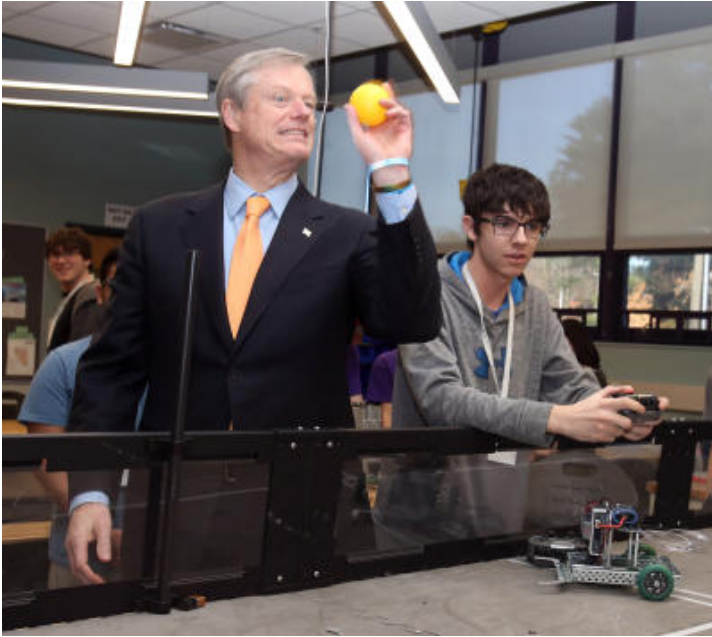


Baker delivers \$3.3 million in school grants

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Gov. Charlie Baker tosses a ball back to a robot during a visit to Shawsheen Valley Technical High School in Billerica. Shawsheen Tech junior Collin Powers, 16, of Tewksbury, watches the governor's form. SUN PHOTOS /JULIA MALAKIE / Gov. Charlie Baker is greeted by, from left, Shawsheen Tech sophomore Jorielle Arlock, left, of Tewksbury, junior Grace Clark of Bedford, senior Emily Morris of Billerica, and senior Sam Moriconi of Billerica.

BILLERICA -- Gov. Charlie Baker took a bite out of a grilled peanut butter and jelly sandwich served out of the new Shawsheen Valley Technical High School food truck.

"I give that an 'A,'" he said. "Well done."

Then he headed inside and spoke to high school senior Alysa Gannon about a cribbage board she was making on of the school's new Computer Numeric Control (CNC) milling machines. Next door, students and instructor Tina Collins showed the governor the school's renovated robotics lab.

These updates at Shawsheen Tech are the products of tens of thousands in grant funding from the state in recent years. On Thursday, Baker, Education Secretary James Peyser and Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy visited the school to present the state's latest round of funding: 3 million in Skills Capital grants.

The grants went to 31 high schools and educational institutions, including Shawsheen Tech, Greater Lowell Technical High School, Middlesex Community College and University of Massachusetts Lowell.

"This is a competitive procurement based on an interest that we have as an administration in providing the strategic tools that you all need to continue to meet the skill demands of the businesses and employers in your area," Baker said.

Shawsheen Tech received \$125,000 to modernize and update the school's drafting program and introduce new engineering curriculum.

According to the announcement, this funding will allow the school to enroll more students and offer adult training programs.

Greater Lowell Tech in Tyngsboro received \$68,504 to fund a new computer lab with training stations for computer networking, security and cyber operations. Both students at the school and adult learners will be able to use the lab to build skills in information technology, programming and web development.

The Lowell Campus of Middlesex Community College received \$124,262 to upgrade its dental hygiene clinic. The funding will re-configure the clinic to meet accreditation standards and purchase 24 new work stations, allowing the clinic to apply for a special license to accept MassHealth and other insurance.

Operated in downtown Lowell, students working toward an associates degree in science work at the clinic, which provides low-cost dental services to 900 to 1,000 patients a year.

"We have a clinic that is over 25 years old that is in desperate need of improvement," said Katherine Gehly, dean of nursing and allied health.

Francis College at University of Massachusetts Lowell in partnership with Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School received \$116,000 to purchase new CNC milling machines.

The purchase will offer new technical training programs for day and night students at both institutions. Students will be able to earn college credits, an associates degree in mechanical engineering technology or a certificate in advanced manufacturing.

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