



# School Talk



A Newsletter of RSN 54/MSAD 54

Summer Edition 2021

E.O.E.

Volume 27, No.2

## A Volunteer Extraordinaire

When a group of Somerset Career & Technical Center (SCTC) students decided to start a Food Pantry in 2019, they needed outside support to help make the project sustainable. They found that support in Chelsey Carrier and the Skowhegan Rotary Club.

According to SCTC Director David Dorr, Carrier became a regular visitor at the school and assisted SCTC students in the “backpack program,” which provides snacks and meals to students who are food insecure.

Dorr adds, “I was in awe of the food delivery effort [Carrier coordinated] last summer during the pandemic. On day one of the pandemic, Chelsey had the foresight to understand we were going to have to build an army of volunteers to make sure our students didn’t go hungry.”

Carrier mobilized a group of community members to collect all of the food in the school district’s food pantries and then centralized the operation at the Technical Center.

“In one day,” Dorr said, “we packed 350 boxes and delivered them to food insecure students and their families. It was amazing to see how everything came together.”

To continue the effort, Carrier worked closely with school nurse Stephanie Voter to procure funds, to get support from the Good Shepherd Food Bank, to purchase food and products from local grocers, and to coordinate packing and delivery.

The pair also enlisted the help of other public agencies, including the Warden Service, State Troopers, Sheriff’s Department, EMTs and Firefighters. Deliveries occurred every two weeks from March until school started again in September. 374 families benefited from this effort, including 776 children.

At the end of the summer, SCTC stored two additional truckloads of food in their building; since then, students have continued to pack 180 bags of food each week for the backpack program—up from 60 bags the previous year.

To recognize her extraordinary contributions, Dorr nominated Carrier for the Maine Principals’ Association Volunteer of the Year. In his recommendation, Dorr wrote, “I can’t imagine how our families would have gotten by...[last] summer without her ability to pull together a community to help the less fortunate.”



# Spirit Week at MCSS

In one of many spirit week activities, MCSS students and staff alike had great fun dressing up as Principal Gagne.



## Mill Stream Elementary: Masks and Sanitizing and Cohorts, Oh My!

What a year it has been! Despite all of the changes implemented that allowed us to stay in school during the pandemic, Mill Stream has been able to operate normally in most respects.

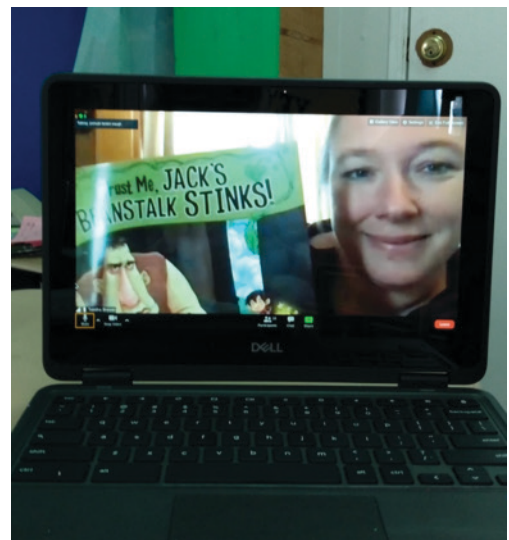
We have had:

- Continuous learning
- Holiday Spirit Week
- March Madness
- The 4th Grade Maine Museum trip
- PTG meetings
- Book Fair
- Several outdoor P.E. classes
- Field days
- Kindness and empathy
- And the list goes on...

This successful year at Mill Stream would not have been possible without the support of our students, staff and families throughout the school year. We could not have accomplished so much without everyone working together as a team. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

## Teaching with Technology at Canaan Elementary

Even during a pandemic there can be enjoyable moments. The picture below shows Mrs. Brewer teaching her fourth-grade class through Zoom to students at home and students in school.



# Spring Bird House Project at Canaan Elementary School

Our Canaan Learning Center students really enjoyed this hands-on project. They were able to bring their completed houses home to engage in bird watching and to learn more about our native species. A big thanks to Jeremiah Jencks from SAHS who prepared the bird house parts for assembly.



# Accomplishing the Impossible at Bloomfield Elementary School

*By Jean Pillsbury*

“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”  
-Nelson Mandela

On August 17, 2020, a team of Bloomfield Elementary educators sat—six feet apart with masks on—and began to map out what felt to be an impossible task.

The team was provided a space, an invitation to create, but very little information. I remember sharing the tidbits that were known: 80% of our students would be returning in person, masks would be worn, students could be three feet from one another when not eating or drinking and six feet otherwise. In addition, teachers would need to maintain a six-foot distance from other adults and children; hands would need to be washed upon entering and exiting the school classrooms and other spaces. Lastly, we would begin the year with a “soft start,” a few weeks in which to teach all the new routines to smaller groups before receiving back all in-person learners together.

Given those few details on August 17, a creative and collaborative group of educators mapped out every aspect of our school day from arrival to departure, also adding what training the staff, families and children would need. Although the day ended with a tentative plan in place, we still left feeling daunted and wondered how long we’d be in school before COVID-19 forced a short-term, if not a long-term, closure.

Fast forward to the day of this writing, May 27, 2021. The plans laid out by that group of educators have been meticulously carried out and required little tweaking along the way. With a mere 10 student days left of the school year, we’re exhausted, elated, and a little amazed as we consider all that our staff, students, families, and community have accomplished together. It has been no small feat, and everyone truly deserves a ticker tape parade with all the bells and whistles, fireworks, and fanfare. We at Bloomfield have truly accomplished the impossible, along with our peers across the district, state and country.

Teaching and learning have looked different, but we assure you that learning has taken place. Here are a few photographs capturing just a fraction of what our days have looked like here at Bloomfield. We are grateful for your support and hope you enjoy these pictures!

# Authentic Learning: Franklin Finishing Company, LLC

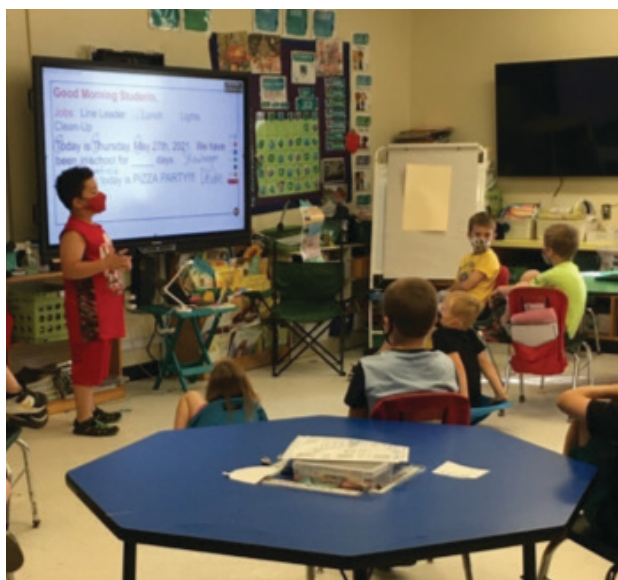


Since last December, the Franklin Team students at Skowhegan Area Middle School have been refinishing and refurbishing furniture and other items brought in by staff members.



After each piece is delivered to the classroom, it is assigned to a student with a “work ticket.” Students must write a project plan and complete some math before completing necessary repairs.

Some of the skills needed to refurbish the items have included sanding, painting, removing hardware, using wood glue, creating new pieces to replace existing broken wood doors, and removing linoleum and contact paper. Students often watched tutorials in order to learn tasks required to complete the job.



Since December, students have refurbished over thirty items! This ongoing project has helped strengthen Franklin Team’s sense of community, even while establishing cohorts and following other COVID protocols.



Projects like this one align perfectly with our Alternative Education mission here at SAMS, which is to introduce vocational skills to students while also incorporating core academics.



“Franklin Finishing, LLC” has been a successful venture and will continue it in the future. Thank you to all community members who made generous donations, including Board Chair Lynda Quinn who provided wood stain.

# MSAD 54 District Retirees



The following staff are retiring this year. We wish them all the best in their future endeavors and many thanks for their years of dedicated service!

### *Retiring Staff:*

Bilodeau, Juline, Gr. 1 Teacher at CES  
Gifford, JoEllen, Kindergarten Teacher at NEL  
Cyr, Karen, SpEd Teacher at SAHS  
Salley, Laura, Literacy Specialist at MSES

### *Retiring Ed Techs:*

Albertson, Rebecca, SpEd Ed Tech I at CES  
Gilman-Kennard, Marilyn, Ed Tech at NEL  
Ramsey, Elisabeth, Ed Tech at MSES

### *Retiring Support Staff:*

Ann Wishart, Custodian at SCTC  
Jean Dickey, School Nutrition at BES  
Donna Parsons, School Nutrition at NEL

## MSAD 54 DISTRICT-WIDE VACANCIES

### Substitute Bus Drivers Substitute Custodians

**Current CHRC/fingerprinting required**

**If interested, please submit:**

1. Cover letter
2. Resume
3. Application

<https://www.msad54.org/sites/default/files/App-NonTeaching.pdf>

**To: David Leavitt  
RSU 54/MSAD 54  
196 W. Front St.  
Skowhegan, ME 04976**

# Diligence + Determination = Diploma

Struggling in high school because she was a teen mom with no childcare, Michelle B. dropped out her junior year. She first came to RSU #54 Adult Education in 2005.

Initially, Michelle pursued her GED. Because she is not a strong test taker, however, she found the high-stakes high school equivalency exams an insurmountable obstacle.

In 2010, Michelle followed the advice of the Adult Ed director and opted to pursue an SAHS diploma. Despite her struggles in high school, Michelle had made good progress and was only a few classes shy of graduating, so she began the long process of earning her missing credits.

An English and history class were first in 2010. The pressures of marriage and raising children forced her to put academics on hold for a long while, but Michelle eventually returned to class in 2018: earning another English credit in 2019, American Government in 2020, and, lastly, science in 2021.

Despite working full time, raising two daughters as a single mom, grappling with the unexpected death of her own mother, and dealing with the disruption of a global pandemic, Michelle found time for her education. She proudly joined many other Adult Education graduates for our June 9 ceremony.

Michelle did it for herself, but—even more importantly—she did it for her daughters. In an essay written for her most recent English class, she explained that she wanted to show her children that if they are willing to work hard, anything is possible. She wrote:

“Even if their dreams change ten times, as their mother I’ll always tell them they can be anything they want. Always, forever, I believe in my kids.”



Congratulations, Michelle! Your experience testifies to the importance of diligence and determination as we pursue our goals.

## Project-Based Learning at MSLC



Students at Marti Stevens Learning Center engaged in several projects this year that not only provided meaningful hands-on learning opportunities but also raised funds for future field trips.

### ***Agriculture***

Science projects focused on themes of small-scale agriculture, sustainability, and self-sufficiency. As part of this agricultural exploration, students raised two flocks of Cornish Cross meat chickens. The students designed and constructed a secure coop structure last fall; after the first batch was raised to maturity, harvested chickens were donated to students and families around Thanksgiving time. The spring chickens were raised to sell to supporters of our program, with all proceeds designated for future field trips. After caring for

# MSAD 54 ADED CLASS OF 2021

the chickens for eight weeks, we partnered with Greaney's in Mercer to harvest and package the poultry in mid-May.



## Carpentry

As part of math class, MSLC students completed many small carpentry projects, including bird feeders, bird houses and picnic tables. The feeders have a large area for seed storage, and the houses' roofs are constructed of upcycled license plates to provide added durability.



During the 2020-2021 academic year, 32 students earned a high school diploma through RSU 54 Adult and Community Education. On Wednesday, June 9, 13 graduates and their guests attended an in-person graduation ceremony held in the SAHS gym. Pictured above is graduate Hayden Nadeau, who was one of the student speakers.



## SCTC Class of 2021



The Somerset Career & Technical Center's Final Awards Ceremony was held on May 27th, in the Skowhegan High School Gymnasium. Director David Dorr and staff members recognized 173 students and awarded over \$27,000 in scholarships. Thank you to the businesses and community members for supporting the students of the Somerset Career & Technical Center.

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Skowhegan Area High School River Hawks Class of 2021 Graduation  
was held June 5th on the SAHS Football Field.

## FREE SUMMER MEALS

*Breakfast & Lunch will be served together for children.*

**Monday thru Thursday**

**Now thru August 12th**

*Boynton's Greenhouse*

*10:50-11:20*

*Bucky Quinn*

*11:30-12:00*

*Canaan Elementary*

*11:00-11:45*

*Cornville Town Office*

*11:30-12:00*

*Franklin Somerset Credit Union*

*10:50-11:20*

*Mill Stream Elementary*

*11:30-12:00*

*North Elementary*

*11:30-12:00*

*Riverside Terrace Community*

*10:50-11:20*

*Skowhegan Middle School*

*11:30-12:00*

*Smithfield General Store*

*10:45-11:15*