

**2023 Annual Report
South Middlesex Regional
Vocational Technical School
Committee
(Keefe Regional Technical School)**

This annual report is prepared by Superintendent /Director, Jonathan Evans, and composed on behalf of the members of the School Committee of the **South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical School District** and submitted after review and approval by the full Committee in compliance with the provisions of the Agreement among the City of Framingham and Towns of Ashland, Holliston, Hopkinton and Natick.

This report reviews the major items with which the Committee was concerned during the year. It is a representative account of matters solely within the policy making authority of the Committee and also of matters which the Superintendent/Director brought before the Committee for information and consultation. For greater detail and discussion, the reader should read the extended minutes of Committee meetings and the attachments thereto which are available on the district website.

In addition to serving as a public high school, the South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical School District provides continuing education opportunities for adults through the Keefe at Night program as well as Summer Discover, a summer program for area youth.

The Committee reorganized on June 13, 2023 with officers elected unanimously to the following positions:

Chair: Edward Burman (Ashland)

Vice-Chair: Sarah Commerford
(Holliston)

Secretary: Maria Martinez (Framingham)

Assistant Treasurer: Barry Sims
(Holliston)

Staff members working on behalf of the District and School Committee are Karen Ward, **Recording Secretary** and William Hurley, **Treasurer**.

The balance of this report presents a summary of the discussions and actions of the Committee on a number of the important matters brought before the Committee for advice or action.

Community Engagement

Last year our CTE program areas participated in several projects throughout the district and member municipalities. Similar learning opportunities were also created on our campus as programs made improvements throughout the school grounds.

Design & Visual Communications
Morse Institute Library Outdoor Reading Room - This collaboration with Metal Fabrication, Design & Visual Communication and Carpentry produced an artistic outdoor structure for community members to enjoy.

Carpentry
Nyanza Healing Garden Ashland - Students designed and built a memorial bench for the garden.

Horticulture
Natick Community Organic Farm - Weekly tasks to grow vegetables and flowers to help sustain the operation
Framingham Fire Department - Landscaping project for a future fireman's memorial

Keefe Tech Turf Project - The students removed the grass from our existing athletic field and used machines to re-grade and apply new Turf to make the field playable. We were able to host games in the fall of 2023 thanks to their efforts.

Electrical

Keefe Tech Light Post Repairs

The students were able to repair and replace the lights along the school parking lot.

Town of Ashland DPW

Grade 11 and 12 students wired a 100-amp underground service for the town's construction trailer at the DPW site.

Keefe Tech Internet Improvements- The students in electrical ran CAT-6 wiring in several parts of the building.

Administration

In 2023, Jonathan Evans completed his tenth year in the role of Superintendent Director, with 28 years of service to the district.

The School Committee completed its periodic evaluation of the Superintendent using the DESE rubric and provided a rating of Proficient Approaching Exemplary. The complete record of this evaluation is a public document that will be available at the South Middlesex Regional School District Superintendent's Office.

School Improvement Plan

The School Improvement Plan for the 2023-2024 school year includes the following objectives: 1) The CTE faculty will intertwine the theoretical and conceptual learning with the active, authentic learning in the construction cluster, 2) Increase the effectiveness and integration of the BRYT program into the

larger school community, 3) Decrease the number of out of school suspensions through creative re-engagement with students in the learning process, with a special emphasis of finding alternative consequences for underrepresented populations, 4) Implement the full transition from iPass to the new learning management system, PowerSchool for all aspects of school business.

The Professional Development Program included a series of workshops on Positive Psychology, the Science of Happiness. The information centered on how happiness can give you the advantage in your career, personal life, and relationships. Faculty learned about and experienced practical, science-based strategies that can increase productivity, joy, happiness, and wellbeing. The professional development was led by Pam Garramone.

Handbook

With review by the School Council, updates to the Handbook were made. A section on plagiarism and cheating was updated to account for the new technology, artificial intelligence (AI), the food and drink policy was updated, and a section on the Debate Club was added. Two new sections, Continuation of Educational Service Plan and Physical Restraint Policy were updated in accordance with legal requirements.

The Budget Process

In 2023, the district was able to utilize grant funding totaling \$1,487,861, through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II & ESSER III) to purchase items such as Chromebooks for students, and support

for mental health initiatives to address learning loss challenges students have faced due to the pandemic. Funding was also utilized to build a four (4) classroom modular structure.

In 2023, the Superintendent continued the practice of communicating early in the budget process with the financial officers of the member municipalities to develop mutual awareness of both municipal budget constraints and the efforts of the Committee to manage the school efficiently and effectively while recognizing those limitations. The Committee continued to consider reductions in the preliminary budget and the budget of \$24,159,019 as submitted to the member municipalities for FY24, was approved by all.

In December of 2023 the Budget Sub-Committee members Ed Burman, Rick Gallagher, Michele Burns, Barry Sims, Jaime Shepard and Ed Carr are beginning the FY25 budget development process.

Auditor's Report

The FY23 annual audit by the independent accounting firm of Roselli, Clark & Associates is underway and will be preparing the financial statements for committee review.

Enrollment, Recruiting and Student Retention

Keefe Regional Technical School is a school of application. Maintaining a healthy enrollment of students for our day school operation is essential for our overall operational success. The Superintendent has indicated that he believes that the quality and rigor of our school programs and the safety and culture of our school environment will lead to our success in attracting students

and their families to Keefe Regional Technical School. The Superintendent has emphasized that the administration, faculty, and support staff must work together to ensure that Keefe Regional Technical School continues to be recognized by our community as a career and technical school of high quality.

As a district, we were pleased to welcome 8th grade students onto our campus in November 2023 for our Showcase Days. Students had the opportunity to explore different Career and Technical Programs and learn about everything Keefe Tech has to offer. Interested students had the opportunity to bring their families back to our Career Night Open House at the end of November. All 16 Career and Technical Programs were represented at this event, as well as our academic departments and all other aspects of our school programming. We continued to have an excellent turnout of prospective students and their families at this event and appreciate the relationships we have with our sending communities to support students accessing our school as an option.

We are pleased to report that we have maintained full enrollment, with 875 students on October 1, 2023.

Buildings and Grounds

Keefe Regional Technical School has been occupied continuously since September 1973. The facility is used not only during the school day and year but also evenings, weekends, and during the summer months.

Facility upgrades that were completed in 2023 include replacement of refrigeration units in the student cafeteria kitchen, upgrades/repairs to turf areas of the football field, replacement of carpeting in

various common areas, plumbing and electrical upgrades, expansion of the video surveillance system, construction of a storage shed for the Horticulture Program, replacement of several exterior glass window panels in hallways, classrooms, and in the cafeteria, construction and occupancy of a modular building (four classrooms) to alleviate overcrowding in academic classrooms, repair/upgrade of gym bleachers, installation of informational banners on exterior light posts, replacement of the main water shut-off valve and backflow device, refinishing of gym and stage floors, replacement of partitions in two student restrooms, plumbing and electrical upgrades, replacement/repair of mechanical and control components of the building HVAC system through participation in an Improving Ventilation and Air Quality (IVAQ) Grant, purchasing additional furniture for classrooms and student cafeteria to accommodate increased student enrollment, painting exterior building panels and various interior areas, renovation of the Culinary Program East Side Dining Room, replacement of the sound system in the gym, upgrades/repairs to the auditorium sound, lighting, and projection systems, and the purchase of two 14 passenger vans.

Student Achievement

Keefe Technical High School is pleased to share several noteworthy updates pertaining to student achievements. We take great pride in announcing that 51 seniors in grade 12 have been conferred the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship for the 2023-2024 academic year. This merit-based program offers full tuition coverage for undergraduate studies at any Massachusetts state college or university.

Furthermore, Keefe Tech served as the host for the Seal of Biliteracy examination for students in grades 11 and 12. Among the 63 exams administered, 27 students successfully attained the Seal of Biliteracy, while 22 students distinguished themselves by achieving the Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction.

Keefe Tech received notification from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the CollegeBoard® regarding student participation and outcomes from state and national examinations. The ACCESS scores reflect consistent growth in language proficiency among our English as a Second Language (ESL) students, with a total of 19 students demonstrating proficiency and successfully transitioning out of the English Language Learner (ELL) Program.

Moreover, Keefe Tech facilitated 85 Advanced Placement (AP) exams for students in grades 11 and 12, spanning seven academic disciplines. Notably, there has been significant improvement in the "mean scores" from the AP exams, particularly in two of the seven content areas, compared to the preceding school year.

The Massachusetts SkillsUSA District III Leadership and Skills Conference was held online March 1, 2023. Keefe Tech. students earned a total of 26 medals at the District Conference: 10 gold, 11 silver and 5 bronze. Keefe Tech. sent 17 competitors, 19 delegates and one state officer candidate to the Massachusetts SkillsUSA State Leadership and Skills Conference. Keefe Tech. earned the Chapter of Excellence award. While one student was named state officer for 2024.

Horticulture and Landscape Management had one student qualify for the National Future Farmers of America (FFA)

Conference based on their performance at the state level. On October 31, 2023, the student and advisor traveled to Indianapolis Indiana to compete in the 2023 National Conference event. The student earned a bronze medal in Extemporaneous Public Speaking at the event.

The State Business Professionals of America competition was held at the Sheraton Tara in Framingham and Keefe Tech took home 14 gold medals, 11 silver medals, 13 bronze medals. A group of 18 Keefe students advanced to the National competition in Anaheim California where our software engineering team received the best in show award and were ranked in the top 10 nationally. The BPA team also had 5 individual medalists at the event.

General Advisory Board

The Program Advisory Committee meeting for the spring of 2023 was held on May 11, 2023. All of the committee members were updated in their program areas about student competitions, cooperative education placements, curriculum, and Perkins purchases. Each program was allocated time to present budget and equipment requests as part of their meeting.

The fall Program Advisory Committee meeting for the 2023-24 School year took place on Thursday October 12, 2023. During this meeting programs elected their new chairperson, reviewed Perkins indicators, were updated on student program enrollment, and allocated time for budget recommendations and five-year equipment planning.

Respectfully submitted,
Jonathan Evans
Superintendent-Director

SOUTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

ASHLAND

Edward Burman - Chairman
William N. Gaine, Jr.

FRAMINGHAM

Michele Burns
Linda Fobes
Sara Hamerla
Maria Martinez
A.J. Mulvey
Rick Gallagher
Brandon Ward

HOLLISTON

Sarah Commerford
Barry Sims

HOPKINTON

Ruth Knowles
Jaime Shepard

NATICK

Edward Carr
Henry Haugland