



REGION 12

SCHOOLS

Spring 2022



SUPERINTENDENT'S *Letter*



Dear Region 12 Community Members,

Our children at Booth Free School, Burnham School, Washington Primary School, Shepaug Valley School, and the REACH, and Shepaug Valley Partnership programs have all persevered through the many challenges and changes that arose from learning during a pandemic. Our students have shown us how to appreciate what is afforded to them and maximize every opportunity to find educational and social fulfillment. The current school year has proven that if you let children help guide their educational journey, we all can achieve higher degrees of success.

This year, Region 12 Schools enjoyed the recognition of our collective efforts to create the top students in the State. *US News and World Report* ranked Booth Free School #1 Elementary School in Connecticut, accompanied by Washington Primary School at #14. Burnham School was not able to be ranked due to its small population size but boasts some of the highest achievements in the district. Each of our elementary schools holds the honor of *Schools of Distinction* by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Shepaug Valley School continues to set a pace for excellence. Our students' accomplishments can be found displayed in our hallways through "brag boards." These boards showcase the achievements of last year's graduates, including the colleges and universities of acceptance and attendance. I was fortunate to overhear a group of eighth-grade students discussing the graduates' college choices. One student said, "I thought I had to go to a private school to get into these colleges." I am proud that our public school system educates and guides our students to achieve their dreams and go on to their dream schools. These boards do not just boast academic achievements but also include athletic and artistic accomplishments. Future brag boards will also highlight celebrations of good character and civic contributions.

When looking back at all that has been accomplished in Region 12, I hope that the students recognize that "*Adversity causes some men to break; others to break records.*" – William Arthur Ward

Our children thrive with our communities' support. We live in towns that do not limit themselves or the opportunities provided to the children and citizens. I am amazed how our communities open their doors and hearts to children seeking to be educated in Region 12 Schools through our tuition-in or agriscience program. We see these programs as opportunities to enrich and introduce diverse perspectives into our schools. As we grow, we get better. As we invite more children to learn in our towns, we produce better experiences for all children.

It is my hope that you look at these pages with a sense of community pride. To keep up with what is happening in our schools, please follow us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or our website. You can follow stories of our students, staff, and communities of Booth Free School, Burnham School, Washington Primary School, and Shepaug Valley School on social media and via email blasts.

Our students receive enrichment opportunities because of the investments made by our communities. We value your trust in our ability to give your children a strong foundation for a bright future. With your support and spirit of community, our students are able to capture optimal learning opportunities. You have helped us through adversities and enabled us to set new records. I hope you enjoy the celebration of achievement in Region 12 Schools.

Respectfully,
Megan Bennett



Region 12 Schools have been recognized by the *U.S. News and World Report* for our exceptional schools in the past. This year's rankings were particularly exciting as Booth Free School was ranked the #1 Elementary School in Connecticut. Adding to the excitement was Washington Primary School's rank of #14 out of 560 Connecticut elementary schools. Burnham School continues to outperform expectations, but was not able to be ranked due to the small sample size impacting the statistical analysis needed for ranking. Schools are ranked on their performance on state-required tests, graduation, and how well they prepare their

students for high school. All three of our elementary schools demonstrated 85-95% achievement levels on statewide assessments. This achievement is a testament to the commitment of our staff, students, and communities. Our schools have committed to supporting our learners to respectfully engage with one another, actively share ideas, practice flexible thinking, and strive for academic excellence.

The information below is from the US News and World Report website.

Booth Free School ranked #1 in Connecticut Elementary Schools. The student population of Booth Free School is 71 and the school serves K-5. At Booth Free School, 95% of students scored at or above the proficient level for math, and 95% scored at or above that level for reading.

Compared with the district, the school did better in math and better in reading, according to this metric. In Regional School District 12, 85% of students tested at or above the proficient level for reading, and 84% tested at or above that level for math.



Booth Free School did better in math and better in reading in this metric compared with students across the state. In Connecticut, 57% of students tested at or above the proficient level for reading, and 50% tested at or above that level for math.

Washington Primary School ranked #14 in Connecticut Elementary Schools. The student population of Washington Primary School is 138 and the school serves PK-5. At Washington Primary School, 85% of students scored at or above the proficient level for math, and 85% scored at or above that level for reading.



Compared with the district, the school did better in math and about the same in reading, according to this metric. In Regional School District 12, 85% of students tested at or above the proficient level for reading, and 84% tested at or above that level for math. Washington Primary School did better in math and better in reading in this metric compared with students across the state. In Connecticut, 57% of students tested at or above the proficient level for reading, and 50% tested at or above that level for math.

ACCOUNTABLE TALK *at the Elementary Schools*

A Vehicle for Learning

Accountable talk is an instructional method to encourage students to be active learners. Students learn how to listen attentively, to elaborate and build on others' ideas, and to construct meaning that deepens understanding. In our classrooms, students engage in discussions that challenge them to analyze information and to formulate and justify claims and hypotheses with quality evidence and reasoning. Students are expected to ask questions, to solve problems and to synthesize information from multiple sources. Learning moves such as turn-and-talk, revoicing ideas, pressing for accuracy through questioning, and showing a commitment to getting it right are a few strategies that promote effective classroom exchanges. Talk in the classroom allows students to express their understanding and to construct meaning together while promoting respect for diverse thinking and points of view.

Creating a culture that optimizes student achievement, builds a collaborative learning environment, and develops engaged learners is foundational to the elementary schools in Region 12. Promoting opportunities for accountable student talk is a powerful strategy used to increase learning and achievement. Talk is an important vehicle to learning knowledge and skills, to increasing rigorous thinking, and to developing reasoning skills.



KINDERGARTEN *Readiness Camp*



The 2020-2021 school year brought many changes to our school system. One of the most significant changes was made in our REACH program that allowed only ten students to participate in a program that usually supported more than forty students annually. The district team understood the challenges associated with the change and began brainstorming possible opportunities for our youngest students who did not have the advantage of a school experience. Region 12 Schools created a grant-funded summer program, Kindergarten Readiness Camp, that ran four days a week for six weeks at Washington Primary School. All families of students registered for kindergarten in one of our three elementary schools were offered the opportunity to participate. The program was structured to provide pre-academic and social enrichment for students. The goal was to allow our students to build student skills while getting excited for their new adventure in the fall.

Mrs. Kimberly Schramm and Mr. Douglas Nadig taught twenty-four students during our Kindergarten Readiness Camp. District paraprofessionals, Cheryl Caridad and Janice Smith, assisted these extraordinary teachers.

During the three-hour program, students worked on classroom expectations, pre-academic skills and participated in art, music, and play opportunities. Region 12 Schools partnered with the After School Arts Program (ASAP!) to provide weekly enrichment, arts-based workshops. Teaching artist, Adelka Polak, held a workshop *Frogs Make Me Hoppy*. During ASAP! sessions, she taught students about the fascinating life of frogs through interactive games, dance, and puppetry. Teaching artist, Ms. Kaitlin Clark, provided our students with *Nature Art Adventures*. During Ms. Clark's lessons, our students hiked along the river trail to explore the wonders of nature and created a mixed media art piece using various materials. Finally, teaching artist, John Marshall, worked with our students in his workshop, *Joyful Sounds*. Students explored rhythms from around the world using percussion instruments.



An added benefit of the summer program was the opportunity for our students to meet future classmates and begin to build relationships before school even started. The Kindergarten Readiness Camp was a productive opportunity for new peer relationships to develop and grow. Our youngest friends' happy voices and sounds in the hallways and classrooms were heartwarming, uplifting, and energizing. The sweetest and most enthusiastic student comments were overheard daily bringing joy to each summer day.

We are so excited to share that the grant allows the Kindergarten

Readiness Camp to continue for one more summer. All parents of registered kindergarten students will receive information about our program for the summer of 2022. We cannot wait to begin our future together through summer fun.



MODEL *United Nations*



Shepaug Valley School - Middle & High School

Shepaug Valley School recently participated in the Harvard Model United Nations Conference. Located in the heart of Boston, Shepaug was one of only a few public schools in Connecticut selected to participate in the 69th session of the Harvard Model United Nations Conference. Eighteen Shepaug students collaborated with students from 200 secondary schools from 35 different countries to grapple with some of the most serious challenges in international relations. The conference lasted four days and there were over 2,000 students from around the globe in participation.

This year, Shepaug had the unique opportunity to represent the countries of the United States and Israel. As a permanent member of the Security Council, our students' voices and insights were on full display. As a strong force and a sought-after ally by many other countries, our student delegates found themselves in situations where their voice, knowledge, and expertise became vital to passing resolutions. All student delegates spent countless hours learning as much as they could about the United States and Israel. In preparation, students met weekly to read background guides, discuss issues, engage with expert sources and finally write position papers. In addition to representing the United States and Israel, eight students served on specialized committees which provided a much more intimate and engaging experience.



- Wyatt King and Mary-Katherine Eddy served on the Historical Security Council of 1992
- Owen Andrews and Luis Missana served on the Security Council
- Harlequin Sullivan and Maria Strattner served on the Human Rights Council
- Grace McKinnon and Ella Waupotic served on the Organization of Migration

These accomplishments are a product of the reputation that Shepaug students have carved out over the years at Harvard. This year's group only improved our standing.

While working to build resolutions to the most pressing issues in the world, students had opportunities to build lasting relationships with students from all over the world. Our students continue to perform at a high level, consistently winning awards each year at the Harvard Model United Nations Conference.





Eighth Grade Language Arts

The eighth grade is working in literature circles to read *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain. Students take roles in their reading, set and achieve reading goals, and use discussion time to enhance their understanding of the characters and the themes of the book. In the future, students will use their notes and prior discussions to participate in a Socratic Seminar.

The SVS Graphics Studio “Design to Production” Program

The Shepaug Valley School Graphics Studio provides a real-world experience for Graphic Design students. In this course, students have project-based assignments that teach the design to production process from client consultations to ideation and development, evaluation, refinement, and finally taking them to the finished printed product. Students learn brand identity, logo and package design, and business etiquette. This experience will culminate in the higher level Graphics classes having an authentic experience actually working with our schools and local communities to produce content for customers on industry standard software. Shepaug students have already created logos, business cards, brochures, posters, and signs for the Region 12 Schools and local organizations. As we continue to build our “Design to Production” program, we look forward to connecting students more with the communities to discuss, design and print their graphic design needs.



Student examples: In this logo unit, students work through the entire design process from design to print. They develop or improve a logo for a company or organization and then apply it to an end product like the packaging below.

Debate Club

The Debate Team has successfully completed their regular season by competing in the Connecticut Debate Association’s final regular season tournament on Saturday, March 5, 2022. The tournament was held virtually and included 225 competitors from 26 schools. Shepaug was well-represented by Sophie Glickman and Wyatt King, and by Sunday ten-Hoeve and Dan Millen.

Debate tournaments, which are held monthly, provide students with the opportunity to discuss serious, pressing issues within a rigorous format. Topics this year have included foreign policy, free speech and libel laws, housing policy, space tourism, and the power of the Supreme Court. Shepaug’s debaters have spent the year grappling with these thorny issues, considering opposing viewpoints, and formulating their own arguments.

It has truly been a banner year for the Debate Team, which was capped off with the duo of Glickman-King qualifying for the State Final that was held March 25. The State Final is limited only to speakers and teams who have posted 3-0 records during a tournament, and have been awarded a trophy on account of their performances. On qualifying for the State Final, Sophie was quick to thank her teammates for their contribution to the Team’s success. This is truly a fitting culmination of Sophie and Wyatt’s distinguished efforts over their four years on the Debate Team.

With the regular season behind them, the Team turns its attention to the future. After celebrating the end of another great season, team members will continue to hone their skills with weekly practices and meetings.

MATH DEPARTMENT *Update*



Shepaug math students have embarked on exciting endeavors this school year! The first of these is the establishment of the first Shepaug National Math Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta. Mu Alpha Theta provides a method for schools to recognize and encourage students who enjoy and excel in mathematics. The focus for participants is to share their knowledge with others through a variety

of community service activities. These include, but are not limited to, peer tutoring at the middle and high school levels, as well as partnering with elementary school children to foster the love of math. The first twenty-seven eligible students were inducted on February 2, 2022.

The second is the establishment of a Litchfield County Math League, spearheaded by Caroline Kibbe's senior project. Caroline was the catalyst behind the formation of Shepaug's math club, the Mathletes, when she was a sophomore. The club has grown exponentially from about fifteen members to over forty! The team initially competed in the Fairfield County Math League at Wilton High School due to the lack of local competitions. Caroline invited several local schools to join the Litchfield County Math League with six schools expressing interest. Shepaug hopes to be the host for the first competition in the near future.



THE AGRISCIENCE *Academy*



The Agriscience Academy continues to blossom like a spring flower as we finish our third year in operation. Recently the building committee officially declared the academy construction complete. Students in the Animal Science, Plant Science, Food Science, and Power Structural & Technical Systems pathways continue to place their individual finishing touches on Connecticut's newest agriscience center. We received a grant through National FFA and local tractor supply company stores to provide funding in completing a tractor restoration project. Additional grant funding is expected to provide The Agriscience Academy with a state-of-the-art arena groomer for our equine rings, as well as an irrigation system and grow lights to improve our greenhouse capabilities.

This year The Agriscience Academy at Shepaug Valley School grew to over 100 students, and is awaiting confirmations for the fourth cohort list of students. We anticipate serving over 150 students next year. The Academy will graduate its first cohort of four seniors in June.

The 2021-2022 school year has brought many new experiences to Shepaug students. We welcomed back our horse, Gulliver, along with new companion Ollie. We also have a new resident beef cow, Peppermint Patty; a trifecta of dwarf Nigerian goats - Diamond, Cheerio, and Blue; and a small flock of poultry. In addition to these animals, students were able to volunteer at the FFA booth at the Big E and attend the 94th National FFA Convention. We plan to host our first Ag Fair to showcase the learning of our students. The Academy also grew its Adult Education program this year by offering a course on Lacto-fermentation sauerkraut and a sold-out cheese making workshop. We expect to offer additional opportunities in the future.

The FFA officers continue to meet weekly to plan opportunities for our members at the local level. This year we have transitioned our monthly chapter meetings into the regular school day to ensure all members stay informed and are able to participate. Students were excited to participate in National FFA Week in February to learn more about leadership and receive encouragement and inspiration from their national officers. Twelve students competed in the State Career Development Event (CDE) at UConn. Mina Kheir-Elden placed 9th in the poultry judging contest while our team placed 8th. Gabby Hilario placed 9th in the livestock judging contest and our team placed 6th. Finally, Jen Demassa placed 6th in the horse judging contest with our team placing 6th. Students are preparing for additional competitions this Spring.

We are so grateful for our community support.



ROBOTICS & Computer Science



Elementary schools are abuzz with excitement this year. Students have been learning about computer science and it goes beyond just programming; they also learn how computers work and their impact on our lives. Teachers spent a day of professional development learning the fundamentals of computer science and how to integrate it into the existing curriculum.

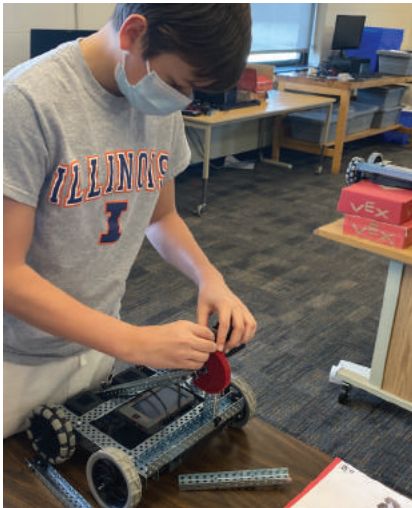
Students are working through the Code.org Computer Science Fundamentals course. Code.org allows students to work at their own pace and practice core coding concepts. Learning how to code reinforces other key skills that students need to master. They must be able to think logically, break problems down into smaller components, and communicate clearly. Their Code.org lessons are supplemented by hands-on experiences with a computer science teacher at least once a month.

Students started the school year by coding All About Me projects with the Scratch programming language. These projects introduced the new programming tool while helping us get to know fun facts about each student. The open-ended nature of the platform allows students to make design decisions and express themselves creatively. Recently they have used Scratch to code stories and make simple games.

In the fall, students learned how to create algorithms or step-by-step instructions needed to program a small robot called BeeBot. Students program BeeBot by entering the sequence of commands directly into the bot using the buttons on its back. To help BeeBot navigate from point A to point B on a map, students must break down the problem into smaller pieces, a process known as decomposition, before creating their algorithms. The immediate feedback proves to be very beneficial, whether it be the joy of success or perseverance of trial and error. This process helps students develop grit.

Students will work with another robot, Dot, to explore events. Dot takes input from the environment through a series of buttons and sensors and knows when it is being tossed, rolled, or encounters another robot. Students can use those sensors to make Dot react to its environment. LEGO robotics sets will be introduced later this year. All of the robots use the same basic coding concepts as Code.org and Scratch. Students look forward to the time they spend in computer science class.





PERSEVERANCE IN TECHNOLOGY & ROBOTICS CLASSES

Shepaug Valley School is an innovative place where students can develop their computational thinking and problem-solving skills through robotics and technology classes. Focused on developing technology skills, technology students discover methods for working through complex problems, a skillset that will serve them well in any career. Students are encouraged to develop their talents in creativity and teamwork as they focus on different problem-solving methods and design thinking.

Technology classes build upon each other. Middle school students begin exploring engineering careers as they design and build biomedical engineering projects.

Students gain experience in computer programming skills like random number generators, developing programmed quizzes, and collaborating with others in building unique video games. Students learn how to look with a critical eye as they analyze each other's work and participate in think-tank-like activities to identify issues and brainstorm ideas for solutions. As students transition to eighth grade, they transfer their programming knowledge to the production of robots and automated machines. Young engineers debate real-world issues like ethics in the use of robotics, artificial intelligence, and drones and how the job market and economy are affected.

Students gain valuable hands-on experiences as they build and program robots. They build testbeds - platforms that utilize different sensors to take input from the environment and translate that into machine behaviors through computer programming. Students learn how to program linearly and then how to sequence, chaining those small behaviors together to become larger, more complex, behaviors. The key is to become adroit in isolating variables and solving problems step by step. Courage, resolve, and persistence are gained and students acquire attributes of determination. They are not allowed to give up and "perseverance" becomes a common word and practice.

Students entering the upper grades can choose to take Robotics I and II as technology electives. Students learn about specific mechanical systems, build gear trains, design, build and test chassis systems and lifting mechanisms, and real-world challenges through programming. Students program their robots via remote control, writing code for each button to operate motors. This is an intriguing experience for students as they compare their video game remote controllers to their robots' remote controllers. Students compose autonomous programs to control the behavior of robots and automated machines.

Young robotics programmers also explored different ways to make their chassis systems turn with precision. They competed in creating faster machines through gear chain configurations, comparing the inverse relationship between torque and speed. Through their studies, they developed a spirit of a collaborative community.



SHEPAUG *Valley Partnership*



Shepaug Valley Partnership (SVP) is a community-based secondary transition program that is offered through Region 12. Our program provides services post-high school for students between the ages of 18 and 22 years old. It is our goal to provide our students with the greatest opportunities to prepare them for an independent and fulfilling future. We do this by connecting them to community resources, empowering them, and strengthening their advocacy skills which assist them in independently navigating their life plan. Transition planning at SVP is driven by a young person's dreams, desires, and abilities. We have a collaborative approach with parents, outside agencies, and the student.

We are centrally located at the Bryan Memorial Town Hall in the community of Washington Depot. This site is within walking distance of numerous local businesses. Our program offers transition services that provide age-appropriate opportunities for students to gain independent living skills, social skills, employment, training, and self-advocacy skills in community settings.

Areas that SVP focuses on include daily living and planning (weather, clothing choices, work, leisure, healthy cooking/eating), budgeting for the week (finances, banking), community safety (crosswalks, parking lots and emergencies), lifelong fitness (hiking, gym membership), shopping (food, clothing, gifts), dining out (fast food or sit down restaurants), and community services (libraries, police, fire, post office).

Vocational activities take place in the community at various worksites with the goal of helping young adults acquire the necessary skills to secure and maintain community connections. These connections allow them to take steps towards future employment and increase their success after they leave Shepaug Valley Partnership.



Our students are working three days a week at sites in the town of Washington. These internships assist our students with completing the same tasks as other employees. Each student is supported by one of our trained job coaches. Our goal is for each student to learn new skills; which in turn is carried over so that each student is productive at their next worksite.

In the Fall, two of our “pioneers” graduated from the partnership. Having completed three years of transition services, both students received their diploma and have since moved into adult transition programs. Bittersweet; but an amazing accomplishment for our students.



Washington Primary School Learners and Leaders

This year, Washington Primary School explored the many attributes of a learner and a leader. How can being a leader of your own learning grow leaders in our communities? This was a guiding question for the staff and students.

LEAD (Learning Together, Effort, Ask, Do) was used to activate students' knowledge and understanding of four key ideas that support learning and leadership. Learning Together, helped students develop skills to listen and share

with respect, and to work toward a common team goal. Effort, supported persistence and grit encouraging students to try new things and to think positively. Ask, taught students the value of asking questions showing interest and exploring ideas with a critical eye. Do, was pressing students to see jobs through, learn from mistakes, accept feedback, and reflect on goal setting. LEAD was a novel way to help students take charge of their own learning.

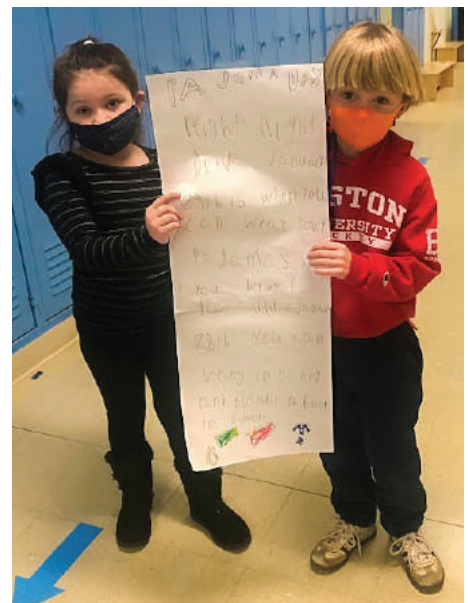


As students gained an internal understanding of how to be a leader of their own learning, they generated skills to be a leader of change within the school community and beyond. Schoolwide clubs emerged from interests and from a desire to help others. The Student Council generated spirit days to support local food drives and the Connecticut Children's Hospital. Kindergartners and first graders chose Project Night-Night, to raise money to purchase night backpacks with stuffed animals, books and blankets for children. The Art Club created T-shirts with proceeds supporting local animal shelters and horse stables. The Kindness Club read stories to students and created kindness rocks to spread inspiration. The Glider Theater Club created puppet

shows to share important character traits of trustworthiness, gratitude, inclusion, and self-regulation to reinforce social skills. These efforts helped our students grow the skills to be leaders and find avenues to think beyond self and influence their school and communities in positive ways.

Our parents and our community partnerships shared their many talents as guest readers, musicians, gardeners, aerobic instructors, and more. Our Parent Teacher Organization brought enriching experiences to our students including a virtual assembly with author Chris VanDusen, and The Secret World of Robots. Our local community also offered learning connections. Trooper Vicki Donahoe visited our youngest learners to read Officer Buckle and Gloria, and the Washington Fire Department shared safety tips and their safety equipment. The Danbury Women's Group supported personal safety and anti-bullying strategies. Washington Primary School is grateful for these partnerships that model how important it is to be a leader in a community and to share knowledge, skills, and talents for the greater good.

Washington Primary School learned and grew outward thinking leaders influencing others in caring and remarkable ways.





Booth Free School and Burnham School

Booth Free and Burnham Schools are integral parts of their communities. Our schools actively partner with many community organizations to enhance learning. We embrace a wide range of stakeholders, organizations such as the Women's Center of Greater Danbury, fire departments, libraries, Roxbury Conservation Commission, Roxbury-Bridgewater Garden Club, local Land Trusts/environmental groups and the Northwest Conservation District.

The Women's Center of Greater Danbury provides high quality programs to our students. Students participated in interactive activities that helped them explore what respect looks and feels like. They were coached to be upstanders in their communities; understanding why bullying happens, and what can be done to stop it. Women's Center professionals helped our students understand the concepts of personal boundaries and empathy. These programs guide social-emotional growth and help our students feel safe and respected as valued members of their school community.

Through first hand instruction by Bridgewater and Roxbury fire personnel, students learned how to stay safe and how to prevent fires from happening in their homes. Students explored equipment and learned about the various strategies firefighters use to prevent and fight fires. Children are always excited to see the trucks, examine the gear, and just get to know their local firemen.



The Roxbury-Bridgewater Garden Club, the Roxbury Conservation Commission, and the Northwest Conservation District serve to beautify our grounds and to promote caring for our environment. Teaching our children about plant life either in our community gardens or within our newly installed rain garden, extends learning in the life sciences for our students. The Principles of Flight, sponsored by the Roxbury Conservation Commission in collaboration with the Minor Memorial Library offers our students a chance to explore STEM concepts regarding the amazing forces of physics involved in flight. These community opportunities lead our students to engage in learning experiences where they can use their problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

COMMUNITY *Connections*

Our students also find many opportunities to give back to others. This year the students collected food for their local food pantry. They painted Kind Rocks and scattered them around their communities and along their travels. Our Student Council sponsored a “PJ Day for the Kids” with proceeds going to the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center to support children battling cancer. As war in Ukraine broke out in March, students created signs, and sunflower drawings to post around their towns to show their empathy and support for the “world community.”

The seniors of Bridgewater and Roxbury are special to the students in our schools. Partnering with state representative, Cindy Harrison, students decorated Christmas trees, made and shared holiday and winter cards, Valentines, and beautiful heart wreaths. Engaging in actions with the purpose to lift others’ spirits, helps our students see how simple acts of kindness benefit us all.

Through partnerships outside of school, we inspire students to see themselves as powerful components in the give and take of society. We are grateful for all of the community contributions that enrich the educational experiences of our students, and for the powerful connections that will surely be fostered for years to come.



2022 SHEPAUG VALLEY SCHOOL *Art Awards*

Scholastic Art Awards



Silver Key Winner: Charles DaCunha



Silver Key Winner: Laura Reed-Langford



Honorable Mention: Olivia Shulta



Honorable Mention: Ryan Sarbello

2021-2022 Celebration of Young Photographers Winners



Annabelle Churyk "Cloudy Moonrise"



Ryan Sarbello "Bright From Dark"

2022 SHEPAUG VALLEY SCHOOL

Art Awards

CAS ART AWARDS

The Connecticut Association of Schools annually honors two outstanding seniors from each of the member schools in the state who excel in the performing or visual arts. Students are chosen by their teachers and must possess the qualities of scholarship, leadership, and most importantly, must excel in one or more of the performing or visual arts.



Ryan Sarbello is an outstanding photographer. His composition and editing skills are evident in his AP Arts class portfolio focusing on how photographers tell

stories. Last year he was selected for the ASAP! Photography Collective. Ryan has also won numerous awards through Scholastic Art and ASAP!. He has incorporated photography into his senior project called Drones, Photography, and Engineering. Ryan plans to attend college in the fall to study engineering.



Charles DaCunha works in several areas of media including digital, acrylics, charcoal, and colored pencil. He is enrolled in his second AP Portfolio course. Charles successfully completed a Drawing Portfolio his junior year that focused

on visually capturing the feelings of mental illness. This year he chose to work on the relationship between subject matter and their environments as the theme of his 2D portfolio. He won a Silver Key at the Scholastic Art Awards and sold a piece at the Washington Art Association (WAA) Emerging Artists Exhibit. Charles plans to attend Trinity College Dublin in the fall to study English literature and classical civilization.



SHEPAUG *Dramatics*



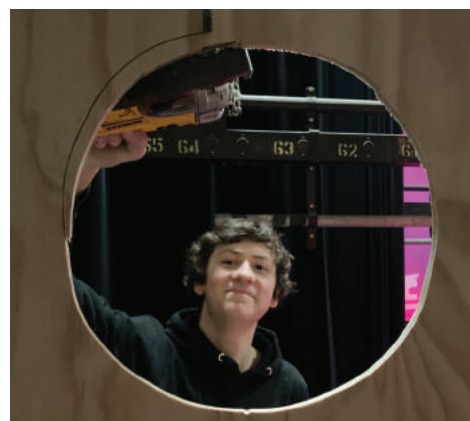
We are very fortunate to have such dedicated members of the Dramatics. Many actors have been in several productions throughout the years and bring a high degree of skill to their performances, as well as extremely committed crew members who design, build, and put those final touches on our sets to make each show a special experience.



In the fall, Dramatics students produced *The Thugs*, one of the most experimental shows created on the stages of Shepaug. The distinct way the story unfolds creates an unflinching look at our reality. The caffeinated characters from the world of *Thugs* rarely speak in full sentences, but if they do they are most likely interrupting one another. Ignoring the statements of their onstage companions, they are each supremely focused on their internal monologues. This is not a world of compassion or careful introspection, but a universe filled to the brim with the 'me' and the 'I' that has become commonplace in our modern culture.

It was important while creating this show the students asked, 'Why? What were the intentions of the playwright Adam Bock, and why would he develop such an off-kilter, unsettling atmosphere? What was he suggesting about the patterns of confusion and groupthink? Had they acted as co-conspirators in the events leading up to the climax of the story, or was it something else?'

The backstage crew has grown by leaps and bounds with each production as experienced students share the tricks and tools of theater with the newer members. The expansion of talent on both sides of the curtain has allowed for the unique choice of a special show that had never been performed in the Shepaug auditorium, *The Wizard of Oz*.



The entire cast is filled with both middle and high school students, featuring Maria Strattnr '23 in the role of Dorothy, Marilyn Santana '24 as the Scarecrow, Mia Melatti '24 as the Tinman, and Mollie Leonard '26 in the role of the Lion. Jack Buchholz '23 is returning as lighting designer, Grey Pomeroy '24 will be sharing stage management duties with Thomas Day '23, and James Wise '22 is in charge of the audio for the production, with many other talented students lending their hands to the lights, sound and running crew.



It is always important to have a tight-knit group that can work well together under pressure. Even after multiple evenings of dress rehearsals, opening night is always special and requires a level of focus and teamwork to bring the various elements together. The students in *The Wizard of Oz* are laser focused on putting on a dramatic, electrifying show that the audience will remember for a long time. It is only fitting that the first musical back on the Shepaug stage is a story of magic, friendship, and home.

Performances are scheduled for Friday and Saturday, April 29 and 30 at 7pm, and Sunday, May 1 at 3pm.

Strategic Planning

This year, Region 12 Schools embarked on a journey to plan out education for the next five to ten years. The Region 12 Board of Education's Long Range Planning Committee, chaired by Julie Stuart, wanted to design our schools to reflect the community and its values. This journey began two years ago but recently received more momentum as the Long Range Planning Committee joined with the consultant company Partners for Educational Leadership.

This partnership invites our community to provide open and honest feedback that will help school officials make decisions to improve our education system. On January 30, 2022, sixty members of the community shared their experiences, perspectives, and perceptions about Region 12 Schools. While the community shared areas for the schools to grow including diversity and communication, they expressed and spoke highly of our strong staff members, the expansive opportunities offered, and the commitment to academic excellence.

The Region 12 Long Range Planning committee wanted to hear from as many voices as possible. With this goal in mind, Partners for Educational Leadership created a survey that was shared out with the entire community. We received nearly 600 survey responses which exceeded the goal of 400 survey returns. Even more impressive was that 52% of the respondents were community members who did have school aged children. It is remarkable to see the community members' investment and interest in our public schools. The survey results will become part of the comprehensive input that will help the Region 12 Board of Education to determine our schools' future.

The strategic work will be ongoing and we hope that community members continue to share their thoughts as we establish a road map for our Vision of the Shepaug Graduate.

The Region 12 Strategic Plan is on track to be completed in June 2022. This strategic plan will guide us as we chart the course for our finances, facilities, programming, and opportunities for our students.



RECOGNITIONS

Retirements tributes

Region 12 Schools appreciates the time and commitment given to our students.

We wish our retirees well in their next journey.



Joan Temple

*Library Media Specialist
Shepaug Valley School*



Cathy Colella

*Principal
Booth Free School & Burnham School*



Regina Rourke

*Educational Tech Specialist
Booth Free School & Burnham School*



Pamela Lucchesi

*Elementary Teacher
Burnham School*



Harry Larson

*Custodian
Shepaug Valley School*



Steve Crowley

*Head Custodian
Washington Primary School*



Nancy Baran

*Assistant to the Director of Finance
Central Office*

RECOGNITIONS

Athletics

Shepaug Valley School's Ice Hockey team celebrated its 38th anniversary this year. The Shepaug squads of the 1980's achieved early success, coached by Washington resident Steve Cornell, highlighted by their 18-3 record and trip to the Division II State CIAC Championship game (a 5-3 loss to Branford High School) during the 1987-1988 season.

After participation numbers declined in the early 1990's, Shepaug's Ice Hockey team transformed from a program consisting only of Shepaug students into a Cooperative Team. Following strict CIAC guidelines, multiple schools combined forces to have enough participants to field a team. Over the years, schools such as Wamogo, Brookfield, Newtown, and Pomperaug participated on Shepaug's Co-Op Ice Hockey team. Currently, the Spartan Ice Hockey program consists of Shepaug, Nonnewaug, Litchfield, and Thomaston high schools.

In 2003, led by Coach Paul Letourneau, the Shepaug team posted a 14-5 regular season record and reached the CIAC Division II State Championship game, where they lost to Glastonbury High School 6-3. In 2015, led by Coach Michael Gorra, a Washington resident and Shepaug alum, the Spartans reached the CIAC Division III Final Four, where they lost in the tournament semifinal game to the E.O. Smith-Tolland Co-Op.

During the 2021-2022 season, led by Coach Rick Faull, the Spartan Ice Hockey team featured 20 players and two managers, with eleven players and both managers being Shepaug students. The team will need to renew their Co-Op agreement with the CIAC in the Fall of 2022, as the current two-year contract will expire this year.

The Fall of 2022 is set to feature Shepaug's first participation in interscholastic football upon CIAC approval. Shepaug will be included in the Northwest United Co-Op Football team featuring players from Wolcott Tech, Nonnewaug and Wamogo. Practices and home games are held at Nonnewaug High School.



Front Row: R. Anderson, R. Hotchkiss, F. Gavel (Captain), R. Bailey, J. Martin, C. Ericson
Second Row: J. Peterson, V. Wescott, C. Dimon, R. Swanson, R. Wescott, E. Ognan, A. Parker
Back Row: Coach Whitson, R. Wagner, J. Nelson, C. Zihick, R. Wilton, E. Swanson, R. Mason

While this is set to be Shepaug's first foray into high school football, many many years ago, Washington High School had a football team that competed in the Housatonic Valley Football League. The 1945-1946 Washington High School team were Co-Champions with Bethel High School posting a won/loss record of 5-2, with 306 total points scored while only allowing opponents from New Milford, Bethel, Newtown, and Guilford to score 163 combined total points. Those that go to watch Shepaug participate on Northwest United Co-Op Football during the 2022 season will certainly see some familiar faces, while some people with local family roots may recognize some players pictured from the 1945-1946 Washington High School Football team.

Olympic Gold

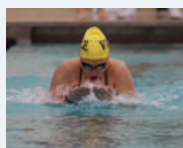
Lindsey Jacobellis, the winner of the USA's first gold medal in the 2022 Olympics, attended Booth Free School and Shepaug Valley School, visited Shepaug Valley Partnership this past November!



RECOGNITIONS

Athletics

College Athletic Alumni News



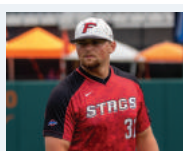
Ava Adiletti '21 | Millersville University, Freshman

Our team finished the season with a record of 8-0, the first undefeated team ever in program history. I am currently number 6 on the all time top 10 list for the 100 breaststroke with a time of 1:10.22. With a team gpa of 3.4, we were also recognized as a Scholar All American team.



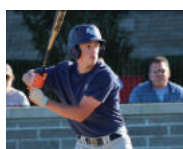
Lily Blyn '21 | Cornell University, Freshman

Our freshman 8 team raced this fall at Head of the Fish and placed first. The spring racing season started in late March and finishes with the Ivy League championships in May.



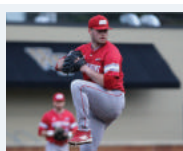
Ethan Hibbard '19 | Fairfield University, Junior

Ethan, an engineering major, received recognition last year as MAAC All-Academic, and had his first career hit vs. Texas in the NCAA tournament last season. "I'm very excited to get the season started! The Stags are looking forward to following up on our great season last year!"



Owen Hibbard '21 | Roger Williams University, Freshman

As a senior at Shepaug, Owen was All League, All State and stole 35 bases - second highest single season total in school history. "I'm excited to start my college baseball career this spring playing for Roger Williams!"



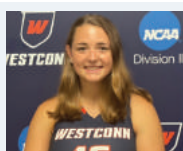
Ryan LaMay '16 | Sacred Heart University, Graduate

Entering 5th year as #2 starter, 34 career starts, selected captain for second year. Deans list all 8 semesters, finished with 3.92 GPA. Won silver medal of excellence in economics for his graduating class. "Outlook for me personally is doing whatever I can to help us win our first NEC title in 7 years"



Brooke Mercier '21 | Eastern Connecticut State University, Freshman

Our season went great this fall. We made it all the way to the LEC championships and won against Keene. We all worked very hard this season which led to great success.



Olivia Moore '18 | Western Connecticut State University, Senior

Olivia was named WCSU Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year, 2021, National Field Hockey Coaches Association Division III Scholar of Distinction, 2021 Little East All Conference second team, and 2021 Little East Conference All Academic team.



Dominic Perachi '19 | Salve Regina University, Junior

Dominic started the '22 season with 6 straight victories and was named Commonwealth Coast Conference Pitcher of the week 4 times. During those 6 games, he gave up 1 earned run in 39 innings pitched, and averaged 16.15 strikeouts per every 9 innings pitched.



Alan Stinson '18 | Albertus Magnus College, Senior

This season we are slated to come in 7th in our conference with 17 new players looking to compete this year. Having played only 20 games last season, we made the semis and look to get back there. I am placed to be a high leverage situation reliever this season and set up man.

Kalin Wachsmuth '15

Kalin has many songs that have been released to various platforms including Spotify, Youtube, and even KDS Universe. Kalin, also known as KDS, will be striving for much more!

Steven Antoni '82

"I am still in Connecticut, working and living in the New Haven area. I am the president of an eCommerce solutions company and helping grow the company in the Americas. Exciting and fast paced, and a great company."

Randy T Ashmore '88

"I retired from the USCG in 2008 after 20 wonderful years. I am now working in the Maritime Emergency/Disaster Response arena around the world, living in Virginia."

Joan Baslow-Temple '74

"I will be retiring from Shepaug Valley School in June after 23 years as the school librarian. My plans are to spend time with my grandchildren (ages 4 and 6), hike with my Australian shepherd, and work part-time at a local public library."

Samantha Williams '21

"I started my first year at Northwestern Community College in person. I applied to the veterinary technician program and hope to get in for fall of 2022. I work at the aftercare program for Region 12 as well as substitute teaching in the K-5 schools."

Michael Gorra '88

Michael is entering his 20th year at Aspetuck Animal Hospital as veterinarian and owner. Mike was head coach of the Shepaug co-op ice hockey team for 17 years. Both daughters, Madeline ('17) and Abigail ('19) went through Washington Primary School and Shepaug Valley School.

Jesse Johnson '88

"Getting old!"

Michelle Wheaton Stafford '88

"I'm living outside of Hartford with my husband, our 2 children, and our silly Cockapoo. I am also a first grade teacher."

Meghan Clark '88

Meghan lives in Woodside, CA with her husband, Jason Bogardus, and their two sons Aidan (16) and Finn (14) and their dog, Jasper (7).

Shepaug Alumni Association

Our Mission is to reach, serve and engage alumni and their families; to foster connections between the school and its graduates, and to provide Shepaug with goodwill and support. Contact Scott Werkhoven, Alumni Coordinator, at SVSAlumni@region-12.org to join our mailing list.



Follow Shepaug Valley School Alumni on Facebook.



Reach out to us!

Follow Region 12 for updates and information www.region-12.org

Instagram: @region12schools Twitter: @ShepaugRSD12 YouTube: youtube.com/Region12Schools Facebook: Shepaug Regional School District 12



The Planetarium

Shepaug Valley School welcomes the return of the planetarium for exploration of the stars by students and the public.

Over the years, the planetarium system became too costly to keep up and the equipment fell into disrepair. This treasure became buried in the clutter of desks and cleaning supplies.

There was a community desire to breathe life back into the planetarium and find a way to explore the universe within our own facilities. This desire was met by the team efforts of the

Director of Facilities and the Director of Finance. Both of these directors rolled up their sleeves and began to look for innovative technology that would be low-cost to maintain and be operator friendly. The result of their efforts is the new Digitstar System in the planetarium. This system allows the students to explore astronomy in 3D with surround sound and state-of-the-art graphics. Additionally, Region 12 has partnered with a local company, Slooh, which provides access to 15 telescopes around the world for real-time exploration of the heavens. Our students can experience the night sky in Dubai right at Shepaug.

The acquisition of technology was the first step in bringing the planetarium back to life. Senior Head Custodian Leticia Pierpaoli and the team of custodians took on the challenge of clearing and cleaning the space. They provided a facelift to the area including new paint and lighting to enhance the viewing experience.

The space has been outfitted with new seating that allows our viewers to adjust their location based on the area of space they are exploring. The flexible seating allows viewers to have a greater immersive experience. Our goal is to build excitement for our planet and the universe.

We are educating the future employees of NASA, our aim is to foster their passion for exploration.