

SOUTH SHORE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

UPDATE

February 7, 2007 Vol. 2, Issue 1

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

South Shore Charter Public School is a young school. Every so often we are reminded of this fact that twelve years in the life of a school is not much time. Last Friday, *The Patriot Ledger* had an article about the graduation rate statistics for the class of 2006 recently released by the Department of Education (DOE). It talked about how Norwell had a ranking of #5 in the state and that several districts in the area were disappointed with their lower, and sometimes significantly lower ratings. We, South Shore Charter Public School, were one of the significantly lower schools. We ranked 269 of 279 high schools in the state. Were we disappointed? Certainly. Were we surprised? Slightly. Will this ranking ever improve? Definitely!

We were only slightly surprised because the school we see today at 100 Longwater Circle is not the same school we were working with in Hull in 2002 when the Class of 2006 began high school. Most 8th graders did not continue on and enter 9th grade at SSCS, they found other alternatives: their town school, independent schools or parochial schools. Of the eleven high school teachers today, only three were on the staff in 2002. The high school had a different Principal each year for several years and admissions in the high school was a revolving door. While some students came, stayed and did well, quite a few would be with us for a matter of weeks or months and then move on to other schools, programs or dropout of school all together. The school as a whole was over 100 students under-enrolled and the high school was half the size it is today. Part of that enrollment picture was due to geography; part program. Despite this picture there were teachers trying to hold the program together and help students to learn at a high level. There were some glimmers of hope and accomplishment in the high school and those students who chose to be here and the teachers who worked with them were dedicated to helping the students achieve some wonderful things. Those were the students who graduated last June. But, there were a significant number of students who came to the Charter School because they needed a place to land, not because they were on their way up the ladder of success. Some were simply lost souls in the world of adolescence.

These students who dropped out of school are still on SSCPS's statistics because we were their last school of record. Sadly, in many cases we have no idea where these students went. Some received a GED (Graduation Equivalency Diploma). But when the DOE figures the statistics on graduation rates, those students are counted in our numbers, thus raising the percentage of students not graduating.

Will this rank of 269 ever improve? Definitely! As I mentioned, SSCPS is a different school today, particularly its high school. We have a much more stable population. Overwhelmingly 8th graders are choosing to have their high school years at SSCPS and our academic program is sound and complete. Our extracurricular programs are more diverse. We have had the same Principal for four years now. And in 2004 the high school ranked #1 in Massachusetts as the most improved tenth grade MCAS scores. Again in 2006 the school ranked in the top five schools in improvement on MCAS. This all happened while the school moved to a new campus, combined all thirteen grades into one building (previously the school was housed in three buildings spread by two miles), and the enrollment grew by 25%. It is also well to point out the when the Class of 2006 graduated last June, their time in the high school represented more than 1/3 of the history of this school. We are a young school. The statistics that compare us with other older schools will improve over time; you can have confidence in the future of our school. We have a strong program and it's getting stronger with each passing year.

The school is continuing to grow. Next year the school will be another step closer to its eventual maximum capacity of 540 students. The Board of Trustees at its last meeting approved the construction/renovation of another Level One classroom. The additional twenty students will be spread equally over Kindergarten and grades one and two. We will be hiring another teacher and aide for the class. This is a next step in the five year program to complete the enrollment plan for the school. This lead "bubble" of students will gradually move through the student population over the next several years. As it reaches each Level it will trigger the construction of a new classroom at that Level to accommodate the students. For the next several years as this process of flow continues classes will be in the same

range they have been in recent years...some getting to the 22 student level. However, the plan, once completed in 2010-2011 calls for no classroom K-8 being larger than 18 students, which is the original size designed in the plan of the school's 1995 charter. It also calls for the high school remaining its current size of about 150 students.

The Board is in the final stages of completing the new Strategic Plan for the school. At its meeting next week it will approve the draft that will be available to the school community for comment for one month. There will be times set up for the Board to hear parents' comments and suggestions with a target date of late March for the completion and final approval of the plan. Please take the opportunity to review the plan and be involved in the shaping of the school's growth and future.

Mike Munhall

Wednesday	2/07	Intent to Continue due	
Wednesday	2/07	Education Committee	3:30pm
Friday	2/09	Level 3 and Level 4 Ski Trip to Pat's Peak	6:15am
Friday	2/09	Middle School Basketball home vs. Marblehead @ ProShots	6:00pm
Friday	2/09	Jaguars vs. MATCH @ Brighton High School	6:00pm
Saturday	2/10	SSCPS Annual Art & Music Auction	7-10pm
Sunday	2/11	Jaguars home vs. Codman Academy @ Hingham Middle School	6:00pm
Monday	2/12	School Council	3:30pm
Monday	2/12	Development Committee	6:00pm
Mon-Thurs	2/12-15	Level 4 Science Exhibition of Mastery Week	
Tuesday	2/13	K-8 warnings mailed	
Tuesday	2/13	Finance Committee	6:00pm
Wednesday	2/14	Enrollment Applications due	
Wednesday	2/14	SEPAC	8:30am
Thursday	2/15	Board of Trustees	7:00pm

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANNUAL ARTS & MUSIC AUCTION! – This Saturday, February 10th is the SSCPS Annual Arts and Music fundraiser. The time will be 7pm to 10pm. Tickets will be available at the door at \$10 per person .If you have an item or service you are willing to donate to the silent auction, please contact Nanci Jaye at jayekay@comcast.net or 781 925 2929.

SSCPS WILL HOLD AN ENROLLMENT LOTTERY FOR THE 2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR on Saturday, February 17th at 10am. All applications for new students must be received no later than Wednesday, February 14th, 2007 to be included in the lottery process. For more information please contact Pam Algera at palgera@sscps.org

FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Reminder for PE class: When the temperatures are 32 F or below students must wear jackets in order to be allowed to go to gym class. If they do not wear a jacket they will not be permitted to go to gym class.

LUNCH ORDERS

Enclosed please find the lunch menu and order form for the month of February. Orders are due Thursday, February 15th, by 3pm. Thank you.

COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

CONGRATULATIONS TO KEILY MONTERIO ON HER ACCEPTANCE TO BRIDGEWATER STATE COLLEGE AND TO ZAK MERTZ ON HIS ACCEPTANCE TO REGIS UNIVERSITY IN COLORADO.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Talent Show last week was a huge success. We really have some talented students here at SSCPS, from *all* of the levels. The kids really did a remarkable job. And the students in the audience were very supportive and respectful of their classmates, which we can all be proud of. Thanks to the Tara and her students from the Biology Workshop for a great performance.

8th Grade move up week went great. Each 8th grade student shadowed a 9th grade student for one morning last week. They attended morning meeting and 4 high school classes. It was a great opportunity for the 8th grade students to get a feel for the high school.

The high school report cards went home last Thursday. Hopefully you have had a chance to review these with your child. If you have questions or concerns about these, please contact the subject teacher directly.

Please join me in cheering on high school students Ryan Brenner and James Dooner who will be competing this Saturday, February 10, at MIT in the Boston Regional Brain Bee. This is a live neuroscience question and answer competition that is open to students grades 9-12. I am proud that our students are able to participate in this.

Levels 3 & 4 will be going to Pat's Peak for their annual ski trip on Friday. Let's hope for a break in the cold temperatures.

Dr. Tom Gorsuch

FROM LEARNING SERVICES

There are times, I'm certain, when some of you wonder --- "What do they do on early release, professional development days?" This is a natural enough question, given the inconvenience it causes for many parents.

I want to take a moment to share with you one reason why this professional development time is so important to all of us at SSCPS. The following memo to staff should shed some light on the importance of our professional development efforts, while it also points out that we try to use all of our time in an effective manner – even our monthly staff meetings are often devoted to professional development topics.

The following memo addresses just one need in the area of professional development. While we focus on this topic, we are also working in many other areas including, but not limited to:

1. Data Driven Decision Making
2. Differentiated Instruction
3. The Skillful Teacher
4. Singapore Mathematics
5. etc.

All of this takes a great deal of effort, organization and time! The following covers only area and provides only one example of how we try to approach professional development of our staff at SSCPS in a comprehensive and thoughtful manner.

Ron Larrivee, Ed.D. Director of Learning Services

In order to help effectively educate students with special needs, we've hired Ms. Cheryl Larson, MSW to consult with us around social skills development of students who fall on the Autism Spectrum and those who require additional assistance with social skill development. Cheryl runs a special program for autistic children, works privately consulting with parents and schools around autism issues and conducts social skills training privately. Cheryl has an exceptional theoretical and more importantly hands-on background in working with children who fall on the autism spectrum.

We began by scheduling several mini-shops with some of our special needs staff, and followed this up with two sessions with our entire staff – one for January 30^t, and one for later on February 27. *These efforts will ultimately be followed-up with one or two sessions for parents. We're all in this together!*

There is an enormous increase in the number of children who are being diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome and other diagnoses that fall on (or near) the Autism spectrum. For example, Nonverbal Learning disabilities, High Functioning Autism, etc., etc. *Not that long ago, we knew very little about these children and the possible debilitating impact of autism spectrum disorders. Now we know how difficult life can be for these children, their teachers and their families.* Most of us have had little to no education about the children who fall on the autism spectrum. We're committed to changing that!

One of the main characteristics of these children is that they often have major deficits in the area of social perception & interaction. They often have difficulties with empathy and can not "put themselves in other peoples' shoes." Thus they often misread social cues or misunderstand/misinterpret the significance of our communications and social rules, while they also send awkward messages that are difficult for us to understand – they just don't see things the way we do! For some children, this is a terrible affliction – for some, it is a more minor problem – but all of them need some help in this area – much more so than typically developing students. We all realize that social skills are critical to success in life.

Research suggests that in order to have a meaningful impact in this area, these students need more than one or two sessions a week of "social skills groups." **They need their entire environment to be responsive to their initial and on-going efforts so that they are reinforced, twenty-four/seven, at school and at home in the specific skills that are the focus.** Thus, this is the beginning of the process. We are working with Cheryl to make sure that our social skills groups are strong and meaningful events in the lives of these children – and - we are also determined to help everyone build even greater understanding and skill in this area. By developing greater understanding and insights, we will be better positioned to provide an exceptionally high quality and effective learning experience for all of our children – 24/7!

I will be copying you on a couple of articles that are worth the time you'll put in to support your professional development in this area. (It will be a great preparation for the workshops.)

Thanks, once more, for all that you do!

Ron

Professional Development Scheduled for Staff Meetings

January 30, 2007

Day 1: Asperger Syndrome and School Life

- I. Clinical Features of Asperger Syndrome
- II. Academic Areas Impacted by AS
- III. Social Deficits of AS
- IV. Unique Strengths of Students with AS

February 27, 2007

Day 2: Asperger Syndrome & Interventions to Aid School Success

- I. Classroom Interventions
- II. Social Skill Development
- III. Behavior Management
- IV. Emotion Regulation

ART NEWS

Starting the New Year off with a bang, 7 pieces of student work was selected for submission to the **Boston Globe All Scholastic Art Show**. The number of pieces eligible is calculated by the student population. Two middle school students, **Matt McAteer** and **Kyle Algera** submitted self portrait collages. High school students **Chelsea Talcott** submitted both an art portfolio and a photography portfolio (an option only for seniors), **Emily Doolittle** (pastel), **Bridget Hatch** (watercolor), **Adhmen MacLean** (acrylic painting), **Eliza Lunny** (watercolor) and **Samantha Wholley** (pastel). Congratulations to these talented students. We look forward to their continued success.

Mark your calendars for a **Mardi Gras Party**, complete with high school student masks. The **Hingham Harbor Gallery** (3A Hingham Rotary, across from Stars) is hosting a festival and fund raiser **art opening** for the South Shore Charter School Art Workshop students. The students have created masks which will be sold at the festival. Please come and support the art students with your company on **Saturday, February 17th**, from **12noon -5pm**. Food and refreshments will be provided, as well as, a band for entertainment.

Be sure to check out the latest art pieces in the front lobby. There is now a collection of Level III hand crafted beads, and high school art students' new outdoor sculpture additions. Don't forget, Look but don't touch!

Also, Level III and high school art students volunteered at the South Shore YMCA on Wed., Jan. 31st. Students along with art teacher, Marianne Buckley Curran, drew with charcoal and pastels from 3:30- 5 pm to raise art awareness. The YMCA is kicking off new classes for middle and high school students on their Teen Friday programs and the students were demonstrating just how it is done! Students on Wed. were **Anne and Emily Nonamaker** (7th grade), **Shannon Leary** (10th), **Bridget Hatch** (11) and **Caroline LaFauci**(11). Please look for the students again on Mon, and Wed. Feb. 5th and 7th.

ON THE LEVELS

SAYING OF THE WEEK:

Level 1: "Eaten out of house and home".

Level 2: "When it rains it pours".

Level 4 is in need of volunteers for judging the Level 4 Science Fair. Judges are needed on Monday, February 12 and Tuesday, February 13th from 12:30 -3pm both days. If you are able to volunteer, please contact Julia Silzer at ext. 323 or email jsilzer@sscps.org. Thank you!!

FROM LEARNING SERVICES

For information on 2006 Tax Benefits for Parents; Getting Records in Order; Planning for the Future – from a Special Ed Advocate from Wrightslaw (02/05/07) please visit the following site:

<http://www.wrightslaw.com/nltr/07/nl.0205.htm>

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

On-Call Substitute Teachers

On-Call Substitute Nurse

Send cover letter, resume and list of references to Kristine Shipps, Business Manager.

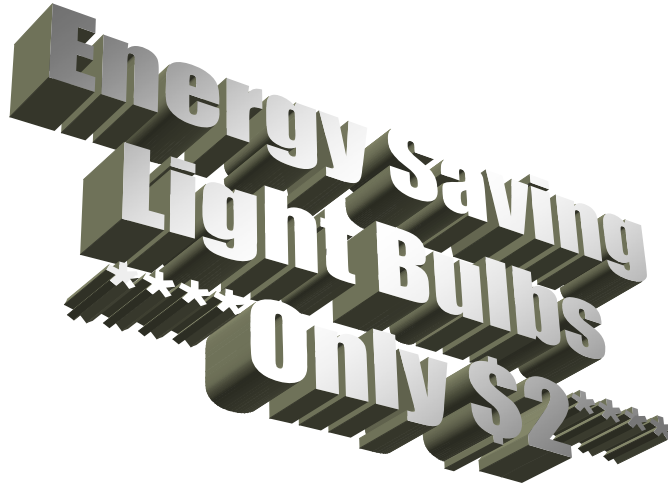
ECO-TIPS FROM THE SSCPS GREEN TEAM

Is Your Dry-Cleaning Dirtying Your Health?? Almost all dry-cleaning establishments in the country clean with perchloroethylene ("perc"), a cancer-causing, neurotoxic solvent that bioaccumulates in fat, and are a suspected endocrine disruptor. That means it's pretty nasty stuff. Exposure to these chemicals occurs as they evaporate from dry-cleaned clothing into our air and are inhaled. We also get exposure when contact is made with our skin. To reduce our exposure to these known toxins, choose clothing that does not require dry-cleaning, learn how to hand-wash many 'dry clean only' items (see link below), or choose dry-cleaners that offer a cleaning process that does not use perc. The dry-cleaner ZOOTS uses a hydrocarbon cleaning system which is less toxic than traditional cleaning systems. In all cases of professionally cleaned garments, when your clothing comes home immediately remove the plastic bag and put the clothing in a covered area outdoors for several days to off-gas the toxins. This can help decrease levels of indoor pollution, and help reduce your family's daily exposures to toxins. <http://www.care2.com/channels/solutions/home/133>

COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

“CARTRIDGES FOR KIDS” – Used cartridges are being collected again this year to earn money for our School. There is a box in the main hallway next to the computer room. They accept ink cartridges and cell phones. We are happy to pick up if you have a large amount. Please call Luke, John or Grace Ryan with any questions at 781/925-9541.

WEEKLY UPDATES ARE POSTED ON OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.SSCPS.ORG



Level IV Composting Project

Our project is continuing our energy saving light bulb fundraiser until February 9th. These light bulbs use only fourteen watts of energy and put out eight hundred lumens of light, the same amount as a sixty watt bulb. Also, if these bulbs are used for about three hours a day they can save you twenty five to sixty dollars over the lifespan of the bulb. This fundraiser allows you to be energy conscious and help us raise money for our project. All the earnings of this fundraiser will go towards gardening supplies for our project. We plan to grow plants with the fertile soil that our worms have produced.

For the next two weeks we will be selling these light bulbs through the order forms only. If you would like us to reserve a light bulb, please fill out the form below and give it to Jessica in room 201. You do not have to include payment for the light bulbs with the order form. You may pay for the light bulbs when you come to pick them up.

Thank you,
Jonathan Jackson from the Compost Project

I _____ would like to reserve _____ light bulbs and:
(Your name) (Number)

I give my child permission to purchase a light bulb for me.

I will come to pick up the light bulb before or after school between January 16th and February 9th in Jessica's room 201.

Lunch Menu – February, 2007

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Turkey</p> <p>With American cheese, lettuce, tomato and mayo</p>	<p>6</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Cheese Pizza</i></p>	<p>7</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ham</i></p> <p>With American cheese, lettuce, tomato, pickle and oil</p>	<p>8</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Cheese Pizza</i></p>	<p>9</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Tuna Salad</i></p> <p>With lettuce and tomato</p>
<p>12</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Roast Beef</i></p> <p>With American cheese and mustard</p>	<p>13</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Cheese Pizza</i></p>	<p>14</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>BLT</i></p> <p>Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato with mayonnaise</p>	<p>15</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Cheese Pizza</i></p>	<p>16</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>PB&J Lunch</i> <i>-or-</i> <i>Tossed Salad</i> With Italian dressing and pita bread</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p style="text-align: center;">V A</p>	<p>21</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C A T</p>	<p>22</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I O N</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>26</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Italian Cold Cuts</i></p> <p>With Provolone cheese, lettuce, tomato, pickle and oil</p>	<p>27</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Cheese Pizza</i></p>	<p>28</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ham, Salami & Provolone Cheese</i></p> <p>With lettuce, tomato, pickle and oil</p>	<p>3/1</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Cheese Pizza</i></p>	<p>3/2</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Tuna Salad</i></p> <p>With lettuce and tomato</p>

2 % milk, chocolate milk, strawberry milk or orange juice is included with the purchase of lunch or may be purchased for 25 cents. If your child has forgotten a lunch, a Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwich and Milk will be provided at the cost of \$2.00. A note from the office will go home that week for reimbursement.

Lunch Order Form
 Lunch for the Month of February, 2007
Due to the office by 3:00 pm, Thursday, February 1, 2007

Student Name _____

Pod Teacher/Advisor _____ Grade _____

Please **CHECK** off the day lunch will be ordered and **CIRCLE** your selection.

Week of 2/5 – 2/9	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday Sub ½ sub Wheat	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday Pizza #_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday Sub ½ sub Wheat	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday Pizza #_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Sub ½ sub Wheat
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Week of 2/12 – 2/16	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday Sub ½ sub Wheat	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday Pizza #_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday Sub ½ sub Wheat	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday Pizza #_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday PB&J Lunch - or - Salad
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Week of 2/19 – 2/23	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday
----- V A C A T I O N -----					

Week of 2/26 – 3/2	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday Sub ½ sub Wheat	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday Pizza #_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday Sub ½ sub Wheat	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday Pizza #_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Sub ½ sub Wheat
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Number of Subs/Wheat ordered	_____	X	\$5.00
Number of ½ subs ordered	_____	X	\$3.00
Number of Pizza Slices ordered	_____	X	\$1.50
Number of Salads/PB&J Lunches ordered	_____	X	\$3.00

Less credit due _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Cash or Checks may be made out to SSCPS.

Choice of 2% milk, chocolate milk, strawberry milk or orange juice is included with the purchase of a meal or can be purchased separately for 25 cents.

Please note: If your child has forgotten lunch, a lunch of Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwich and Milk will be provided at the cost of \$2.00. A note from the office will go home that afternoon for reimbursement.