phelps, who coached the Canton wrestling team from 1981 to 2012 is thrilled to see the team in action, with so much success and is proud of the coaches.

“They stepped up to really continue what I think is a really special place for wrestling in this town. ... Instead of being all about winning, it’s all about making those kids better .. it’s really wonderful to see.”

And for Bristol it’s not the team motorists see driving by the high school, or when walking through town, as long as kids keep coming to the sport and learning from it.

“We’ve got this little room under the gym. The room is not even 40’ by 40’. It’s a little cinder block box and I love that place,” Bristol said. “At this point, I’ve spent 12 winters of my life in that room and I wouldn’t have it any other way. It’s one of my favorite places in the world.” ■

Winter Sports Wrap-Up 2018-19

Boys Basketball

Record: 15-9

Tournament Results: Lost in Division IV 2nd round and lost in NCCC quarter-finals

All-NCCC: Grant Lange and Jack Rose



Girls Basketball

Record: 26-2

Tournament Results: Lost in the Class S championship and won the NCCC tournament!

All-NCCC: Sarah Bowman, Allison Celmer, Abby Charron and Lauren Eschenbrenner

All-State: Abby Charron



Boys Indoor Track

Record: 12-2

Tournament Results: Finished 18th in the Class S championships and finished 3rd in the NCCC championship

All-NCCC: Peter Fuller

All-New England: Peter Fuller



Girls Indoor Track

Record: 14-0

Tournament Results: Finished 4th in the Class S championships and won the NCCC championship!

All-NCCC: Mackenzie Archangelo, Maddie Archangelo, Kaylia Bailey, Julia Caputo, Chelsea Mitchell, Brooke Shepard and Maya Sutton-Hall

All-State: Chelsea Mitchell



Wrestling

Record: 20-3

Tournament Results: Finished 6th in the Class S championships and won the NCCC championship!

All-NCCC: Brian Connolly, Donovan Mackin, Ethan Titus

NCCC championship in the 55m hurdles and high jump.

The girls 4x200m relay team won the NCCC championship.

Peter Fuller won the NCCC championship in the high jump and 55m hurdles.

Unified Sports played in the NCCC basketball tournament at SMSA.

Individual and Team highlights...

Will Gallant qualified for the 2020 US Olympic Swimming Trials in the 800 meter race.

Sophia Blais participated in girls ice hockey with the Suffield co-op team.

Brian Connolly became the 14th athlete in the 100 win club in Canton wrestling history.

Chelsea Mitchell won the state championship and the state open in the long jump. She also broke a school record and conference record in the 55m race. She also won the NCCC championship in the 55m, 300m, and long jump.

Maddie Archangelo broke a school record in the 55m hurdles and high jump. She also won the

Community Service...

Our winter initiative was for Project Purple again which is all about substance abuse awareness. The great thing about this is that it has become a school wide initiative. Athletics along with other activity groups and the high school administration have really gone above and beyond to encourage becoming a part of the Project Purple movement.

Our athletic teams did a lot with youth teams this winter as well. The home wrestling quads were attended well and youth wrestlers were encouraged to attend to meet the high school team. Our boys and girls basketball teams held youth days



where the youth basketball teams were able to attend for free if they wore a uniform to the game and they also played a halftime game.

Leadership Opportunities...

Our athletic council promoted the organization SKORE which gives sports equipment to needy communities and organizations.

Schools throughout the district had boxes in their lobbies where community members could drop off old sports equipment to donate.

The athletic council also helped tremendously with the dodgeball tournament we recently held for spring teams. We collected money and food for the Canton Food Bank. ■

Legally Blonde: The Musical



From left, Diana Lawler, musical director, Colleen Barnhart, costume director, Chuck Simmons, stage director, Terry Rowe, choreography, and Ken Jones, lead technical director.



Canton High School presented
'Legally Blonde, The Musical'
March 15 to 17.

Photos by John Senecal



Integrating technology appropriately

While the Canton Public Schools' current Technology Plan laid out very specific actions, the next one will involve broader benchmarks that will ultimately allow each school, and the district, to better integrate appropriate technology in its day-to-day operations.

"These tech tools that we deploy and the opportunities we give to kids have to be very meaningful and enriching," said Jeff DelMastro, director of technology for the Canton Public Schools.

The new plan is designed to take that concept to the next level. It will continue to include five overarching goals, adopted from the United States Department of Education's National Technology Plan (see inset) that deal with technology itself, infrastructure, leverage, access and learning methods.

But while the current plan laid out very specific steps, the new one will include indicators of success, allowing principals at each school to detail specific ways of achieving those indicators in their Continuous Improvement Plans.

"This way of doing it will mean that it's now embedded into daily practices at the school levels and at the district level," said Dr. Jordan Grossman, Assistant Superintendent of the Canton Public Schools.

For example, while the current plan specified that Cherry Brook

Primary and Canton Intermediate schools needed to use the grading portal to communicate information to families, the new one might simply require that each school determine how best to communicate academic achievement.

The specificity in the current plan was needed to get the district to a level of technical proficiency and reach some important goals, such as the one-to-one technology that provided technology in 90 percent of K-12 classrooms and a device for every student in Grades 7 to 12.

DelMastro said it allows his team to work more closely with principals and others in each building to build infrastructure that makes sense, an initiative that is already underway.

"It's certainly more planning, but I welcome that," he said. "I'm looking at the appropriate technology in the appropriate location. I'm really trying to work closely with principals so I know what's happening where so we can provide the most cost-effective and powerful learning experiences."

The Technology Plan Committee is 18 strong and includes teachers, community members, administrators and school board members. As the group works on the new Technology Plan, members will formulate indicators of success, incorporating feedback from students, staff and parents. Significantly the committee will have several years of data from Brightbytes, an adaptive



survey given to parents and students in its fourth year.

The one-to-one initiative was an important one for classroom work, at-home assignments and standardized testing, and educators agree that students are learning technology and analytic skills as part of their training for jobs that might not yet exist. However, they also realize that issues such as screen time have become a challenge for society as a whole. The committee will be looking at the habits of students at school as well as at home and how school-issued devices play into that. Once again, the committee will carefully review parental feedback, including the results of a survey the district sent to parents in March.

"I think we have to find a balanced approach," Grossman said. "We're working really hard on analyzing what we're asking kids to do, but I also think we have to provide some resources to families." ■

Adopted 2020-2023 Technology Plan

Goal Areas

As detailed by the National Technology Plan

Goal Area 1: All learners will have engaging and empowering learning experiences in both formal and informal settings that prepare them to be active, creative, knowledgeable and ethical participants in our globally connected society.

Goal Area 2: Educators will be supported by technology that connects them to people, data, content, resources, expertise, and learning experiences that can empower and inspire them to provide more effective teaching for all learners.

Goal Area 3: Embed an understanding of technology-enabled education within the roles and responsibilities of education leaders at all levels and set vision for technology in learning.

Goal Area 4: At all levels, our educational system will leverage power of technology to measure what matters and use assessment data to improve learning.

Goal Area 5: All Students and educators will have access to robust and comprehensive infrastructure when and where they need it for learning. ■

Seniors take the wheel with mastery projects

While senior projects have been a staple at Canton High School for years, educators were pleased to see an improved version of the concept, called the Canton Mastery Project, go so well this year.

The Canton Mastery Project, often known as CAMP, involved a semester-long exploration of an "in-depth project" that explored a hobby or potential career path utilizing research skills, collaboration with students, teachers and, in some cases, area professionals, and a final public presentation.

CAMP involved a fall semester course, in which students learned of the project concept and requirements, came up with ideas and worked with teachers and each other to hone in on a final project. Interspersed in the classes were sessions to help students with

their essay writing and other skills needed for college application and career readiness.

The classroom format worked well and allowed that student-led learning and group work, said Dr. Ruth Kidwell, Chair of the English Department and Canton Mastery teacher.

"You had everyone having that shared experience of going through it together," she said. "The teacher had the role of helping to explain the project and push and talk about the skills, but the kids had a lot of independent time to just be working on what they needed to do. The teacher would have conferences and group discussion to push each other and question each other."

Along the way, some students worked with mentors, in some cases a staff member at one of the Canton Schools, and in others an outside professional, an aspect the school would like to build upon.

"That's our hope moving forward

to expand on opportunities to connect with community, through the mentoring lists, through the Chamber of Commerce, as well as just natural connections," said Drew DiPippo, Canton High School principal.

The CAMP projects culminated in an expo in January, during which each senior presented his or her project to underclassman on a rotating basis.

"We were working to hone their public speaking and presentation skills ... just having that opportunity to share what they did," Kidwell said.

The day also gave younger students a glimpse into what will be required of them in coming years.

"Part of the goal that day was to afford underclassmen opportunities to know and understand better the type of projects and processes that the students undertook, which stimulated their own thinking around potential next steps," DiPippo said.

While senior projects were

once under the guidance of the English Department, CAMP is a cross-discipline course, and one required to graduate, per Board of Education policy.

"The reason we definitely wanted to make it a schoolwide course is to think about all those academic and content related skills they've learned, but also those big skills they're going to need after graduation — how to think about a problem, how to come up with innovative solutions, and develop skills in basic resiliency and persistence," Kidwell said.

And the other major goal is for students to take charge of their learning and start becoming independent problem solvers.

"It's unique to the individual and what we want to afford to all students is the opportunity to grow over time," DiPippo said. "This process created opportunities for independence and persistence that they normally wouldn't have." ■

District updates its art standards



This Drawing and Painting Level 2 project grid portrait, at left, is a group intro activity assignment on the left in which students are introduced to the structural/scientific concept of gridding to establish accurate proportions, shapes, and forms.



Social Action Anti- Drug Poster inspired by the work on artist Keith Haring - Grade 6

When it comes to art education, teachers want students to see the big picture. The National Core Art Standards, which are the basis of Canton's own artistic endeavors, allow just that.

Since 2015, Canton teachers, with the help of other professionals, have been honing the art curriculum to align with the national core standards, which emphasize four key areas: creating, presenting, responding and connecting. Each area contains several anchor concepts.

"The big shift with the new standards is pulling away from the skill based to more conceptual-based teaching and learning," said Deb Costello, art teacher at Canton Intermediate School. "We're no longer saying create a painting. We're saying create the illusion of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface and folding in the skills as part of the process."

In Canton, art teachers are reflecting the conceptual nature of the standards by developing a districtwide scope and sequence with essential learning outcomes by grade levels. The curriculum is then taught using specific K-12 themes such as Realism vs. Imagination, Identity, Traditions and Cultures, Color My World and Relationships. Using the themes, teachers created benchmark lessons for grade levels.

In an Elements of Design Squares lesson at CIS, for example, students were able to incorporate their own personality, designs and shapes into stacked squares, but the basics of art were still present.

"The big concept is how are you

creating an abstract piece that is a representation of you, but as you're doing that I want to make sure you're showing that you know how to use value, you know how to use positive and negative, space you know how to create an interesting composition with a focal point. Even though the big concept now is how they're using symbols in their work to represent themselves, they still have to show it using all those key skills."

In another CIS lesson, Costello was able to use a reading assignment in which kids choose a book about a social issue and have the students create work inspired by the pop art of the late Keith Haring. Kids chose topics such as bullying, drug awareness and environment.

"We'll meet with classroom teachers to see what concept they're covering and how it can be a natural fit with the arts and it's wonderful."

Jessica Stifel, Canton High School art teacher, loves to build solid skills and gradually give students more freedom as they progress.

However, even in classes such as Drawing and Painting 1, a line mural is a project in which all students must start from the same point and end at the same point with their white line, but what they do in between is dependent on their creativity which is a primary objective of the assignment.

"However, the points in between were wide open for students to experiment. In the end, the squares were placed together, creating an interesting display of student expression," Stifel said.

In Drawing and Painting 2, one assignment involves a split personality portrait. In which kids

take two selfies on their phone, with different expressions and angles and interpret them with an art medium of choice. The lesson plan includes an example of how the portraits can be arranged and conveyed, but students are encouraged to deviate, especially if they can defend their reasons.

"You can see how they really get to express themselves," she said.

An example of a Drawing and Painting 3 assignment is a multi-media cardboard large-scale painting. Students create three thumbnail drawings, apply paint to the cardboard and then cut away areas to create textures. Students have the choice to add collages on various papers and found images, creating endless possibilities.

Drawing and Painting is just one of several courses at the school, but others carry the same concept of more structure in the beginning but with flexibility that only increases with each level.

"I feel it just puts more ownership on them for their learning because they have the choice and it's not like they're being forced to do something they don't want to do," Stifel said. "I think it really helps them grow more and get more out of it."

"The nice thing about the new standards is it allows the student who can excel in art and wants to excel to really do so," she added.

The Drawing and Painting progression is just one example. The standards, she said, keeps things grounded, but are all about building blocks.

"It covers Art as a language," Stifel said. "It's self-expression, rather than just accomplishing skills that you can check off. They are the authors in their art work. They get to develop their own voice." ■

Art and Music

Art will be on display representing the work of CHS Art Students for the month of May through the beginning of June in the auditorium lobby. An art show closing ceremony will correspond with the Spring Choral concert, all June 5. The ceremony takes place at 6:30 p.m. with the Spring Choral Concert at 7:30 p.m.

National Core Art Standards

Artistic Process: Creating

- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work
- Refine and Complete artistic work

Artistic Process: Presenting anchor standards

- Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation
- Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic works

Artistic Process: Responding Anchor Standards

- Perceive and analyze artistic work
- Interpret intent and meaning in visual art
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work

Artistic Process: Connecting Anchor Standards

- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding



Cherry Brook kindergarten students work on an art project

Training the next generation of scientists



Jon Bishop, K-12 STEM and Marsha Jorgensen, Grades 7 to 12 science chair, recently coordinated a professional development day for NGSS.

While academic standards can often be misunderstood, Next Generation Science Standards are firmly rooted in practicality.

While their parents might have memorized charts or key words long enough to pass a test, today's students need to be able to solve problems, explain their answers and use the knowledge to figure out future problems.

"The big idea is to help kids begin to think earnestly like scientists and engineers," said Jon Bishop, K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) for Canton Public Schools. "It's integrated across the sciences. Nothing stands apart. You can't really truly understand Biology without understanding some Chemistry and Physics comes into play with so much of Biology. There's a lot of interplay and we're able to explore more of that now."

"It's all about students figuring things out, rather than us just giving them vocabulary," added Marsha Jorgensen, Grades 7 to 12 Science Department Chair.

The standards are grouped into the four main areas of physical science, life science, earth and space science and engineering.

There are three "dimensions" at the heart of the standards — disciplinary core ideas, science and engineering practices and cross-cutting.

The core ideas are just that, the knowledge base of physical science, life science, earth and space science and engineering. They cover everything from

Earth and the solar system, to the roles of water in Earth's surface processes to growth and development of organisms to stability and instability in physical systems.

"It's not like the content's changing, it's just a different way of thinking about it," Jorgensen said. "The science and engineering practices are where the exploration comes into play and students are taught the concepts, but also how to discover and solve for themselves."

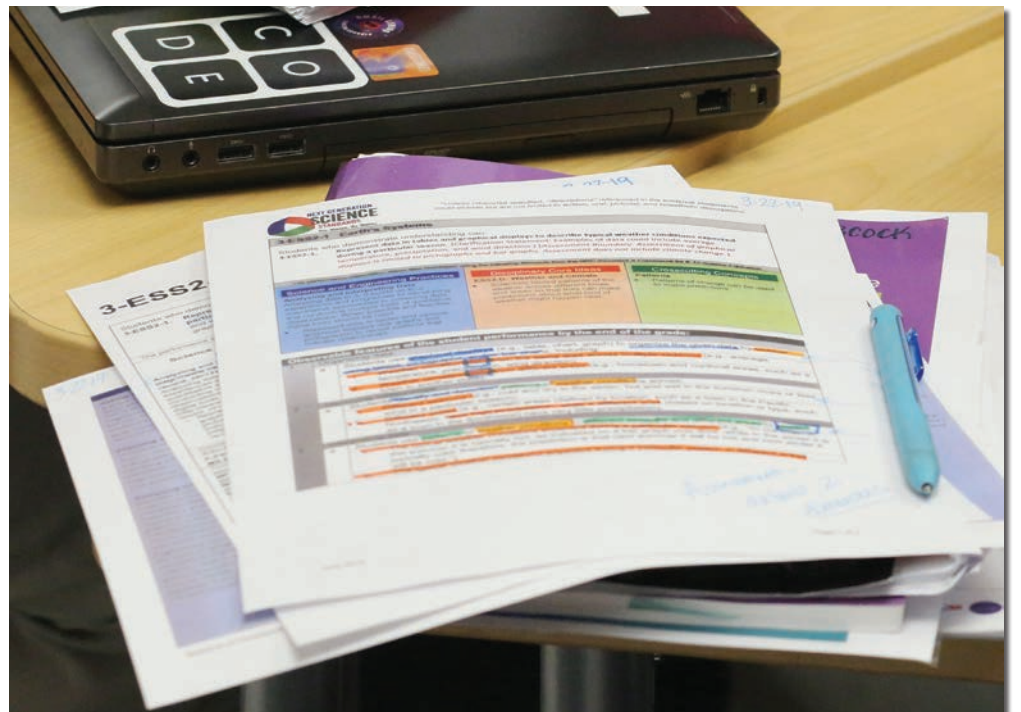
The science and engineering practices lay out a framework of learning, analyzing and problem solving.

Finally the cross-cutting concepts bridge disciplinary boundaries, uniting core ideas throughout the fields of science and engineering."

"The cross-cutting concepts are another big NGSS idea and that's how we in our district really work to unify and use that common vocabulary with all our students and teachers K-12," Jorgensen said. "We've always done this but this really frames how we're developing questions defining patterns."

While some of the concepts were long being developed, Canton adopted the standards in late 2015.

"NGSS requires a little bit more of the content and conceptual of our elementary teachers, and it requires a little bit more of the interdisciplinary and connected base for high school teachers that elementary teachers tend to have, so it's almost like each side was able to learn from each other's strengths a little bit," Bishop said. ■



Cross-Cutting Concepts

1. Patterns. Observed patterns of forms and events guide organization and classification, and they prompt questions about relationships and the factors that influence them.

2. Cause and effect: Mechanism and explanation. Events have causes, sometimes simple, sometimes multifaceted. A major activity of science is investigating and explaining causal relationships and the mechanisms by which they are mediated. Such mechanisms can then be tested across given contexts and used to predict and explain events in new contexts.

3. Scale, proportion, and quantity. In considering phenomena, it is critical to recognize what is relevant at different measures of size, time and energy, and to recognize how changes in scale, proportion, or quantity affect a system's structure or performance.

4. Systems and system models. Defining the system under study — specifying its boundaries and making explicit a model of that system — provides tools for understanding and testing ideas that are applicable throughout science and engineering.

5. Energy and matter: Flows, cycles, and conservation. Tracking fluxes of energy and matter into, out of, and within systems helps one understand the systems' possibilities and limitations.

6. Structure and function. The way in which an object or living thing is shaped and its substructure determine many of its properties and functions.

7. Stability and change. For natural and built systems alike, conditions of stability and determinants of rates of change or evolution of a system are critical elements of study. ■

QPR. Three letters to remember to save a life.

Superintendent of Schools Kevin D. Case likens QPR to CPR. While CPR saves people from heart attacks and respiratory failure, QPR is designed to save those with suicidal tendencies and is all based on research.

Case had been invited by the Farmington Valley Health District's Justine Ginsberg to participate in training so he can educate others about the principles of QPR Institute: "Question. Persuade. Refer." In turn, Case put his training to work at a community forum on April 16, at Canton High School, where his goal was to educate parents "so we're all on the same page," he said. He will offer more opportunities in the future, as well.

Prior to the event, he discussed the details of the presentation, the purpose of which was to train others to recognize the warning signs of suicide, offer hope and help, and ultimately save a life.

Starting with Q, is "Question." Case posited, "Do you have a plan on taking your own life? Do you know I'd be so sad if you take your own life?" He added that there are key phrases that can indicate a crisis: "my family won't miss me. I'm so stressed, I can't take it. 'I'm gonna kill myself.'"

Even if seemingly in jest, Case noted, "Take these comments

seriously; ask directly. Talking about suicide doesn't increase risk, it actually decreases it. People admit they have a plan if asked directly." Ask questions when there are behavioral signs or clues.

"I stress to everyone, it's not so important how you ask, but that you do ask or find someone who can immediately," Case emphasized. If someone says yes, what's next?

The letter "P" for Persuade. "Persuade that person to get help immediately," said Case, offering examples of what to say: "Are you willing to have me take you to emergency for help, or have a family member who can help?" If the person already has a counselor, ask, "Can you give your counselor a call?"

Case also emphasized to "never leave the person alone with a suicide plan. It could take hours or days. The most important thing about Persuade is to use words of hope and optimism: 'I'll be here by your side until things improve. I want you to live.'"

Finally, "R" is for Refer. "Make sure they get help," said Case. "You drive them to the hospital yourself or enlist someone else. Never leave them until they get the help they need."

One important concept about QPR that Case noted is that "it's not meant to be a counseling program

The following is from the QPR Institute's training booklet, "Ask a Question, Save a Life"

Warning Signs of Suicide:

- Suicide Threats
- Previous suicide attempts
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Statements revealing a desire to die
- Sudden changes in behavior
- Prolonged depression
- Making final arrangements
- Giving away prized possessions
- Purchasing a gun or stockpiling pills

Resource Numbers:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)
1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)
Vets4Warriors 1-855-838-8255

10 Facts You Need to Know (Source: Surgeon General of the United States):

- Over 90% of all people who die by suicide are suffering from a major psychiatric illness.

- For every suicide death there are 5 hospitalizations and 22 Emergency Room visits for suicidal behaviors – over 670,000 visits per year.
- Firearms are used in 6 of every 10 suicides.
- Suicide rates remain highest among Americans 65 and older.
- In the month prior to their suicide, 75% of elderly persons had a visit with a physician.
- Males are four times more likely to die by suicide than females.
- Over half of all suicides in America occur in adult men aged 25-55, and most of these men are employed.
- More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza and chronic lung disease, COMBINED.
- Every 17 minutes another American dies by suicide, every day 86 Americans take their own life, and another 1,500 attempt suicide.
- For all Americans suicide is the 8th leading cause of death. ■
QPR: Question. Persuade. Refer.

or treatment. It's intended to offer hope through positive action."

Case has already conducted three sessions and provided over 90 percent of staff members in the Canton school district with QPR training. This helps not only the students they see regularly, but also

other adults in the community.

People who he trains receive a QPR booklet, "Ask a Question, Save a Life," with "helpful hints on what I talked about in the training," said Case, along with phone numbers on the back cover for dealing with a person in crisis. ■

District evaluates its early childhood education

In the Fall of 2017, an Early Childhood Task Force was put together by Superintendent Kevin D. Case and Director of Pupil Personnel Services Dr. Perri S. Murdica, whose members include classroom teachers at the pre-K through grade 3 level, as well as Special Ed teachers from that level and representatives from support staff, such as school psychologist, social worker and speech/language pathologist, Case noted.

The Task Force's "purpose was to examine the early childhood program, focusing on the Pre-K through grade 3 program," according to Case. "All of this began when the half-day Kindergarten program went to full-day," about six years ago.

Case noted that "we wanted to take a look at what the pros and cons are." With full-day Kindergarten, the students have the benefit of being in class all day, and "teachers incorporate play-based centers; students

learn social and emotional skills through play."

With guidance from the CT Office of Early Childhood, Canton has spent the last year looking at that office's Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards, which include social and emotional learning standards for every grade level and specifically, what children from birth to age five should know and be able to do. Case said the focus is to integrate these standards into all areas of the curriculum, adding, "We've identified the strengths and other areas we want to improve upon."

The CT Office of Early Childhood states that its standards "were developed to help families, communities



Leslie Bahre, para educator, works with pre-K students.

and schools work together to support children's early learning and growth."

Murdica emphasized why these standards are important in child development. "We know where children should be at a certain point in time. Knowing that is critical for teachers to know – about the whole child: cognition, academics, all content areas, and also social, emotional and behavioral development. It's critical to have set standards that highlight what's work-

ing at a certain phase in a child's life. Do they meet the standards or not?"

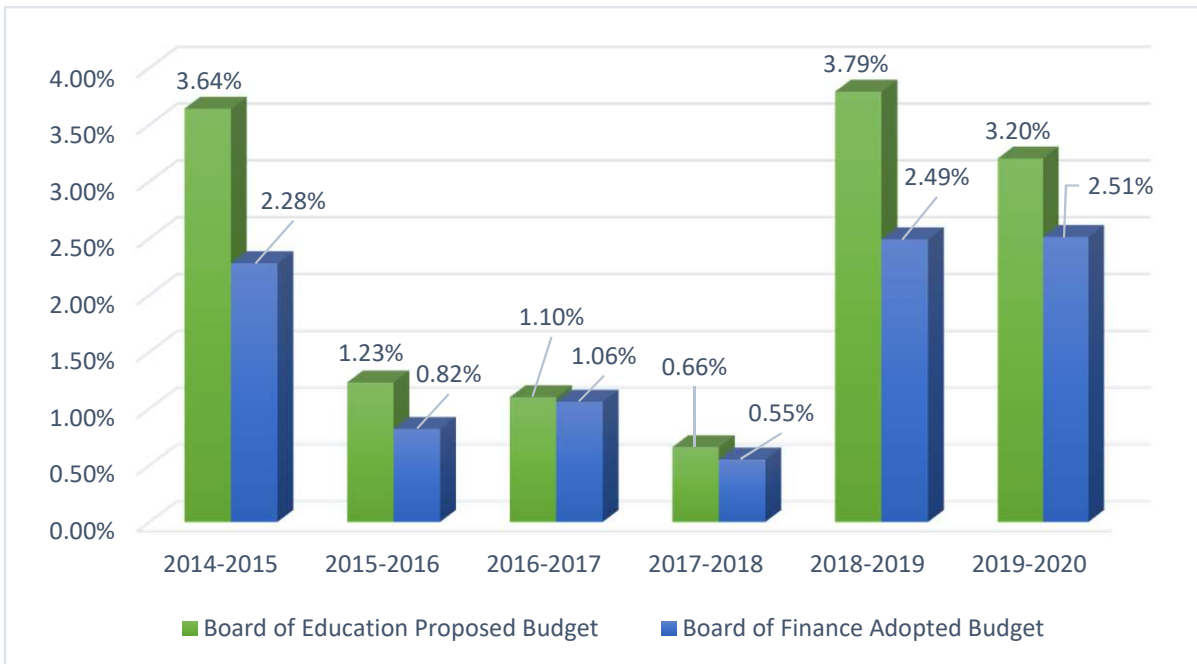
She said that at one of the Task Force meetings, when teachers reviewed the standards, "They were surprised at when things develop. We have high expectations of students, but some develop more quickly. There's a range of development for students."

"Students develop strategies to fill in gaps," Case added, noting, "The Task Force met this spring to examine the standards more in-depth."

The next priority is the future of pre-school development, according to Case, and what it should look like in the next few years in Canton. "Early intervention is key," he said, including "right at birth – if an infant needs intervention, provide it as soon as possible. The earlier a child receives services [provides] a fabulous long-term investment and fewer services the child will need moving through the grades to graduation." ■

Budget by the numbers

Canton Public Schools Board of Education Budget 2019-2020



Budget vote May 13

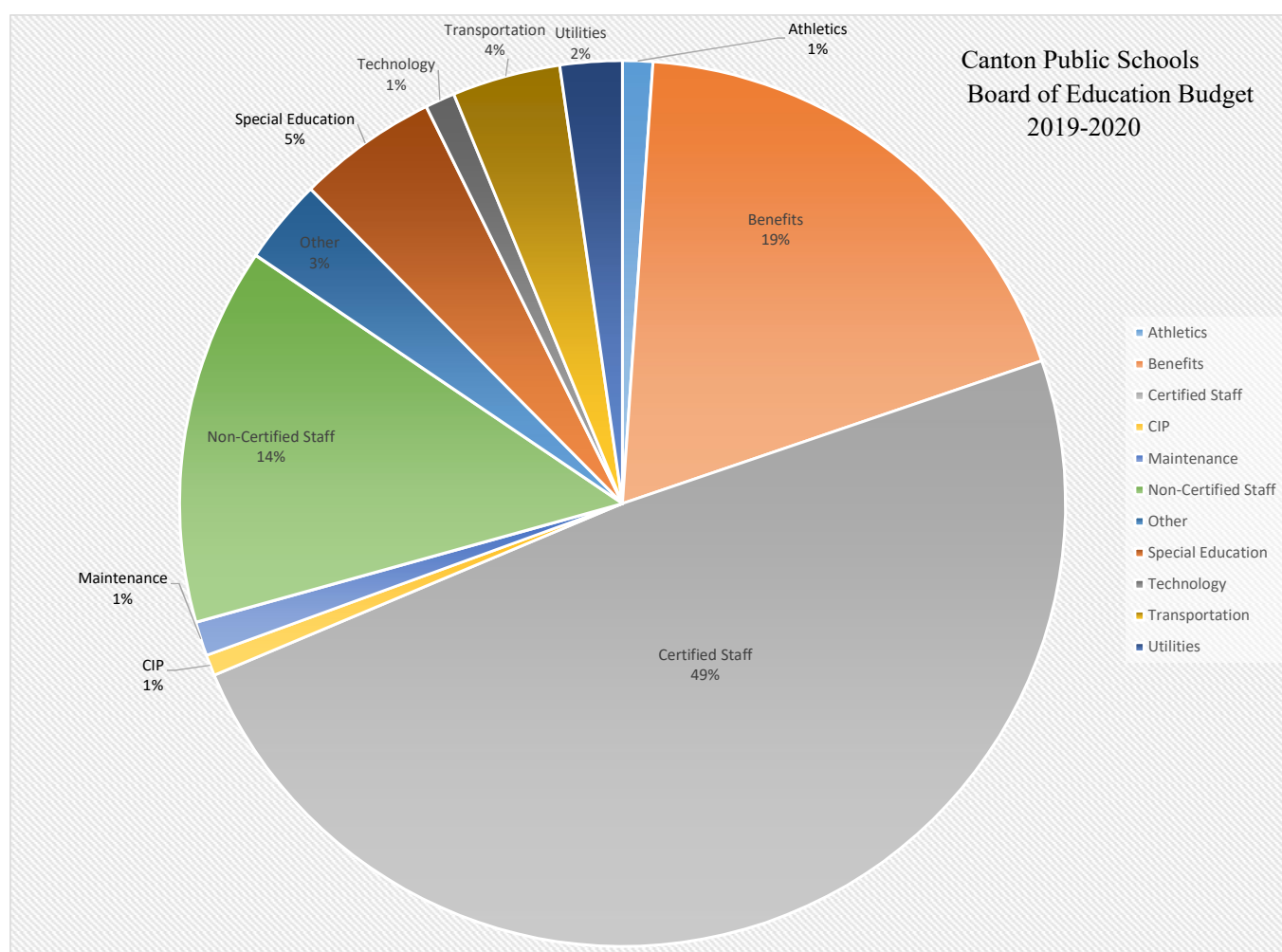
The Canton Public Schools Board of Education 2019-20 budget is \$26,584,943, an increase of 2.51 percent of \$650,710. The annual budget meeting takes place at 7 p.m. on May 13 in the Canton High School auditorium. If 150 qualified voters do not attend the meeting, a town-wide referendum will be scheduled.

Open Choice Grant Allocation 2019-2020 Budget

Canton Academy	\$ 40,000.00
0.5 FTE Special Education Teacher	\$ 27,246.00
0.5 FTE District STEM Coordinator	\$ 31,535.00
Special Ed Paraprofessionals	\$ 198,000.00
Music Equipment & Repair	\$ 11,000.00
Magnet School Tuition	\$ 160,000.00
CHS Textbooks	\$ 30,800.00
CMS Textbooks	\$ 12,318.00
Educational Technology	\$ 286,577.00
Open Choice 19-20	\$ 797,476.00

Canton Public Schools 2019-2020 Capital Improvement Projects

Canton High School/Canton Middle School	Track & Field Long Term Maintenance	\$ 74,000
Canton High School/Canton Middle School	HVAC Control Unit	\$ 23,943
Canton High School/Canton Middle School	Sidewalk replacement/repairs	\$ 50,000
Cherry Brook Primary School	Tile floors - replace existing carpet	\$ 55,301
	Total CIP	\$ 203,244



* The additional reduction of \$75,000 from the Board of Finance has not yet been allocated

District fondly remembers Betty Rae Richardson

The help that Betty Rae Richardson provided to families during her nearly four decades working for the Canton Public Schools is immeasurable.

Betty Rae, who passed away April 5, filled many roles for the District.

“Betty Rae served the Canton Public Schools for 38 years, retiring from her position as Secretary at Cherry Brook Primary School this past Fall,” said superintendent Kevin Case. “She began her service as Secretary in the Canton High School Guidance Office, moving on to Secretary at Central Office, to Secretary at Cherry Brook Primary School. Betty Rae was the welcoming face and voice at Cherry Brook Primary School for the last 15 years. She helped hundreds of students throughout the years and made sure that they got on the correct bus and stayed with them in the afternoon

if they missed their bus or if no one was at home to greet them.

Case added: “In 2007, a Cherry Brook Primary School staff member wrote me the following about Betty Rae, “ Betty Rae deserves a huge pat on the back for always being upbeat and helpful to everyone. She has a wonderful sense of humor and brightens my day...” She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.”

As Andrew Robbin, principal at Cherry Brook, will tell you, Richardson really filled the roles of historian, student support specialist, security director, bus route expert, bill collector and graphic designer.

“Betty Rae Richardson was a loving, memorable character that was a huge part of Cherry Brook School,” Robbin said. “With her unique blend of love, thoroughness and wit, she was able to warmly greet students, staff and visitors while maintaining structure and

control. Her heart melted when interacting with students and she was able to connect deeply with students that needed extra care.”

Her son Tom said he thought his mother could have worked at many different places and didn't fully understand why she stayed at the school until his own kids started at Cherry Brook.

“I went in there and realized she had the best job in the world. These kids would come in and talk to her and give her hugs and she loved that attention,” he said. “To see all the kids in there every day in that setting, it really kept her going. She loved that.”

And at the start of her career in guidance many students completed their college admission requirements because Betty Rae kept them on task.

“She really left her mark as a guidance counselor secretary,”

her son Tom said. “She was really the one to get everybody motivated to get their stuff in to colleges.”



Betty Rae Richardson

Betty Rae loved students enough to make sure they stayed on the right path. Adults also knew that she could be tough, but loving. “Betty Rae could be direct to the point of being blunt but able to pull it off and make people smile,” Robbin said. “Her secret, which she tried to hide, was that beneath that exterior was a person with a kind heart and so much love to share. She loved her family, her job, the school and the town. I know how lucky I am to have spent much time with her and get to know her through the years.” ■

Illustrative Math coming to grades 6 to 8

While Canton educators feel they've provided middle schoolers with a sound mathematical base, they are also excited to bring a new curriculum for the 2019-20 school year.

Specifically, next fall the Canton Public School District will introduce Illustrative Mathematics for grades 6 to 8. It will replace a hybrid system currently used by the district that combines an older math program with a locally developed curriculum.

Like in many disciplines, national and local standards are driven to teach students how to think for themselves, and critically analyze and solve problems, and the new curriculum follows suit, teaching students by “doing math, solving problems in mathematical and real-world contexts and constructing arguments

using precise language.”

The curriculum retains much of what students at that age have typically learned. Ratios, unit rates and percentages and dividing fractions in grade 6; scale drawing, proportional relationships and percentages, measuring circles and rational number arithmetic in 7th grade; and linear equations and linear systems relationships, exponents and scientific notation and Pythagorean theorem and irrational numbers in grade 8.

While the curriculum comes from a different company, the important factor is it is a natural progression from the Bridges in Mathematics Program taught in grades K to 5.

“We've always had an aligned curriculum, but the common language of a program will be helpful in that transition and it builds on the instructional strategies in Bridges,” said Gabrielle Aitchison, Math De-

partment Chair for Grades 7 to 12.

“We're excited that the new Illustrative Math curriculum aligns with our successfully implemented K-6 math program, Bridges,” said Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jordan Grossman. “This is one of the most important criteria we were looking for in selecting a math program.”

The program is also set up to allow students of different levels to learn the material. “The way the program is set up, it offers entry points for students of all levels,” Aitchison said. “It really has a focus on the math practices, so students are really working with and discussing math. It doesn't focus on the procedural. It really focuses on the understanding of the concepts.”

Like many standards today, long gone are the days of rote memorization. It's about problem solving, critical thinking and working together with other students and teachers.

“The collaborative nature of the learning process is really key,” Aitchison, said. “It's not a teacher standing at the front of a room spewing facts. It's the kids really getting into the math and using manipulatives and using different things to discover some of it on their own and discover some of the relationships. And there should be more student talk than teacher talk in a lesson.”

This Spring, Canton teachers, along with those from the Region 10 School District, will participate in professional development. Additionally, there are other web sites and social media platforms for teachers.

The school has been on the lookout for such a program for a couple of years now, Aitchison said. Math teachers and administrators investigated the program, conducted two site visits to two schools and talked to several others. ■

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Legacy concert

Canton High School's choir program will be host its first annual “Legacy Concert.” We invite any and all Canton Choir alumni to attend the concert and participate in the event. The concert will take place Wednesday, June 5 in the High School Auditorium. The concert will begin at 7:30 p.m., with a 6:30 p.m. dress rehearsal for all alumni who wish to join the choir in singing our finale. Please RSVP to Brian Jones at bjones@cantonschools.org if you wish to receive a pdf and rehearsal tracks. ■