
SHAWSHEEN REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Shawsheen Valley Technical High School District is pleased to submit its 1999 Annual Report to the citizens of Bedford, Billerica, Burlington, Tewksbury, and Wilmington. Located on Cook Street in Billerica next to the Towns of Burlington and Wilmington, we celebrated our 30th anniversary offering quality vocational technical education to area youth and residents.

The District is governed by a ten member, elected School Committee empowered by the Massachusetts General Laws and by a Regional Agreement between the five member towns.

Elected representatives of the Regional School Committee include: Mark Trifiro and Don Drouin from Bedford; Kenneth L. Buffum, Vice Chairman, and Bernard F. Hoar, Treasurer, from Billerica; John P. Miller, Chairman, and Alfred Verrier from Burlington; J. Peter Downing and Patricia W. Meuse from Tewksbury; and James M. Gillis, Secretary, and Robert G. Peterson from Wilmington. Charles Lyons is Superintendent/Director of the District serving in that capacity since 1987.

Shawsheen Valley Technical High School is one of twenty-six regional vocational technical school districts in Massachusetts. Eleven hundred and thirty-five high school students were enrolled in Shawsheen Tech's day school programs in October of 1999. Over eight hundred adults also participated in Shawsheen Tech's adult and continuing education courses. Shawsheen Tech's comprehensive adult education program is the fifth largest in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The high school graduating class of 1999 numbered two hundred forty-five seniors. Sixty-five percent of the class graduates secured employment immediately after graduation in their chosen profession; thirty-one percent elected to pursue further education in post secondary institutions; and two percent joined the armed services. The placement statistics for this class are amongst the highest of the twenty-five other regional vocational technical schools located in the Commonwealth.

Shawsheen Tech has articulation agreements with fifteen area colleges, all of whom grant students college credit for the work they complete during high school. Known

as the "Tech Prep" program, this unique approach further develops career paths for high school students maximizes student interest to obtain advanced degrees in emerging technical areas and assures students a career educational path that is both relevant and rewarding. Industry leaders and educational professionals throughout the United States have applauded and emulated Shawsheen Tech's "Tech Prep" program.

In addition to the aforementioned, Shawsheen Tech expanded its partnership with area institutions in 1999 by developing a dual enrollment program with Middlesex Community College. Underwritten by the Department of Education, this program allows students to receive both high school and college credit for after school courses taken at Middlesex Community College in Bedford, MA. Sixteen upperclass students have taken foreign language courses at Middlesex Community College.

Committed to Student Interests and Special Talents

Three-hundred and twenty of three-hundred and seventy ninth-grade applicants entered Shawsheen Tech last fall as inquisitive learners. Interest in attending Shawsheen Tech is so high, that the school found it necessary to establish a waiting list of students for the first time in a decade. Upon entering Shawsheen, students spend every other week experiencing and exploring fourteen different vocational/technical occupations. With nineteen different programs to select from, parents and students are entitled to select eight of the fourteen areas they are scheduled to explore. Students spend alternate weeks in academic classes. By eliminating study halls and providing a challenging eight-period school day, the school offers students all academic requirements for college entrance into any college of their choice and, at the same time, trains them trained as technicians or craftsmen.

By April of their freshmen year, students select a vocational/technical profession in which they will major for the next three and a quarter years. Those who select Plumbing or Electrical will earn fifteen hundred-hours towards a journeyman's license prior to graduating from high school. Those who select Cosmetology will acquire the thousand-hour trade experience needed to take the state examination. Program offerings range from Health Careers to

Electronics; from Telecommunications to Culinary Arts; and from Graphic Arts to Welding. The public is invited to contact the Guidance Department at (978) 671-3613 for a catalog of Shawsheen's diverse program offerings.

By the fall of their senior year many students begin initial employment as either apprentices or co-op interns with local companies during their shop week. Over two hundred and fifty area businesspersons serve on Shawsheen Tech's Craft Advisory Committees ensuring our curriculum, content, and technology is up-to-date. Meeting twice each year with Shawsheen Tech administrators, these local businesspersons are among the first to hire graduates from programs that they have had a part in developing.

Shawsheen Tech students participate in a wide variety of extra curricular activities such as the National Honor Society, the School Yearbook, the Student Newspaper, the World Wide Web Club and the Student Council. The Vocational Industrial Club of America, known as VICA, represents the largest population of student involvement at Shawsheen Tech. VICA is a co-curricular activity, providing opportunities for students to showcase their vocational technical skills at local, state, national and international competitions. Fourteen students participated in the national competition in Kansas City in late June of 1999.

Three-hundred and forty Shawsheen Tech students participated in interscholastic athletics, capturing state vocational championships in both cross-country and wrestling. The football cheerleading team won the Commonwealth Athletic Conference Championship, as well as the Division II North State title. The basketball cheerleading team also earned the Division II North title. The ice hockey and softball teams both qualified for state tournament play. On an individual basis, Robert Cassidy won the Division I State Wrestling title at 130 pounds and was named the Outstanding Wrestler at the Vocational State Wrestling Tournament. Robert Cassidy has also received notice of early acceptance at Penn State University.

Although the MCAS scores of Shawsheen tenth graders were below the state average in 1998 and 1999, this school has aggressively reviewed and revised its academic and vocational programs, to align all learning outcomes with state expectations. Learning deficiencies of individual students are identified prior to the beginning of the freshman year. Students in need of remediation and special accommodations are placed in appropriate classes with Massachusetts certified specialists ready to serve their individual needs. During the 1998-1999 school year, an addi-

tional mathematics teacher was hired to reduce the student-teacher ratios in all ninth and tenth-grade math classes. Expansion of remedial reading, writing and mathematics services has been further enhanced by the addition of computer application programs supported by extensive staff training. Efforts to reinforce basic academic skills across all academic and vocational programs has become a school-wide focus of school improvement. Because of the natural correlation between academic science programs and vocational technical programs, new science courses and state of the art science laboratories have been added.

Shawsheen Tech continues to assess individual learning progress internally through the administration of standardized testing, final examinations and performance assessments. Shawsheen Tech leads the way in advocating for a national assessment that will recognize the attainment of occupational knowledge and skills. Members of the school leadership team are actively engaged in the creation of occupational-proficiency and occupational-mastery standards that will provide evidence of learning progress and the graduation eligibility for students enrolled in vocational technical schools.

The School Council, co-chaired by Assistant Superintendent-Director/Principal Robert Cunningham and parent Bonny Smith, met and fulfilled its responsibilities in regard to Educational Reform Act enacted into law by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1993. The Council approved a School Improvement Plan; revisited the Student Handbook, suggesting changes in the discipline policy; and approved the school budget prior to submission to the School Committee. Plans for a school store have progressed, and parent volunteers have agreed to work during school lunches to assist in its implementation. We anticipate the store will open at the beginning of 2000.

Special Activities in 1999

Many activities took place during 1999 that deserve special recognition:

- In order to promote attention to general student and staff wellness, the weight room above the gymnasium was transformed into a beautiful new Health/Wellness Center equipped with strength-building equipment and cardiovascular machines. This area is now a vibrant instructional facility used extensively during the school day. Activities in the new Health/Wellness Center will be expanded into after school and vacation hours to serve Shawsheen Tech students and staff.

- At the Annual Scholarship and Awards night, seventy-nine seniors received either scholarships for further education or awards for tool and equipment purchases in recognition of their outstanding efforts in their academic and technical studies. Community organizations continued their spirit of generosity in providing substantial scholarship assistance to Shawsheen Tech graduates.
- Two seniors received Presidential Scholar's awards from the University of Massachusetts providing full four-year scholarships at that institution. Another senior received the Presidential Scholar's award from Newbury College.
- The Computer Services Department upgraded a new switched network with 2,000 times the throughput of the previous one, switched the student administrative functions to a modern graphical system, implemented an automated reporting system, performed Y2K updates on all network equipment and computers, and installed an integrated messaging system by tying our new phone system to our computer systems.

The Millennium 2000 is, indeed, the Information Age, driven by the Internet. Information can be shared globally at any time of the day. The educational implications are significant. Students must now be trained to use the tools of this technology. Again, Shawsheen Tech is in the forefront. Members of this school's English Program have devised curriculum on multimedia, interactive web pages, which students access daily in their classroom. In another English-Department setting, students are networked within the classroom and to the World Wide Web. They operate like a web-to-web business within the classroom, assuming specific management roles. The students operate the business and report to their peers daily. This type of structured communication has nurtured significant growth in students' writing ability as measured by the 1999 MCAS English Language Arts test, and it has contributed to significant increases in students' reading comprehension scores as measured by nationally normed standardized tests.

- The School District was fortunate to promote Ms. Barbara Ahern as the new Director of Vocational/Technical Programs. Ms. Ahern replaced Mr. Anthony Bazzinotti who served the District for nearly thirty years in a most professional manner. Shawsheen Tech's outstanding reputation as a pioneer in vocational education can be directly attributed to Mr.

Bazzinotti's stewardship. He will be sorely missed.

- Shawsheen Tech is viewed as a national leader in integrating technology as a teaching tool in the classroom for our students. Ms. Margarida Mello and Ms. Leah Marquis' on-line Crucible project was judged by the United States Teachers of English Association as one of the most outstanding and innovative English programs on the Internet. Their presentation of the project in Denver, Colorado to four hundred English teachers from around the world was well received and followed by an invitation to publish their program in the National English Magazine in March 2000.
- Shawsheen Tech was pre-eminent among seventy-two schools in Massachusetts who developed a Summer Tutorial Program assigned to assist students in improving their MCAS results. Seventy comprehensive schools and two technical schools were funded for this program during the summer of 1999. Shawsheen Tech selected fifty students from the five-town district and taught them mathematics through integration. Of all of the funded programs, Shawsheen recorded the highest student attendance and the highest pretest-posttest gains in standardized mathematics test scores. The Massachusetts Department of Education invited the Shawsheen Summer Tutorial staff to present the model program at the State Palm Program for Math and Science Teachers.
- By expanding its technology growth, Shawsheen embarked on several new paths to improve service to students. The school entered into an agreement with 3-COM, a national network services provider company who trained, certified, and provided technical support to Shawsheen instructors in local area network design. Some of Shawsheen's graduating seniors from the Internet Technology Program will be Industry Certified as Local Area Network Managers. These Shawsheen graduates will enter the work force capable of designing and managing network systems for local businesses.
- Our Business Technology Department now has five Microsoft Certified Instructors. During the past year, Shawsheen Tech received three performance grants as a Lighthouse Technology School and provided assistance and training to educators from other schools.
- During the 1999 School Year the Massachusetts Department of Education awarded Shawsheen Tech

three Lighthouse Technology School Grants. Shawsheen Tech was selected for its advanced application of using the Internet as a teaching tool in the classroom. Shawsheen Tech staff presented at conferences and held training sessions for teachers across Massachusetts on how to integrate technology as a teaching tool for students.

Community Projects

Examples of numerous community projects completed by Shawsheen Tech are as follows:

- Shawsheen Tech's Masonry/Carpentry students built a new storage shed (28' x 120') complete with five bay doors on the Shawsheen campus.
- The Masonry Department completed a 30' x 30' two car garage/storage shed at Tewksbury's football field.
- The Construction Trades Cluster completed a new house project in Wilmington.
- The Graphic Arts curriculum was enhanced to produce "Print on Demand", which is state of the art in the industry. Each year Shawsheen produces many publications at minimal charge for municipal and non-profit organizations.
- Shawsheen's student supported web site expanded to more than one thousand pages. Residents are encouraged to view our web site at www.shawsheen.tec.ma.us
- Masonry students competed in the state-wide Masonry Knowledge Bowl at Greater Lowell Technical High School and captured first place.
- The District continued to provide extensive computer training in new software applications to municipal employees at no charge to member towns.

Conclusion and Acknowledgement

The Shawsheen Valley Technical High School District School Committee, staff, and students gratefully appreciate the support it receives from the residents of the five member communities. The Shawsheen family especially thanks the local Town Managers, Finance Committees, and Town Meetings for their continued financial support, ensuring the highest quality in vocational technical training opportunities for area youth.

BCAT ANNUAL REPORT

1999 proved to be an exciting year for Burlington Cable Access Television. BCAT was an integral component of the Bicentennial Celebration throughout the year. BCAT staff worked closely with the Bicentennial Commission to organize coverage of all major Bicentennial Celebration Events including the Interfaith Service, the Colonial Minutemen Encampment & Reenactment, the Bicentennial Parade, Junefest, Bicentennial BBQ & Block Party, the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Moving Wall Ceremonies, and Heritage Day. All of these special productions were produced by the BCAT staff, but wouldn't have been possible without the help all of the volunteers who contributed their talents and countless hours. BCAT produced many other Bicentennial Specials in conjunction with the schools. Bicentennial plays were covered at the elementary schools, and a special series Burlington Reflections was created as high school students discussed the towns history with residents as an oral history project. BCAT conducted its Fifth Annual Scholarship Telethon on behalf of the Burlington Community Scholarship Foundation. 1999's telethon was a special Bicentennial Telethon exceeding its goal of \$30,000.

OTHER BCAT HIGHLIGHTS IN 1999

- A few milestones were reached by BCAT volunteer producers. Tom Carberry, producer of the religious talk show titled You Shall Be My Witnesses produced his 500th show in March of 1999. You Shall Be My Witnesses is the longest continuous running show produced at BCAT. Mary Clancey producer of the entertaining The Kitchen of Mary Clancey cooking show reached her 100th show milestone in July. Frank McGonagle, Burlington native and producer of Franko's Foodaramaland, returned to his home town to produce his 200th show. This 200th special was produced in front of a live studio audience.
- Tom Carberry was named Volunteer of the Year at BCAT's Annual Meeting and Open House last April. He is the producer of You Shall Be My Witnesses mentioned above, as well as the producer of the weekly St. Malachy's Sunday Service program. Chad Dixon was awarded the BCAT college grant as outstanding student of 1998.