

# CREATING CONNECTIONS



# CREATING CONNECTIONS

## Letter from the Superintendent



Dear Shaler Area families,

At Shaler Area, we are focused on **Creating Connections** throughout the district. Our faculty and staff are committed to connecting with our students on a personal and academic level, and we are fortunate to have strong relationships with all four of our communities— Etna Borough, Millvale Borough, Reserve Township, and Shaler Township—and with the people in those communities. All of these connections benefit our students, from our youngest learners to our high school students looking at their next steps after graduation. Our goal is to create more connections within our district, whether they are personal connections made through our Respect for All efforts or the Power of 12 or through connecting students to resources to help them create a personal path for their academic career and future aspirations. Our efforts extend beyond our classrooms and drive our commitment to fiscal responsibility to ensure the future success of the district. In the pages of this report, you will see how placing a focus on these connections has helped our students, staff, and alumni see success and recognition for their accomplishments. We are proud to share this year’s report to the community and highlight some of the ways that Shaler Area is **Creating Connections** for the future.

Sincerely,

Mr. Sean C. Aiken  
Shaler Area Superintendent

Shaler Area School District is a collaborative, innovative, and creative learning environment for all.

To serve our Shaler Area community and its children by providing an education that fosters our youth to be contributing members of society.

To develop resiliency, empathy, creative thinking, critical thinking, and problem solving in every student on their path to fulfilling their potential.

MISSION

VISION



VALUES

- We value the celebration and promotion of excellence in our community.
- We value a culture where everyone has a voice and everyone is an owner.
- We value and encourage creative and innovative risk-taking.
- We value our responsibility to serve and educate our community.
- We value an atmosphere of trust, transparency, and collaboration.



# CREATING CONNECTIONS

## Shaler Area students and staff focus on others through the Respect for All campaign

Over the past few years, Shaler Area's schools have focused on creating a positive environment for all students, and a common theme across all schools centers on the word "respect." These efforts led to a renewed focus and celebration of respect across all buildings in the 2018-19 school year and the creation of the districtwide Respect for All campaign.

The Respect for All campaign was organized by a team of teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community members who identified two months of the school year for students and the community to participate in biweekly challenges to think about and show respect. Students and staff were challenged to say thank you or show gratitude to others, meet and talk to someone they didn't know, volunteer their time to help someone else, and write thank you notes to someone who impacted their lives. Additionally, throughout the school year, teachers and administrators recognized high school students for showing respect; middle school students succeeded in their buildingwide challenge to complete 1,000 acts of respect throughout the school year; and elementary and primary school students created new friendships across grade levels and participated in countless service projects to help others in need.

### Showing Titan Respect



Allison Ai, an eighth-grade student, saved her money throughout the year to purchase 630 candygrams—one for each middle school student—and write a personal note on each candygram before they were distributed on Valentine's Day. She said she wanted to make sure every student received at least one candygram because she noticed that some students did not receive any the previous year.

## District staff builds relationships with students through the Power of 12

Shaler Area recognizes the importance of connecting with and building relationships with its students. At the beginning of the school year, Superintendent Sean Aiken launched the Power of 12 and challenged all staff members, from bus drivers to teachers to principals and beyond, to make meaningful connections with students in the 2018-19 school year. The intention was for every staff member to connect with at least 12 students through writing them notes, offering an encouraging word, calling home for something positive, or attending one of their extracurricular events. These points of connection are the building blocks for student success as the district moves forward.



Shaler Area teachers and staff members make connections and build relationships with students.



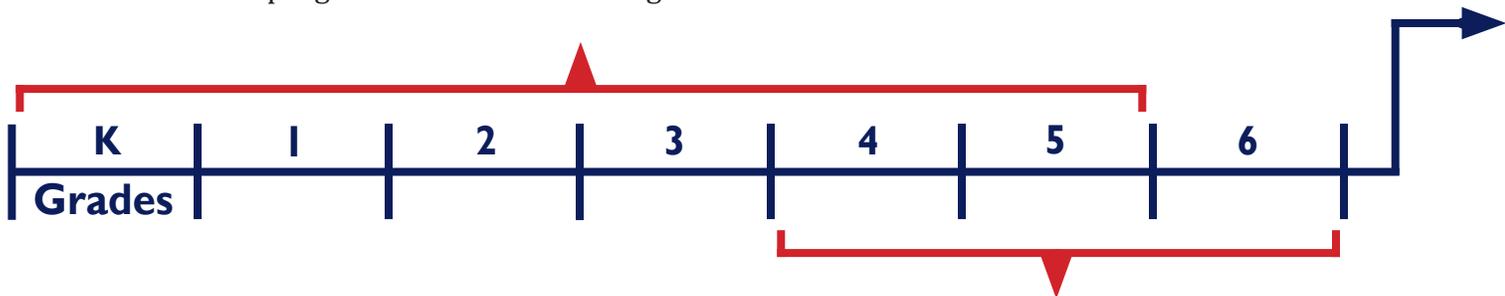
# CREATING CONNECTIONS

## Introducing career options to SASD's early learners

Students in Shaler Area's primary and elementary schools are introduced to a variety of occupations through hands-on, schoolwide events. In the district's primary schools, students experience events such as safety day and career day. Safety day events invite local first responders into the schools to talk to students about their work in the community. Career day events welcome parents and community members into the schools to talk to students about their careers, the education they needed to qualify for their jobs, and the skills they need to be successful in their jobs. Fifth-grade students at Shaler Area Elementary School spend a day learning about career paths available through A.W. Beattie Career Center. Shaler Area High School students who are dual-enrolled in the school's programs teach students about the programs and careers through hands-on activities.



Students in Shaler Area's primary and elementary schools learn about different jobs through a variety of hands-on, schoolwide events.



## Projects support learning in school makerspace

Shaler Area Elementary students have a new space to learn. The Compass Studio, which is located next to the school library, is a makerspace open to all students in the buildings to collaborate, create, and explore new ideas using a variety of materials. The Compass Studio was created in a partnership with The Digital Promise through the Maker Learning Leadership Cohort. Digital Promise supported the elementary school's initiative by working with teachers to embed maker-learning activities and challenges into grade-level curriculum. For example, a group of fifth-grade students applied concepts from their science class to design and create a hydroponics system to grow plants without soil. Students then donated their hydroponics system to the Millvale Community Library to teach others about the technology. The Compass Studio gives students the opportunity to persevere through the design process and use problem-solving skills to explore new ideas or complete projects that extend their classroom learning.



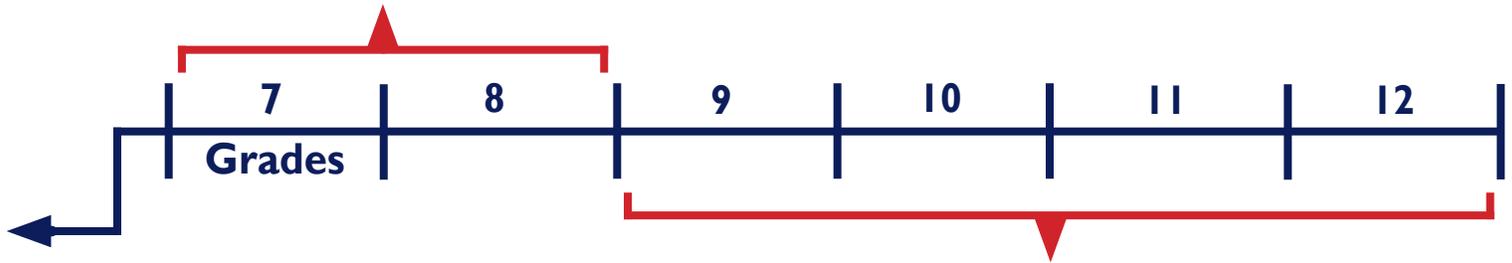
The Compass Studio at Shaler Area Elementary allows students to collaborate, create, and explore new ideas using a variety of materials.

# Middle school philosophy promotes student success

The Shaler Area Middle School is putting emphasis on creating an environment where students can grow academically and socially. Middle school staff is working to redesign its program to align with the Schools to Watch criteria, a research based, best practice model for school improvement. A steering committee was created to focus on academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structures and processes. These areas are essential for establishing a school grounded in middle school philosophy. The building's plan is to develop and implement programs in the next three years, with the third year being used for evaluation of the programs, however, the building already is seeing a positive cultural shift.



Middle school staff is working to redesign the building's program to align with best practices for school improvement, which is focused on the whole student.

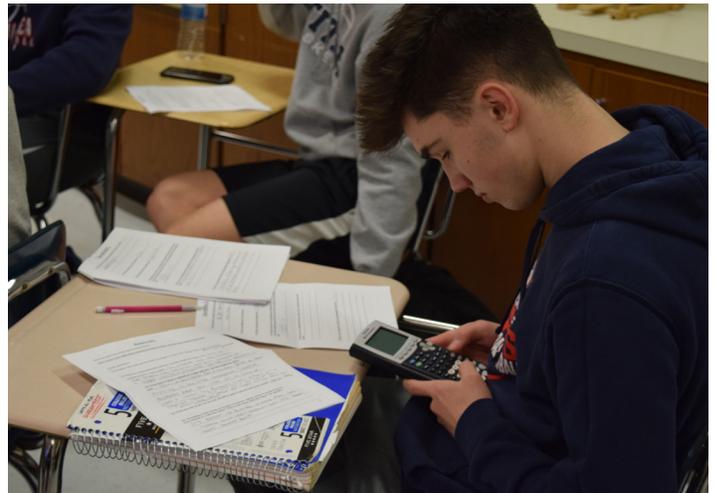


## Classroom lessons applied to students' future plans

Students benefit from Shaler Area teachers' efforts to apply classroom lessons to their own lives. For students in Seth McCall's Algebra 3 class at the high school, it is a hands-on look at how exponential growth and compound interest can affect their lives in a positive and negative way.

Students complete a weeklong activity to calculate their monthly student loan payment based upon their post-secondary education plans. They also calculate the percentage of their monthly salary used to pay off student loan debt based on their intended major/profession to determine whether they are taking on too much student debt. Analyzing how different variables would affect students' student loan payment such as receiving scholarship money, decreasing or increasing the life of the loan, and varying interest rates are an important aspect of the project as well. Finally, students look at monthly payments and interest rates for taking out a mortgage and how that would factor into their hypothetical monthly budget.

Throughout the project, Mr. McCall makes it clear to his students that he is not trying



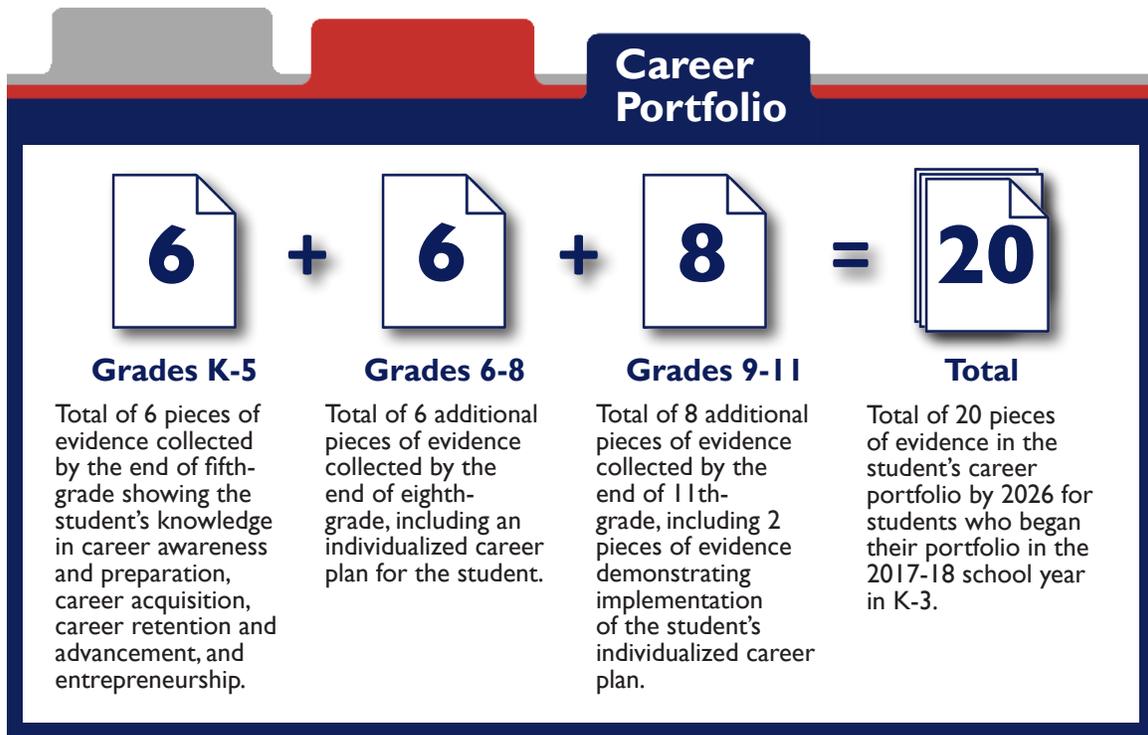
High School students apply lessons in exponential growth and compound interest to learn how their career goals, including the costs of post-secondary education, will affect their financial futures.

to discourage anyone from attending college and outlines the benefits of all post-secondary education. However, he also wants to provide students with the knowledge of how their decision of where they get their post-secondary education will affect their financial future.



# CREATING CONNECTIONS

## Portfolio project helps students connect with future careers & create career plans



Shaler Area is helping students from Kindergarten to 12th-grade connect classroom lessons with future careers through a new program.

Pennsylvania established academic standards for career education and work that addresses four areas of knowledge: career awareness and preparation, career acquisition, career retention and advancement, and entrepreneurship. The 2018-19 school year marked the full implementation of this state-mandated career readiness initiative.

In order to meet the standards and make them meaningful to students, Shaler Area integrated activities and lessons addressing each content areas into the curriculum. Additionally, Shaler Area provides students in grades 7-12

**Skills Addressed**

Each piece of evidence required in a student's career portfolio shows an increased knowledge in one of the four content areas:

- Career Awareness & Preparation
- Career Acquisition
- Career Retention & Advancement
- Entrepreneurship

with access to Xello, a college and career readiness software program. Xello allows students to personalize their career portfolios and helps them keep track of the lessons they have learned. By the end of eighth-grade, every student will have created an individualized career plan that identifies the student's interests and abilities, career goals, training and education requirements and costs, and possible high school courses, extracurricular activities, and community experiences that connect to their career goals.

By the end of a student's 11th-grade year, their career portfolios will include at least two pieces of evidence to show how they have implemented their individualized career plan in addition to increasing knowledge in each of the four content areas.



## Shaler Area students achieve success at regional, state, & international competitions



John Stanton won 1st place in High School Creative Writing in the 2019 Waldman International Arts and Writing Competition.

### ACADEMICS

- Senior **John Stanton** won 1st place in High School Creative Writing in the 2019 Waldman International Arts and Writing Competition for his entry, “Sumpf Sturm,” a fictional account of a group of people living in the swamps of Poland during World War II and doing whatever they can to thrive and survive and slow the Nazi’s progress.
- Senior **Jordan Dourlain** was one of about 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation recognized for their academic promise in the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Program.
- Junior **Kaitlyn Colucci** was one of only 13 high school students from the Pittsburgh section to qualify to compete in the U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad at the University of Pittsburgh.
- Two Shaler Area High School students were recognized for their participation in the Carnegie Science Center’s Covestro Pittsburgh Regional Science & Engineering Fair. Senior **Jordan Dourlain** placed 4th in the Earth/Space/Environmental division for her project

“Managing the Detrimental Effects of Surface Water Runoff.” Additionally, junior **Autumn Roney** earned a Sponsor’s Award from NACE International for her project “Mitigating Acid Rain Damage with Coatings” as well as a scholarship to Gannon University.

- Senior **Andrew D’Agostino** won 2nd place in the individual competition and 1st place in team competition—even though he was a team of one—in the Pittsburgh Regional Brain Bee competition at the University of Pittsburgh Center for Neuroscience.



Marissa Fukas, Josh Chechak, and Jeremy Meyer earned awards at the Future Business Leaders of America’s regional Leadership Conference.

- Three Shaler Area students placed in the competitive events program at the Future Business Leaders of America’s Region 13 Leadership Conference: Seniors **Marissa Fukas** and **Jeremy Meyer** took 1st place and 4th place, respectively, in Accounting 1; and sophomore **Josh Chechak** placed 3rd in Intro to Business.
- Junior **Samantha Goetz** was one of 30 selected for the competitive Allegheny Health Network’s Healthcare Discovery Summer Internship, an eight-week learning experience for high school juniors and seniors. The internship provides students with hands-on learning experiences.

# Partnerships with local organizations produce award-winning projects for the Fairchild Challenge at Phipps

The Shaler Area High School team placed first overall in the high school category in the Fairchild Challenge at Phipps, a yearlong environmental challenge that consists of five different challenges. Students receive scores for each challenge, and the scores are totaled for the overall winners. The students competed against 14 area high schools.

For Challenge #1, students compared a human organ or organ system with a plant or biological system based on either synergy, similarity, or human dependence, then wrote a comparative essay and created a two-dimensional artistic rendering of the biological system superimposed over the organ. Senior **Taya McCullough** received a Special Merit award for her artwork and essay, and junior **Bri Girty** received and Exhibitor Award.

For Challenge #2, a team of students placed 2nd after partnering with Girty's Run Watershed Association for ideas to redesign a local property by incorporating green stormwater infrastructure that would reduce the amount of surface runoff. The team included: **Alyssa Juzwick, Jennifer Moore, Caitlin Fedorek, Dakota Carr, Olivia Jarzynka, Anna Sheets, and Rebecca Schiavone.**

A team of students placed 3rd in Challenge #3 for its infographic on the emerald ash borer. The team included: **Caitlin Fedorek, Dakota Carr, Hannah Coleman, Jamie Eichmiller, and Olivia Jarzynka.** Additionally,



Shaler Area students display the awards they received from the Fairchild Challenge at Phipps competition.

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**Shaler Area High School  
has been awarded  
1st place in 7 of the 9 years  
students have competed in the  
Fairchild Challenge at Phipps.**

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**Emily Ehrenberger** received a Special Merit Award for her infographic on the Japanese knotweed.

Students placed 1st in Challenge #4 for their "green" prom plan and report. The team included

**Hannah Coleman, Jamie Eichmiller, Caitlin Fedorek, Olivia Jarzynka, Lauryn Caplan, Dakota Carr, Anna Sheets, and Rebecca Schiavone.**

Students worked with Etna Borough for Challenge #5 Environmental Action. The students focused on four areas of Etna's EcoDistrict initiative to improve mobility, air quality, equity, and food. The team included **Abby Guiste, Alyssa Juzwick, Anna Sheets, Caitlin Fedorek, Caty Clark, Hannah Coleman, Dakota Carr, Ella Mizera, Emily Kelly, Jamie Eichmiller, Olivia Jarzynka, and Rebecca Schiavone.**

- Shaler Area students were recognized for their participation in the 15th High School Integration Bee hosted by the College in High School Program and Department of Mathematics at the University of Pittsburgh including senior **Andrew D'Agostino** who

placed 2nd and senior **Kylie Dougherty** who placed 4th. Also participating were Shaler Area seniors **Jordan Dourlain, Alyssa Krause, Brandon Fafata, Marcus Katich, and Kiley Rowell** who made it through multiple rounds of competition.



Kayleigh Hegerle was named a 2019 Global Scholar through the Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association Global Scholars Program.

- Senior **Kayleigh Hegerle** was named a 2019 Global Scholar through the Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association Global Scholars Program, which provides high school students the opportunity to develop global awareness and competency through the completion of interdisciplinary studies and activities over the course of their high school career.
- A Shaler Area Elementary School team of fifth-graders was awarded runner-up in The Citizenship Challenge at the Heinz History Center, which challenges students to write and defend an essay on an issue facing United States democracy. The Shaler Area Elementary School team included **Alex Ai, Jayla Antomachi, Brooke Callahan, Katie Celender, Miley Crowell, Noah Demchsin, Joey DeSabato, Octavia Dixon, Owen Engbarth, Cy Engel, Sally Engel, Natalie Evangelista, Adam Hoffman, Bella Hoffman, Maddie Lennon, Carter McKissick, Ryleigh Meinert, Nick Mulkerin, Shamus Ortlieb, Aiden Quinn, Cayden Sherbine, and Maddie Wilson.**
- **Miley Crowell**, a fifth-grader, won first place in The Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania's 2018-2019 Youth Sculpture Contest.

## A.W. BEATTIE CAREER CENTER

- Nine Shaler Area students dual-enrolled in A.W. Beattie Career Center earned recognition for their knowledge at the Pennsylvania Association of Family Career and Community

Leaders of America competition. **Shelby Yurek** received 3rd place and a gold medal in the Baking Competition. **Emily Morrison** and **Lexi Kaltreider** received 3rd place and gold medals in the Life Event Planning Competition. **Merritt Montgomery** earned a silver medal in the Focus on Children Competition. **Cassie Kagle** and **Joseph Moneck** earned silver medals in Culinary Competition. **Ashley Capozzoli** and **Chelsey Sheets** earned Bronze medals in the Job Interview and Entrepreneurship Competitions, respectively.



Bailey Ritchey won a Gold Key in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for the Pittsburgh region.

## VISUAL ARTS

- A total of 13 students won awards for their submissions in the 2019 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, a prestigious national juried exhibition. High school art students competed against 1,700 submissions in the Scholastic Art

& Writing Awards for the Pittsburgh region. **Bailey Ritchey** was awarded with a Gold Key, which qualified her to advance to the Northeastern region contest. Silver Keys were awarded to **Brittany Bitsko, Luke Maurer,** and **Meiling Watts**. Honorable mentions were awarded to **Amaya Branch-Riggs, Maillie Ciak, Julie Lignoski, Kristina McCluskey, Alexis McKee, Shannon Roche, Adella Shepherd, PJ Squire,** and **Aliza Zelina.**



Kylie Dougherty, Jenna Facer, Evan Baldwin, Mai Swendsen, Marcus Katich, and Nathan Hayward took top awards in the 22nd annual High School Japanese Speech Contest held at the University of Pittsburgh.

## WORLD LANGUAGES

- Shaler Area students earned top awards in the World Languages Competition sponsored by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures at Slippery Rock University, including freshman **Madeline Turner**, earning 2nd place in French 1; junior **Ella Mizera**, earning 1st place in French 3; freshman **Mai Swendsen**, earning 1st place in Japanese 1; freshman **Emma Wunderlin**, earning 2nd place in Japanese 1; sophomore **Zoe Babbit**, earning 1st place in Japanese 2; sophomore **Jenna Facer**, earning 2nd place in Japanese 2; junior **Thomas Henshaw**, earning 2nd place in Japanese 3; and junior **Nathan Hayward**, earning 3rd place in Japanese 3.
- Shaler Area students participated in and received recognition for their performance on the National Latin Exam, which tests their knowledge of Latin vocabulary, Roman culture, and mythology, and their translation skills. The National Latin Exam is a test given every year to students in Latin I-V. At the Latin I level, achievement award winners included: **Angelina Antonucci, Frank Babicka, Jacob Ciganik, Jessica Dwyer, Aydan Grundler, Candace Kozej, Noah Long, Aidan Sanders, Cameron Scaramuzzo, Christine Sciuillo, and Samantha Walker.** At the Latin II level, **Kiera Harger, Grace Gralewski, Rebecca Schiavone, Isabella Cercone, and Rebecca Beckas** earned Silver Maxima Cum Laude; **Cassidy Laffey** and **Genevieve Sabo** earned Magna Cum Laude; and **Flannery Loudon, Isabel Dean, and Joseph Lombardo** earned Cum Laude. At the Latin III level, **Alec Battaglia** earned Silver Maxima Cum Laude.

- Shaler Area High School students took top awards in the 22nd annual High School Japanese Speech Contest held at the University of Pittsburgh. In the Advanced Plus level, senior **Kylie Dougherty** placed 2nd and senior **Marcus Katich** placed 3rd. In the Advanced level, junior **Nathan Hayward** earned 1st place and junior **Evan Baldwin** earned 3rd place. In the Intermediate level, **Jenna Facer**, a sophomore, placed 3rd; and in the Beginner level, freshman **Mai Swendsen** placed 3rd.

## MUSIC

- Five students were accepted into PMEA honors ensembles. Accepted into the Honors Jazz Band were **Luke Franks**, trumpet; **Zachary Spondike**, tenor sax; and **Michael Zang**, trumpet. Accepted into the PMEA Honors Orchestra were **Marissa Fukas** and **Jackie Geyer** both for viola.
- 12 Shaler Area high school and middle school students were accepted into the Strings North Orchestra Festival ensemble. Accepted into the high school ensemble were **Felicity Agostino, Siroun Petersen, and Morgan Visconti**, all violin 1; and **Jackie Geyer, Maeve Snyder, and Camryn Turner**, for viola. Accepted into the middle school ensemble were **Allison Ai**, viola; and **Gina Aluise, Mikaylah Cousins, Tia Jarosinski, Emily Mellinger, and Talia Montgomery**, all violin 2.

# Five students accepted into PMEA All-State music ensembles

The Pennsylvania Music Educators Association recognized five Shaler Area High School students as some of the top musicians in the state with their acceptance into All-State ensembles. Each of the students was selected following a rigorous audition process, and performed during the 2019 PMEA All-State and NAFME Eastern Division Conference in Pittsburgh in April 2019.



Sophomore **Zachary Spondike** was one of 19 students in the state to be selected for the PMEA All-State Jazz Band. He plays baritone saxophone.



Junior **Ethan Carter** was selected to play bass clarinet, principal chair, in the PMEA All-State Concert Band.



Sophomore **Zoe Babbit** (soprano 1) and junior **Alex Almonte** (bass 1) were selected for the PMEA All-State Chorus.



Senior **Marissa Fukas** was selected for the PMEA All-State Orchestra. Fukas earned 2nd chair in the viola section.

- 17 students were accepted into Allegheny Valley Honors ensembles. More than 600 musicians from eight school districts auditioned for the AV Honors Band. Accepted into the AV Senior High Honors Band were **Jenna Facer**, flute; **Michael LaBella**, bassoon, principal chair; **Ethan Carter**, bass clarinet, principal chair; **Garrett Robinson**, alto saxophone; **Zachary Spondike**, baritone saxophone; **Luke Franks**, trumpet, principal chair; **Michael Zang**, trumpet; **Adam Braughler**, French horn; **Dan Horgan**, euphonium; and **Ethan Chirdon**, timpani. Accepted into the AV Junior High Honors Band were **Rebecca Schiavone** and **Teyah Wilson**, flute; **Erika Kenst**, **Grace Cosentino**, and **Alexis Gregory**, clarinet; **Matthew Franks**, trumpet; and **Rachel Scierka**, mallets.
- 24 students were selected to participate in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association District 1 ensembles. Selected for the PMEA District 1 Senior High Band were **Adam Braughler**, French horn; **Ethan Carter**, bass clarinet; **Jenna Facer**, flute; **Gabriella Greco**, clarinet; **Michael LaBella**, bassoon; and

**Zachary Spondike**, tenor saxophone. Accepted into the PMEA District 1 Senior High Chorus were **Alex Almonte**, **Zoe Babbit**, **Sonny DeMasi**, **Kelsey Marshall**, and **Caelin Stewart**. Accepted into the PMEA District 1 Junior High Orchestra were **Felicity Agostino** and **Talia Montgomery**, violin; **Allison Ai**, **Veronica Maurer**, and **Maeve Snyder**, viola; **Alyssa Hillwig**, trumpet; and **Erika Kenst**, clarinet. Accepted into the PMEA District 1 Junior High Chorus were **Logan DeLuca** and **Ciarra Reese**. Accepted into the PMEA District 1 Junior High Band were **Erika Kenst** and **Grace Consentino**, clarinet; **Madeline Turner**, baritone horn; and **Andrew Deal**, alto saxophone.

- Seven students advanced to be accepted into Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Region I ensembles. Accepted into the PMEA Region I band were **Zachary Spondike**, tenor sax; **Ethan Carter**, bass clarinet; and **Michael LaBella**, bassoon. Accepted into the Region I Chorus were **Zoe Babbit**, **Alex Almonte**, and **Kelsey Marshall**. Accepted into the Region I Orchestra was **Marissa Fukas**, viola.



# CREATING CONNECTIONS

## Shaler Area athletes succeed through hard work and teamwork

- Football: The team made the playoffs for the first time in seven years. Two players were named 1st Team All-Section **Brennan “BB” Fugh** (defensive back), and **Jeff Bonnette** (offensive tackle). Two players signed National Letters of Intent: **Jeff Bonnette** (California University of Pennsylvania) and **Joe Kremer** (Seton Hill University).
- Cross Country: **Samantha Hennen** and **Dalton Kalbaugh** advanced to the PIAA Championships. Kalbaugh placed 10th in the WPIAL Championships and Samantha placed 18th.
- Girls Golf: **Emilee Miller** qualified for the WPIAL Championships. The team won three matches, breaking a two-year losing streak.
- Girls Volleyball: The team advanced to playoffs. They won their first-round matchup before being defeated in the WPIAL semifinals. **Oyinda Agbale** was named 1st Team All-Section middle hitter and signed a National Letter of Intent for

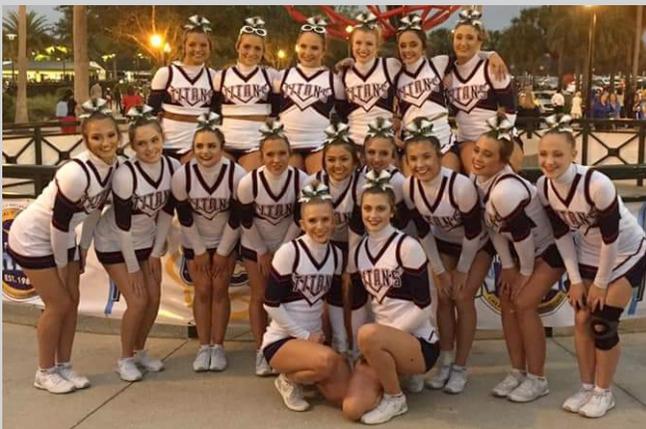


Shaler Area Titan Varsity Football team made the playoffs for the first time in seven years.

Shippensburg University. Paul Stadelman was named coach of the year.

- Girls Soccer: **Olivia DeLeonibus** signed a National Letter of Intent to attend Seton Hill University.
- Boys Soccer: **Peter Moorey** signed a National Letter of Intent to attend University of Pittsburgh Johnstown.

## Shaler Area Varsity Cheerleaders place at the state and national level



The Shaler Area Varsity Cheerleaders continue to compete on both a state and national level. The team won the Universal Cheer Association Regionals held at Slippery Rock and went on to place 8th out of 48 teams in the UCA National High School Cheerleading Championship in Orlando, Florida. The team also placed 3rd, winning a bronze medal, in the WPIAL Competitive Spirit competition and went on to also place 3rd in the PIAA Competitive Spirit competition.

- Girls Tennis: The team recorded six victories for the season.
- Boys Basketball: The team finished 3rd in their section and advanced to the state playoffs. **Justin DeSabato** and **Mekhi Reynolds** were named All Big 56 1st Team; and **Matt Bendel** and **Brennan “BB” Fugh** received Honorable Mention.
- Girls Basketball: The team missed making the playoffs but had several players named to the All Big 56 Teams including **Emily Cavacini**, 1st Team, and **Meghan Lacey** received Honorable Mention.
- Varsity Wrestling: **Ian Scarberry** captured his 100th career win. **Ryan Sullivan** defended his section title but was unable to defend his PIAA state title due to injury—he was named Honorable Mention Wrestling USA All American Team and signed a National Letter of Intent for the University of Pittsburgh.
- Girls Bowling: The team was named Co-Section Champs, placed 3rd in the WPIBL, and advanced to the Western Finals for the state. **Bella Pilyih**, **Macey Prosser**, and **Shannon Roche** individually advanced to the Western Finals for the state.
- Boys Bowling: The team finished with a record of 5-2 and claimed 3rd place in their section.
- Boys Swimming: The team ended the year with a 9-2 record, and six swimmers qualified for the WPIAL Championships: **Justin Adametz**, **Stephen Adametz**, **Eddie Sheets**, **Peter Lesnett**, **Kevin Chalmers**, and **Jake Bacasa**.
- Girls Swimming: The team ended the year with an 8-2 record, and five swimmers advanced to the WPIAL Championships: **Isabella Cercone**, **Olivia DiBon**, **Virginia Lesnett**, **Lydia Nebiolo**, and **Jenna Stanton**.
- Indoor Track: Two athletes advanced to the PA State Indoor Championships. **Cam Mbalo** placed 7th and **Dalton Kalbaugh** placed 11th in their respective events.

## Shaler Area Varsity Baseball wins program's 5th WPIAL title



The Shaler Area Varsity Baseball team placed 2nd in the section, and then went on to win the program's fifth WPIAL Championship title. Additionally, three players were named to Big 56 Teams: **Hunter Boyan**, 1st Team pitcher; **Zach Hernon**, 2nd Team infielder; and **Colin Harger**, 2nd Team outfielder. **Zach Hernon** signed a National Letter of Intent for Alderson Broaddus University. Brian Junker was named coach of the year.

- Varsity Softball: The team advanced to WPIAL playoffs to continue its long tradition of excellence. Several team members were named to the All Big 56 Teams: **Meghan Lacey**, 1st Team outfield; **Tori Martrano**, 1st Team infield; **Skyler Tortorea**, 2nd Team infield; **Cam Murphy**, 2nd Team outfield; **Jamie Lappe**, 2nd Team DH; **Megan Povich**, Honorable Mention outfield; and **Ella Richards**, Honorable Mention catcher. **Kelsey Cordera** signed a National Letter of Intent for Edinboro University.
- Girls Lacrosse: The young team showed growth and finished the season with a 6-10 record, winning three of the final four games. **Rylee Wilson** led the team with 41 goals and was named to the All-WPIAL Team.
- Boys Lacrosse: The young team, starting several freshmen, showed progress throughout the year and was able to garner three wins during the season.

- Boys Varsity Volleyball: The team finished a record-breaking season by securing a playoff spot and a first-round bye. Advancing to the semifinals, the team lost a close match but then won the consolation finals to earn a spot in the PIAA state playoffs. The team defeated D-10 Champion Erie McDowell before losing the quarterfinal match against North Allegheny. **Billy Dadowski** and **Steve Hoffman** were named 1st Team All-Section, 1st Team All-WPIAL and All-State Team; and **John Kenst** was named 2nd Team All-Section and 3rd Team All-WPIAL; **Trapper Crain** and **Thomas Borgen** were named 2nd Team All-Section.
- Varsity Track: **Danielle Eshelman, Mayah Charity, Lydia Valentine, Cam Mbalo, Jack Keenan, Dalton Kalbaugh, and Andrew Dadowski** all advanced to compete at the

WPIAL Championships. At WPIALs, **Danielle Eshelman** received 6th and 12th place finishes. **Cam Mbalo** won a WPIAL title in triple jump and a trip to the PIAA State Championships where he won a bronze medal and a trip to New Balance Nationals in Greensboro, NC.



Cam Mbalo

- Boys Tennis: The team continued to grow and add more victories every year. They finished the season with a 7-7 record. The team was led by **Cam Szazynski** who played in the number one spot.

## Shaler Area student body celebrates Unified Sports Bocce's Allegheny County Championship

The Shaler Area community embraced its Unified Sports bocce team, and that support helped lead the team to capture the Allegheny County Championship title and a trip to Hershey to compete for the State Championship in just the team's second year.

The Unified Sports indoor bocce program is supported through the Special Olympics and Unified Sports program to promote social inclusion through athletics. The program pairs students with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team.

The high school students, teachers, and staff contributed to the team's winning momentum by coming out to the team's matches and celebrating when they won the county championship and advanced to states.

"[When] it was ... the time we would leave for Hershey ... We walked in the cafeteria, and we were greeted by about 300 students, all on their feet, all cheering for us, giving the team high-fives. They made posters. They made signs. It was a pretty incredible moment," said Gina Chmielewski, Unified Sports bocce coach.



Shaler Area's Unified Sports bocce team won the Allegheny County Championship in its second year of existence.

"I've been working here a long time and coached a lot of sports, and I've never seen that before. It was a really cool moment."

Shaler Area's 2019 Allegheny County Championship team included captain **Angelina Robertson, Joey Broderick, Nakeisha McCoy, Lauren Donnelly, Skyler Tortorea, Roman Tortorea, Kassidy Steinmetz, and Eli Deutschbauer.**



# CREATING CONNECTIONS

## Shaler Area grad recognized for her work to help women advance in the workplace

Shaler Area honored Dr. Kathleen Buse (Class of 1977) as the 2018 Distinguished Alumnus for her accomplishments following high school graduation and her contributions to advancing women in the workplace.

The Shaler Area School District created the Distinguished Alumnus Award to recognize and honor the graduates of the Shaler Area, Shaler, Etna or Millvale School District who have made a valuable contribution to society either in his/her personal or professional life.

Following her 1977 graduation from Shaler Area High School, Dr. Buse went on to pursue a successful 25-year career in industry, beginning as an engineer and advancing to executive leadership. She then spent 10 years in academia where she became an award-winning researcher and top-rated educator. After immersing herself in the five decades of research on women in the workplace and drawing on her own experiences in industry, she designed strategies and solutions for women and their leaders. These efforts have



measurably increased women's achievement within organizations especially in leadership roles and other critical professions including engineering.

Today, Dr. Buse is the director of the Employer Resource Council (ERC) Women's Leadership Institute where she helps employers recruit, retain, and advance women through research-based solutions and development services. Previously, Dr. Buse served as president of Advancing Women in STEM, and as faculty director for the Leadership Lab for Women at Case Western Reserve University and adjunct professor at Case Western.

Dr. Buse earned a Doctor of Philosophy in management from Case Western Reserve University, a Master of Science in electrical engineering from Rochester Institute of Technology, and a Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering/engineering and public policy from Carnegie Mellon University. Her industry experience includes Kodak, Lubrizol, Avery Dennison, and Sherwin-Williams.

## Six athletes, one team inducted into Athletic Hall of Fame

Shaler Area is proud to recognize the athletic accomplishments and contributions of its alumni and supporters, including the Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2018 inductees.

- **Jerry Dickinson** – Soccer, Football: 3-time team captain at Holy Cross and Crusader and Patriot League Defensive Player of the Year.
- **Tim Gralewski** – Basketball, Baseball: led the 1987 Titans with a .444 average, with 7 home runs and 34 RBIs.
- **Erich Kaiser** – Soccer: led the 1986 section championship team, former Titans soccer coach and Director of Player Development in the Hampton Soccer Club.
- **Skip Palmer** – Assistant and head Titans softball coach, 4 section championships, a WPIAL championship, and a PIAA championship as head coach.
- **Sam Robick** – Football, Basketball, Track: 3-sport, 4-year letterman for the Titans.
- **Steve Sciuolo** – Football: member of a MAC championship team at Marshall University, All-Conference honors, and played professionally in the NFL, including the Super Bowl.
- **2009 Boys Hockey Team** – Section champions, Penguins Cup champions, and State runners-up.



# CREATING CONNECTIONS

## Shaler Area teacher brings Antarctica to students through first-hand experience

Shaler Area Elementary School teacher Mike Penn traveled to the end of the world to bring lessons about math, science, and the Antarctic to life for students.

Mr. Penn was one of 11 teachers in the United States selected to participate in PolarTREC (Teachers and Researchers Exploring and Collaborating), an educational research experience funded by the National Science Foundation that partners science teachers (grades 6-12) with academic researchers actively involved in polar science research—five teachers traveled to Antarctica; six teachers traveled to the Arctic.

For approximately six weeks starting in November 2018, Mr. Penn worked as part of a research team from the University of Wisconsin to install and maintain remote automatic weather stations all over the continent of Antarctica. The automatic weather stations collect information about weather conditions and measurements that are used by meteorologists and climate scientists all over the world.

In addition to being a full member of the research team, Mr. Penn also engaged with



Shaler Area Elementary teacher Mike Penn shared his experiences working with a research team in Antarctica with students around the world.

students, schools, and the public about his experiences to foster an interest in math and science and general knowledge about the Antarctic. Mr. Penn explained his role in the Automatic Weather Station project, conveyed his observations, responded to questions, and inspired students to become interested and active in scientific issues that affect the world.

### Haberman named Secondary Teacher of the Year

Shaler Area High School teacher Nick Haberman was named Secondary Teacher of the Year by the Pennsylvania Council for Social Studies (PCSS). The award recognizes teachers who are committed to the advancement of social studies. Mr. Haberman teaches 10th-grade World Cultures, and the social studies elective courses: History of the Holocaust, which covers the history of the Holocaust from the origins of anti-Semitism to neo-Nazism today, and Multicultural Studies, which focuses on multiculturalism, human rights, and genocide.



Nick Haberman

### Balsomico named state Teacher of the Year semifinalist

Shaler Area High School Japanese language teacher Steve Balsomico was named semifinalist for the 2020 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year. Mr. Balsomico provides a variety of opportunities for students to learn the language and experience the culture—from hosting native Japanese assistant teachers in his classroom to inviting individuals from the local Japanese community to share various cultural experiences. Mr. Balsomico also has arranged Japanese homestays and brought Japanese students to Shaler Area in a cultural exchange.



Steve Balsomico



# CREATING CONNECTIONS

## Shaler Area recognized for its commitment to music education

For the second consecutive year, Shaler Area School District was honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

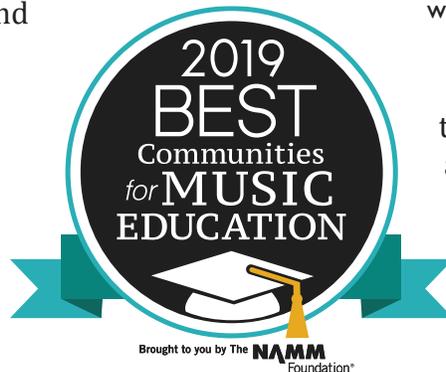
Shaler Area was one of 623 school districts in the nation and 92 districts in the state to be named among the Best Communities for Music Education. The award program recognizes outstanding efforts by teachers, administrators, parents, students, and community leaders who have made music education part of a well-rounded education.

“We are extremely proud of the music education program at Shaler Area and the dedicated teachers in our music department,” said Superintendent Sean Aiken. “Being recognized with the Best Communities for Music Education designation for the second consecutive year highlights Shaler Area’s commitment to music education and the quality of music education available to our students.”

The Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts



Shaler Area was honored for its commitment to music education with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for the second consecutive year.



that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students based on the district’s music education funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs.

## Reserve Primary named Title I Distinguished School

Reserve Primary School was one of only 158 Title I schools in Pennsylvania to be named a Title I Distinguished School for the 2018-19 school year. Reserve Primary received the designation of Reward: High Achievement by placing in the highest 5 percent of Title I schools based on English language arts (ELA) and math PSSA proficiency that met all four Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) and Reward: High Progress by placing in the highest 5 percent of Title I Schools based on ELA and math Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System growth that met all four AMOs. Schools in Shaler Area have been named Title I Distinguished Schools in four of the past five years.



Reserve Primary School was recognized as a Title I Distinguished School for 2018-19.



# CREATING CONNECTIONS

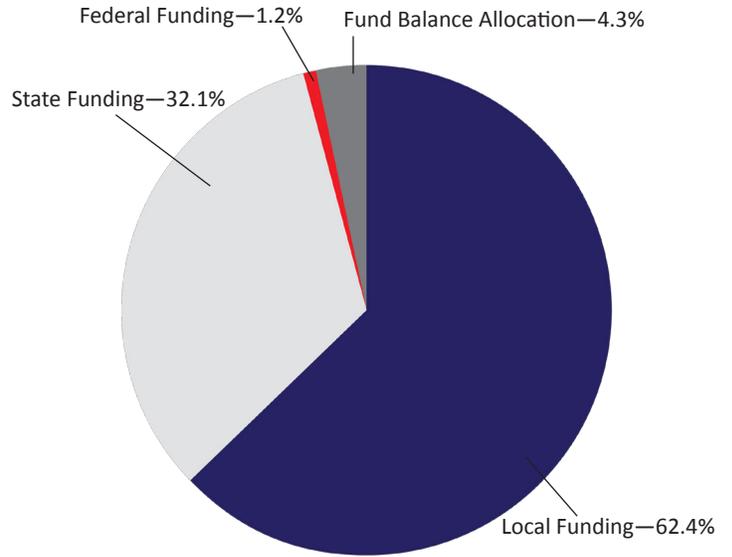
## Shaler Area focused on fiscal responsibility to move district forward

Fiscal responsibility and operational efficiency remain at the forefront of the district's priorities, and administration continues to look for creative ways to utilize staff, generate resources, and reduce spending while maintaining the integrity of the academic programs.

Since the 2016-17 school year, the district instituted an aggressive attrition model to reduce salaries and benefits. When appropriate, the district has continued to use this model to minimize the overall increase in salaries and benefits in the 2019-20 budget and into the future.

The \$88,568,892 budget for 2019-20 features an overall increase of approximately 4 percent over the 2018-19 budget. With revenues generating \$84,714,119, Shaler Area balanced the budget using \$3.8 million of its fund balance and will continue to analyze the budget throughout the year for cost-savings measures. The millage rate for 2019-20 is unchanged at 23.5319 mills.

### WHERE OUR MONEY COMES FROM



## Grants advance initiatives, save money

As part of Shaler Area's commitment to fiscal responsibility, teachers and administrators seek out grant opportunities each year to help cover the cost of academic initiatives, resources, and educational opportunities.

In the 2018-19 school year, Shaler Area received more than \$630,000 in grant funds. These grants provided students and teachers with additional opportunities without affecting the district budget. In the 2018-19 school year, grants received provided funding for the following programs and initiatives:

- Pre-K Counts preschool program at Marzolf and Reserve Primary schools;

In the 2018-19 school year, Shaler Area received **more than \$630,000** in grant funds.

- Partnership with Carnegie Mellon University for math remediation and support for students K-6;
- Project EMBRACE, which to make STEAM projects more accessible for students with special needs;
- Security cameras at the elementary school and high school;
- Computer science programming at the elementary school and middle school;
- Creation of a maker space at the elementary school;
- Educational materials and science equipment;
- Educational out-of-district trips.



The 2018-19 school year budget designates funds for academic programs and the safety and security of the district's facilities, including the addition of a second School Resource Officer in the district and the purchase of a new reading series for students in Kindergarten through sixth-grade.



## 2019-20 budget supports academics, safety

Shaler Area is committed to supporting educational initiatives and improving the safety and security of the district's facilities through a plan set forth in the 2019-20 school year budget.

The \$88,568,892 budget for 2019-20 continues Shaler Area's commitment to quality educational programming through supporting the following projects:

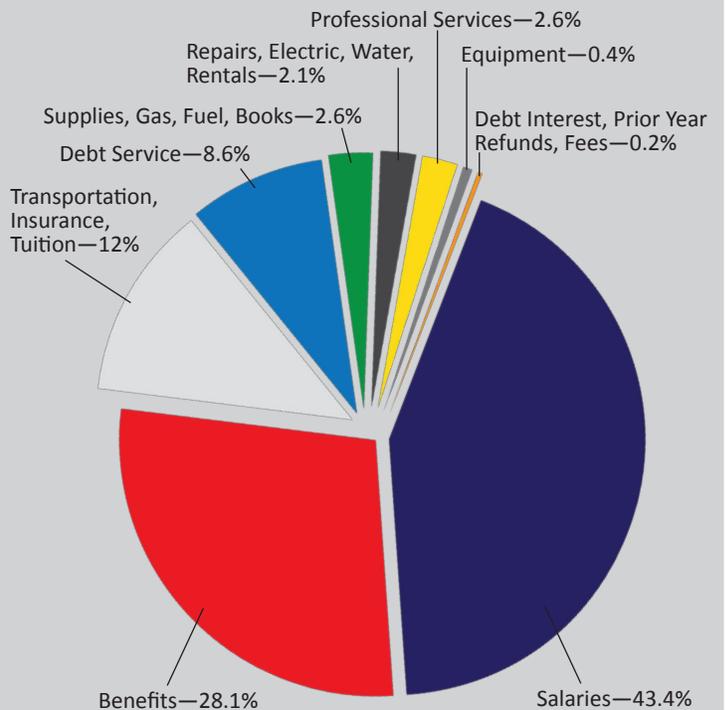
- Continuation of the Project ACE 1:1 iPad initiative;
- Purchasing a new reading series in Kindergarten through sixth-grade;
- Increasing staffing to address higher student populations at the elementary level and in special education;
- Increasing professional development to support the change to a middle school model of programming and scheduling at Shaler Area Middle School.

The budget also continues Shaler Area's commitment to the safety, security, and maintenance of its facilities and designates funds for the following projects:

- Adding an additional School Resource Officer;
- Adding security cameras at district buildings;
- Improving the locks and doors in all buildings;
- Replacing the Shaler Area Elementary roof;
- Replacing the cooling tower at the Shaler Area High School;

- Replacing the artificial turf at Biles Field;
- Repaving Paul Schweiger Way and parking lots at the high school;
- Initiating a districtwide energy conservation program.

### WHERE OUR MONEY GOES



# Shaler Area School Board

Shaler Area School Board is made up of nine elected members who represent the community and play an integral role in making decisions for the future of Shaler Area.



**Front Row (left to right):** Dr. April Kwiatkowski, Eileen Phillips,  
Suzanna Donahue, Jeanne Petrovich

**Back Row (left to right):** Steve Romac, School Board President James Tunstall,  
School Board Vice President Tim Gapsky, James Fisher, Jason Machajewski

Shaler Area School Board of Directors meets most months on the **second and third Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Barbara J. Duss Conference Room** of the Administration Building, 1800 Mt. Royal Blvd. December's reorganization meeting is the first Wednesday of the month. A full schedule of meetings, meeting agendas, and minutes are available at [www.sasd.k12.pa.us/SchoolBoard.aspx](http://www.sasd.k12.pa.us/SchoolBoard.aspx).



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