



School Talk

A Newsletter of RSV 54/MSAD 54

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3D Printing in Canaan Elementary Sparks Districtwide Initiative

By Tabitha Brewer



For more than a year, I have been working with three-dimensional (3D) printers at Canaan Elementary. After applying for a grant that funded my first printer, I took some courses and studied independently to build my wheelhouse of knowledge. Then I got some colleagues involved. Now, a dedicated group of district staff are working on ideas, developing skills, and sharing designs. I am amazed by what has been created by staff and students alike.

This year my 4th graders design and print daily. Students have created their own games, characters for their stories, and artifacts to match social studies topics. They are currently doing research for a writing project that will be complemented by a 3D print of their own design.

My goal has been to acquire enough printers in my room to allow a few small groups to each have one, which would allow for more frequent printing. On their walk through the building, I shared with school board members and Superintendent Moody what we have been doing and where we hope to go.

What began as a plan to acquire a couple of additional printers for my room evolved into a districtwide initiative, by leveraging federal COVID-19 funds to engage students. Interested staff can sign up, be outfitted with materials, receive some professional development, and then have a printer for use with their students. Board members and administrators are excited to be able to offer the materials and learning to staff, and I am equally excited to help broaden the use of this technology. 3D printing can open a door to a different way of thinking, and it provides a hands-on approach that is critical for many of the students we serve.



At Bloomfield Science Is a Gas



Students in Ms. Colburn's Second Grade Class at Bloomfield Elementary School have been studying the properties and phases of matter. In this experiment, students combined a solid (baking soda) with a liquid (vinegar) in a bottle that was then topped with a balloon. The chemical reaction of the combined materials released a gas (oxygen) that filled the balloon. Bloomfield students are loving science!

Civil Rights Teams Foster a Welcoming Environment

By Sara Everett

Margaret Chase Smith School is a proud member of the Civil Rights Team Project, a school-based preventative program administered by the Office of the Maine Attorney General. MCSS is one of 175+ schools that have an active Civil Rights Team (CRT).

As team advisors at MCSS, Mary Pono and I teach, encourage, and support students as they engage in learning about issues (categories) related to race and skin color, national origin and ancestry, religion, disabilities, gender (including gender identity and expression), and sexual orientation. The mission of CRTs is to eliminate bias-motivated behaviors and harassment in our school.

We currently have nineteen 4th- and 5th-grade students on our team. Our year began with the Day of Welcome. This is an annual event that takes place at the start of each school year. The purpose of this day is to welcome ALL individuals to our school and to reinforce that all students deserve to be treated with fairness and respect.

This year we also initiated a visibility campaign. Students created bulletin boards for each category, the first focusing on disabilities. Students researched the term disability, learned about visible and non-visible disabilities, and then created word clouds that tried to express the experience of living with a disability.



The next bulletin board showcased Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The students learned about Dr. King's involvement leading the Civil Rights Movement. Students read many of King's poignant quotes and then matched those quotes to photos of Dr. King. Through discussion, students recognized how the work they are doing to promote equality and awareness directly relates to the works of King and many others.

On Thursday, February 17, the CRT presented to the school board. We took this opportunity as the district advisors to introduce ourselves and share our mission, which aligns with district policy, that students come to school feeling safe, welcomed, and respected for who they are. Three students from MCSS—Delilah Jones, 5th grade, Maddilyn Provost, 5th grade, and Charlet Hamilton, 4th grade—shared their reflections and thoughts on the important work done with the CRT.

If you would like to know more about MSAD 54's teams please feel free to reach out to an advisor: Bloomfield, Adam Masterman and Aliza Jones; MCSS, Sara Everett and Mary Pono; Mill Stream, Rita Collins and John Lawson; SAMS, Dawn Fickett; SAHS, Mike Jones and Donna Irish.

Mill Stream Welcomes Principal Rodrigue



We are thrilled that Robert Rodrigue has joined us as the new principal of Mill Stream Elementary School this school year.

During his 18 years in public education, Mr. Rodrigue has taught both special and physical education at Messalonskee Middle School. In addition, he has extensive experience as a coach, serving on Messalonskee's varsity football staff for 17 years and as the Waterville girls varsity basketball coach for 10 years.

Rodrigue earned a BS in physical education from the University of Maine, an MS in Technology Integration from Thomas, and most recently completed a CAS in Educational Leadership through the University of New England.

In his new role as principal, Rodrigue is excited by the ability he will have "to make global impacts on students, staff and communities."

Mr. Rodrigue is especially passionate about being a school leader because of the profound impact education has had in his own life. "I grew up as a child experiencing poverty and was a first-generation college graduate," he says, and "I would not be where I am today without the hard work and dedication of my teachers and coaches."

The transition into his new role "has been absolutely wonderful" because "the students and families have been terrific to work with and the dedication and commitment of the teachers and support staff at MSES is unmatched."

Rodrigue's primary goal this year has been to learn about the school and community in order to develop

"positive and sincere relationships with both students and families."

Despite the challenges posed by COVID, Rodrigue has also strived to open the school back up to the community as much as possible. To this end, he sends out a biweekly parent newsletter outlining activities and events at MSES. In addition, MSES hosted an in-person open house this year, along with several other community events that took place during and after school hours.

Day to day, Principal Rodrigue makes himself visible to both students and staff. He is routinely in classrooms conducting walkthroughs and check-ins. During morning duty, lunch and recess, Rodrigue takes time to interact with students, which, he says, "is truly the most enjoyable part of my school day."

When not at MSES, you may find Mr. Rodrigue out on the golf course. He says, "I truly love the game... [and] I have found that golf...can meet my desire to compete as I get older and [am] less able to participate in more rigorous athletic activities." Although it may not be a positive on the golf course, RSU 54 is glad to have a new principal who is clearly above par.

What is Reading Recovery?

By Mary Jane Pelletier

Reading Recovery is an intensive intervention designed to help first-grade students who have difficulty with reading and writing. Students are selected based on a screener that "red flags" the areas that are common for learners who are challenged with literacy learning.

Students receive one-on-one instruction provided by a highly trained teacher. This precise instruction allows the teacher to build on individual strengths and to design lesson activities that are specific to each learner's needs. The series of lessons generally lasts for 12-20 weeks, with instruction occurring for thirty minutes every day.

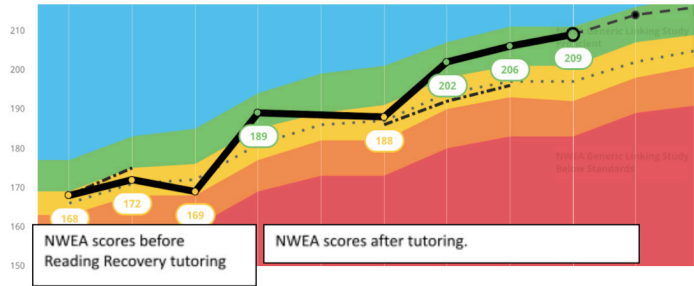
Success Rate

Approximately 75% of students who complete the full program can meet grade-level expectations in reading and writing. Follow-up studies indicate that most Reading Recovery students also do well on standardized tests and maintain their gains in later years.

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The few students who are still having difficulty after a complete intervention are recommended for further evaluation. Recommendations may be made for future support (e.g., classroom support, Title I, LD referral).



Process

The daily lessons include many multisensory activities that support engaged learning.

- Students reread familiar books. This builds fluency in word recognition, decoding, and comprehension, while simultaneously boosting self-confidence.

- Students read their new book from the previous day's lesson. Teachers take precise notes while the child reads (a "running record") and are then able to pinpoint the next best teaching/learning moves for that child.

- Students manipulate magnetic letters at the white board. These activities help children learn about letters and about how words work. This word study helps develop decoding skills so that words can be read, and written, with efficiency.

- Students write a story each day. The teacher helps students organize their thinking while composing their story.

- Students assemble a cut-up sentence. The teacher records the student's story on a long strip of paper, cuts the strip into parts, and students then assemble the words in the correct order. This activity promotes comprehension and visual scanning.

- Students read a new book. Teachers carefully select a book that is "just right" – not too hard and not too easy. The correct book selection allows readers to practice and refine efficient reading strategies necessary for future literacy learning.

Parent Involvement

Each day, students bring home their cut-up sentence from the writing portion of their lesson as well as a book to read at home. This practice not only helps

children learn faster but provides the joy of sharing their new learning.

Here is Kieran with his "Home/School Book Bag" and a story he had just completed, entitled *All About Frogs*.



For more information, please visit ReadingRecovery.org or contact one of the district's Reading Recovery teachers: Tracey Brown, Roxanne Davis, or Debbie Morrison at Bloomfield; Karol Brown at Canaan; Andrea Ferrari or Mary Jane Pelletier at Mill Stream.

REACH Saturday Bowling Club: A Striking Success



The REACH After School Program—a 21st Century Community Learning Center—recently completed its first bowling club session. In partnership with Central Maine Family Fun Bowling Center, we offered a six-week bowling club to students of REACH and Mill Stream Elementary School. Over 40 students from grades K-8 participated in the weekly Saturday game.

Terry Washburn, the owner of the bowling center and a much beloved member of the Mill Stream staff, opened up the bowling alley each Saturday from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., just enough time for students to bowl two strings and eat a healthy snack.

With the help of REACH staff and parent volunteers, students had a blast both learning how to bowl and meeting new friends! Students and parents alike shared how wonderful it was to have a fun and free activity available during the cold winter months.



This bowling club session was sponsored by Hight's Family Dealership and Al's Pizza, in partnership with the Skowhegan Chamber of Commerce. Transportation was provided by REACH.

REACH hopes to offer a second session after April break and to increase student participation to 70. The ASP would love to have more community sponsorship to help support the program.

Community members and local businesses are encouraged to reach out to program director Dawn Fickett at dfickett@msad54.org, or to contact Terry Washburn at the bowling center, if they are interested in becoming a sponsor or getting involved.

iPOWER Coming to SAMS

The Skowhegan Area Middle School Professional Learning Community (PLC) met this winter in an effort to respond proactively to some of the many issues our students face, issues that impact their educational lives. This community of educators, in conjunction with our Guidance Department, is working to develop a program for students at SAMS that encompasses a variety of topics, including Civil Rights, social media safety, emotional regulation, and substance abuse.

This program's name is iPOWER, an acronym signifying Public Outreach With Educational Responsibility. iPOWER is a trauma-informed program that will organize regular presentations about societal concerns that our students and greater school community face. These presentations will provide

education and foster skills to help our students navigate areas that are not traditionally served through school. Each session will include a guided debrief by a staff member, and student surveys will aid our Guidance Department in determining any further needs.

This program is intended to unite the students, staff, and parents/guardians with information about the topics presented; support materials will be housed on a program-specific website. We will also send home communication regularly in order to promote and support healthy conversations about the topics presented to students.

The iPOWER program is still in the developmental stages for the 2022-2023 school year; however, we are planning a presentation on Empowerment and Healthy Relationships this April. If you would like any additional information on this program or have questions, please reach out to building principal Zachary Longyear at zlongyear@msad54.org.

Student Activities at SAHS

Skowhegan Area High School's National Honor Society inducted 15 new juniors last fall in recognition of their dedication to the four NHS Pillars: scholarship, leadership, service, and character.

This year NHS members have assisted with the clothing closet at the Methodist Church, packed food for SCTC and families, and volunteered at both the Ring Family Farm Make-a-Wish event and Lake George Snow Fest.

NHS members have spread cheer around school with a Halloween costume contest and Valentine's Day candy grams. Lastly, NHS is looking forward to hosting their annual Riverhawk Walk & Run 5K this spring!

Student Council planned "March Madness" events for two weeks this year. March 14-17 students competed in after school activities such as 3 vs. 3 basketball and floor hockey. The week of March 21-25, students took part in themed dress up days. Finally, in the "Deck the Walls" competition, each class decorated a wall in the main hallway of the school. This year's theme was "Famous Locations."

The second week culminated in "Fun Friday." Staff members throughout the building hosted various events including snow shoeing, open gym, and sports trivia.

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A new club created this year is the Board Game Club. Students come together each week to relax, socialize and enjoy friendly competition as they play new games or some of the classics. Some favorite games of the club include “Hues and Cues,” “UNO,” “Oregon Trail: the Card Game,” and “SkipBo.” No one is “board” at this club!

Chess Club is yet another popular new activity this year. Each week, 10-15 students gather to learn new techniques and to practice the game. Coached by Dan DeLuca and Dominic LaFlamme, the team has the potential to be a strong force in the Maine high school chess scene.

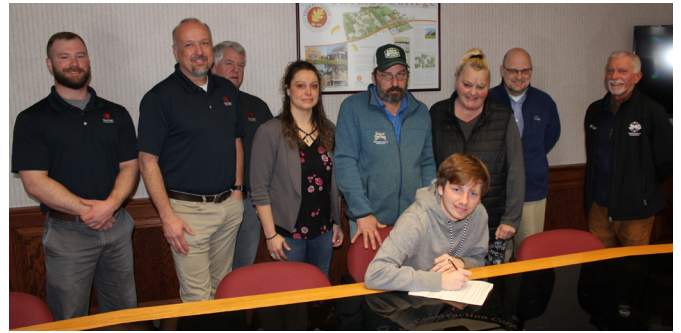


In January, club members participated in their first “Blitz” tournament (see photo), and on March 12, five team members competed in Lewiston at the Maine Scholastic Team Chess Championships. Out of 13 schools, Skowhegan placed 4th—an outstanding accomplishment for our very first interscholastic event. We are looking forward to a great future with this team!

New Apprenticeship Program at SCTC

Somerset Career & Technical Center is the first CTE in the state to become an Intermediary Sponsor for Apprentices. Working closely with Jobs for Maine Graduates Specialist, Matt Clark, SCTC applied for sponsorship and received official approval from the Maine Apprenticeship Council in December.

For its initial apprenticeship, SCTC partnered with the Sheridan Corporation in Fairfield. Pictured is an SCTC welding student signing his apprenticeship agreement papers. He is now continuing his paid training at Sheridan Corporation in the Fabrication Shop.



Moving forward, other students at SCTC can also become apprentices at area businesses to continue their training. As with the welder working for Sheridan, these students will not only earn credit in their respective SCTC programs but will also be paid to do it. To date, two students have started apprenticeships, and many other opportunities are in the pipeline.

RFGH, KVCC, and Adult Education Collaborate to Provide Free Training

On March 9, Redington Fairview launched its inaugural medical assistant training program. Eight lucky students will spend the next 18 weeks studying a variety of topics including infection control, medication administration, and blood collection/analysis—among many others.



Students will work a total of 20 hours each week: a combination of classroom theory, hands-on labs, and clinical practice. All of their efforts will culminate with a National Certification Exam in July.

This class took months of planning, primarily between RFGH’s education department—led by Director Bethany Shalit—and RSU 54 Adult Education. RFGH was able to secure a Harold Alfond Workforce Training grant being offered through the community college system. KVCC disburses the grant, and RSU 54 Adult Education serves as the training coordinator and partner.

Thanks to the generous Alfond grant, the training

is free for all students.

This project embodies the power of collaboration. If the initial class goes as well as planned, the partners anticipate offering future sessions. Given the huge demand for trained healthcare workers, increasing the number of skilled medical assistants living and working in the greater Skowhegan area will benefit our community immensely.

UPDATE: MSAD 54's Consolidated Elementary School Building Project



Over three years ago, when North Elementary School was placed 2nd out of 74 schools on the state's priority list, MSAD 54 learned that the State would fund the building of a new elementary school in our district. Since that time, work has progressed in earnest. Below is a timeline detailing what has been accomplished and what lies ahead.

Timeline

2018-19 – DOE finalizes Rating Cycle List.

Fall 2019 – DOE process begins; building committee is formed.

Winter 2020 – MSAD 54 hires Stephen Blatt Architects (SBA) to manage the building project.

Fall 2020 – District Analysis & Building Composition – SBA conducts a comprehensive review of district schools and recommends a consolidated elementary school. The state supports keeping Canaan Elementary School open with expanded Pre-K through grade 2. The state, district and SBA agree to a final building makeup that includes all of Bloomfield, Margaret Chase Smith and North Elementary Schools as well as the upper grades (3-5) from Canaan Elementary School.

Fall 2020 – District Site Selection – The district site selection process identifies 54 sites, which are later narrowed to four sites in the fall and two by early winter.

Winter 2021 – Site Selection – MSAD 54's building committee supports the Blatt Architects recommendation

of the Margaret Chase Smith School (MCSS) site. The town, which will be providing the district with the land abutting MCSS, will receive funding from the state to move the athletic fields currently on that site.

Spring 2021 – Ed Specs – As part of the Educational Specifications process, MSAD 54 staff provide feedback and share thoughts on the new building.

Spring 2021 – Site Selection – The MSAD 54 community supports the MCSS site in a unanimous straw poll vote on May 19.

Summer 2021 – Site Selection – On June 26 and July 14 respectively, the State Construction Committee and the State Board of Education also unanimously support the MCSS site.

Fall 2021 – Ed Specs – The district completes this step after receiving additional feedback from staff, hosting multiple districtwide informational meetings for community members, and gathering information through a district-wide survey.

Fall 2021 – Middle School Expansion – Voters overwhelmingly support a district-wide referendum to use federal funds to expand Skowhegan Area Middle School for all district 6th grade students (attending fall 2023).

Fall 2021 – Architectural Concept Design – Regular meetings with the State continue, and the Building Committee visits recently constructed elementary schools around the state.

Winter 2022 – Architectural Concept Design – The Committee and architects meet weekly with Maine DOE to refine the building specifications. SBA finalizes the concept design phase of the process and anticipates an early April submission to Maine DOE.

Spring 2022 – Architectural Concept Design – MSAD 54 will again hold public informational meetings to share progress on the Building Project, including the Concept Design and anticipated cost of the project. The district expects to have the building project go out to the voters in a local referendum later this year—likely June 14, 2022.

What's next

We will be holding a public hearing and straw poll vote on the Concept Design plan on **April 28 at 6:00 p.m. in the SAHS gymnasium**. For updated plans and a complete outline of the school construction process, visit the district website <https://www.msad54.org/building-project>

When will the school be complete?

If all goes well, the district expects to break ground late in 2023 with an anticipated opening date of Fall 2025.

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KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

If your child will be 5 years old before October 15, 2022, please call your town's school to sign up for a kindergarten registration appointment.

*Canaan Elementary 474-3901
Mill Stream Elementary 634-3121
North Elementary 474-2907*

We look forward to meeting you and your child at one of our area kindergarten registrations. Registrations at each school will be held on:

*Canaan Elementary - Friday, May 20
Mill Stream Elementary - Monday, May 16 & Tuesday, May 17
North Elementary - Wednesday, May 25 thru Friday, May 27*

YOU MUST CONTACT YOUR CHILD'S ANTICIPATED SCHOOL TO SIGN UP FOR A REGISTRATION APPOINTMENT.

All kindergarten students need to bring a completed registration packet to their appointment. Packets are available at the school in the town you reside in. All families should bring proof of residency to the registration appointment, and if your child is not in our KVCAP Pre-K program, you will need to bring a birth certificate, and immunization records as well. If your child is not up to date on immunizations, please contact their physician.

Application for KVCAP's Pre-K Program: <http://bit.ly/KVCAP>

Somerset Career & Technical Center

girls who code

Summer Camp

Join us this summer for a week-long program full of coding and other fun activities. Open to students from Somerset County. Thanks to generous sponsors, the camp is FREE! Register today: bit.ly/SCTC_GWC

Age 14 - 18

**June 20-24, 2022
8:30am-11:30am
at SCTC
61 Academy Cir, Skowhegan**

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