

Simsbury Public Schools

Students



Teachers

Parents



Community

District Annual Report 2018-19

Message from the Superintendent/BOE Chair

“The Simsbury Public Schools cultivate the mind, body, and character of all students by engaging students with a meaningful and rigorous academic foundation strengthened by the SPS Vision of a Graduate.”

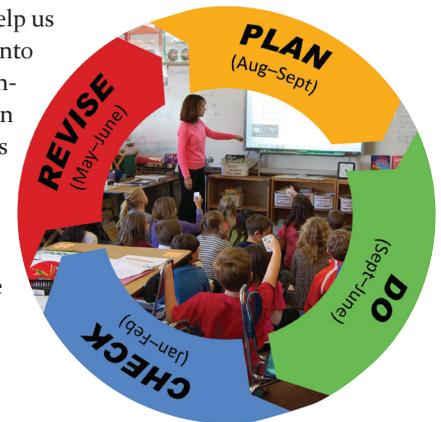


Simsbury Public Schools has established high benchmarks for both teaching and learning. Each fall we examine the areas we identified for improvement during the previous cycle, assess how much we have progressed in those areas, and then take that data and synthesize it into this *District Annual Report*.

Our Board of Education (BOE) prioritizes goal setting as part of our continuous improvement planning cycle. On June 11th, the BOE adopted new Strategic Board Goals (2019-2024), which give us direction relative to financial and human resources and drive the adjustments and refinements we make to our teaching practices at all grade levels. Our teachers develop their individual goals in alignment with school and district goals. The BOE Strategic Goals encompass four key areas: Student Growth and Success, Compassionate and Connected School Culture, Premier Workforce, and Sustainable and Strategic Investments. You can find more details about each of these areas on the BOE webpage at <https://www.simsbury.k12.ct.us/boe/goals>.

To best support student learning, we must strive to achieve the best use of our school buildings. Last year \$200,000 was approved by the Board of Finance to develop a School Facilities Master Plan and Reconfiguration Study. The plan consists of: 1) preparing a detailed inventory of all buildings; 2) identifying capital improvement and maintenance needs over the next 10 years; and 3) using this information to assist in the preparation of the BOE’s 6-year capital improvement program. Tecton Architects worked closely with district leadership to accomplish these objectives. They also engaged the services of an engineering firm to help us more accurately gauge the ebb and flow of Simsbury’s changing population. This fall, we are delving into the most challenging aspect of the plan—reviewing alternate school reconfiguration concepts. This information will assist the district in planning for changing demographics, developing strategies to align facilities with enrollment needs, and determining how to best position resources. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that our buildings serve our students and teachers well into the future.

Please take a moment to review the list of impressive accomplishments by Simsbury’s students as well as the charts we have compiled on the pages of this Annual Report. As always, if you have a question or concern about how your expectations are being met, please contact us or visit our website at www.simsbury.k12.ct.us. There is so much happening in our public schools, and we are so proud to share this journey with the Simsbury community.



Continuous Improvement Planning Cycle
District • School • Grade Level/Department

Tara Donohue Willerup
Board of Education Chair

Matthew T. Curtis
Superintendent

2018 Teacher of the Year Kurt Dougan



The 2018 Kathleen Magowan Simsbury Teacher of the Year is **Kurt Dougan**, SHS/HJMS Technology Education & Engineering Coordinator. Dougan has been teaching the Project Lead the Way engineering program since its inception in 2003, and many of his students have gone on to college to study engineering. One of his proudest accomplishments is the “Electrathon” program, which enables students to design, build, and race fully functional electric race cars. Dougan co-founded SHS’s FIRST Robotics team, leading the team to several national competitions. He also supports girls in engineering careers through his participation in the annual “Girls in Engineering Day.” To honor veterans, he also runs the annual “Freedom Pen-a-Thon.”

2018-19 Board of Education

- Tara Donohue Willerup, Chair
- Susan Salina, Vice Chair
- Todd Burrick, Secretary
- Lydia Tedone
- Thomas E. Frank
- Jeff Tindall
- Jennifer Batchelar
- Brian Watson

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? Email: MCurtis@simsbury.k12.ct.us Website: www.simsbury.k12.ct.us

Highlights of Accomplishments 2018-19

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

- SHS had 7 National Merit finalists.
- 146 SHS students took New England Math League Competition exams.
- Districtwide elementary students participated in Connecticut's *Invention Convention*; 2 Central and 15 Tariffville students participated, and 3 Tariffville students qualified for state level competition at UCONN.
- 45 Central and 37 Tariffville students participated in *Math Olympiads*; for Tariffville, 24 scored above the 50th percentile nationally, and a sixth grader earned the top score with 23 out of 25 correct.
- One HJMS student and a Central School sixth grader advanced to the state's *National Geography Bee* competition.
- 18 HJMS students took the Mathematical Association of America national test in November 2017; the average score for HJMS students exceeded the national average.
- 63 HJMS students qualified for the Presidential Award for Excellence based on their academic success.
- 16 8th grade female students participated in a "Girls in Engineering" program at Simsbury High School.
- A Squadron Line teacher facilitated a Coding Club, which led to 6th grade students teaching 1st grade students about 3D printing.
- 47 Latin students were inducted into the NJCL Latin Honor Society, and 41 won awards at the National Exam.
- SHS Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) earned the Gold Seal Chapter award for excellence; a student received national recognition for placing second at the CT State FBLA Leadership Conference, and another student was elected as the State FBLA President for 2019-20.
- SHS had 4 COLT State Poetry Contest winners.
- An SHS student placed 9th in the nation for his National History Day website and 1st for an American Government History prize, and he earned a gold medal scholarship award from the National Archives.
- Two SHS students were awarded the NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing.
- 2 SHS and 2 HJMS students were honored by the Connecticut Boards of Education (CABE) for leadership qualities; 1 SHS and 1 HJMS student received recognition from the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) for their leadership qualities.
- Students in HJMS's Engineering Technology class took First Place in the 2018 Connecticut SeaPerch competition, and three students went on to compete in the National competition.
- The Nutmeg Book Award Selection Committee chose a Central School 6th grader to join the 2021 Intermediate (Grade 4-6) Selection Committee as a student reader.

ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS

- SHS had 9 All-State Musicians, 22 Northern Regional Musicians, and 2 Ensign Darling Vocal Fellows.
- SHS had 5 OAKE National Honor Choir singers.
- Two HJMS students were honored as the Artsonia Artists of the Week.
- The HJMS band teacher and a special education teacher continued for the third year a program called United Sound, providing musical performance experiences through peer mentorship for students with special needs; students performed at the Connecticut State Capitol.
- Over 70 HJMS students participated as cast and crew members in the HJMS Musical Blockbuster, *James and the Giant Peach*.
- Two Squadron Line students placed in an International Fiddle competition.
- At Fantastic Festivals (Six Flags), Squadron Line's 6th Grade Special Chorus won a Gold Designation as well as the prestigious Esprit de Corps Award, given to one group that best represents its school and community, displaying exemplary cooperation, support, and spirit.
- At Fantastic Festivals, the HJMS chorus and orchestra won platinum, and the band won gold.
- Several Squadron Line students qualified for and sang in several prestigious honors choirs (OAKE National Choirs, CT Northern Regional Middle School Choir, CT Elementary Honors Choir, and ACDA Eastern Regional Choir).

HONORS & RECOGNITIONS

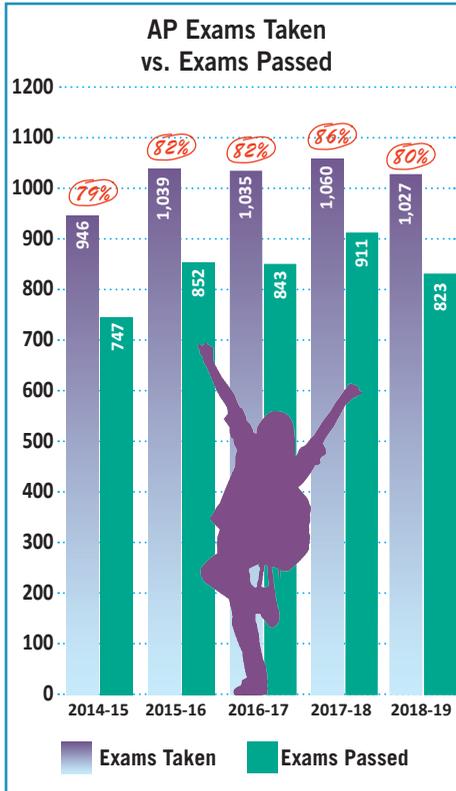
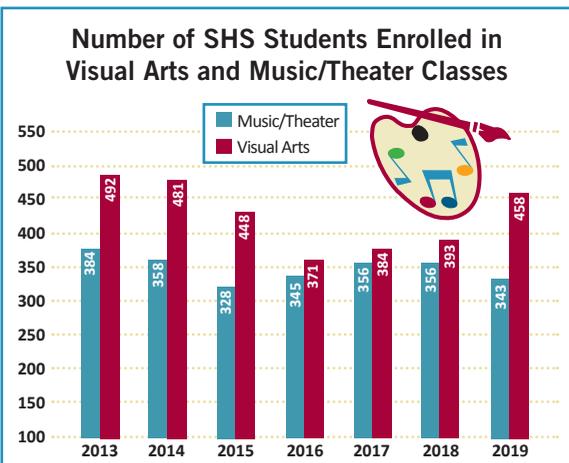
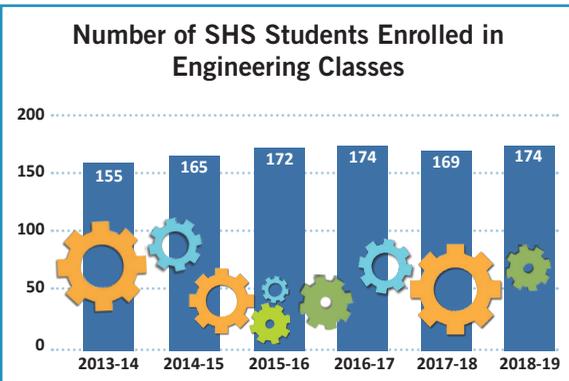
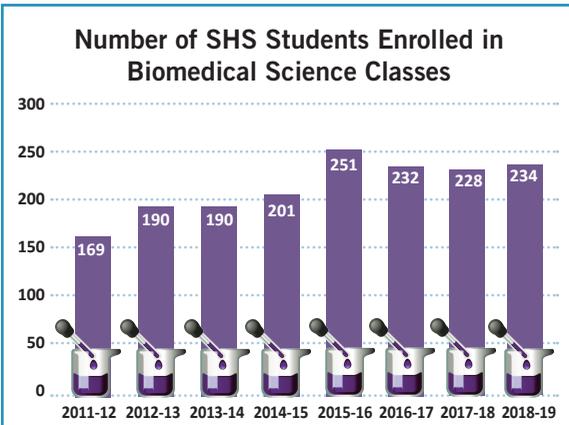
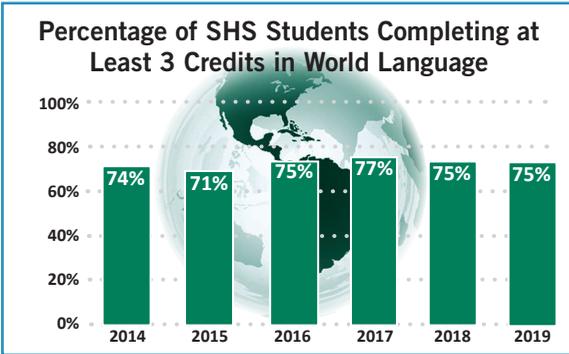
- In the *U.S. News* rankings, SHS ranked 404th in the U.S. and 8th in CT.
- The SHS Chess team won the state championship.
- Two SHS students earned a Connecticut Association of School (CAS) award, and two students were awarded CAS Scholar Athletes.

BUILDING CHARACTER AND SERVING THE COMMUNITY

- SHS collected and donated over 260 toys for needy children.
- HJMS and SHS students took part in the Freedom Pen-a-Thon held at SHS to make pens for veterans and raise money through a fundraiser for organizations supporting veterans.
- Two teachers worked with Squadron Line's PTO who graciously donated over \$54,000 to help renovate the library media center.
- For the annual Turkey Trot HJMS collected \$1,000 from staff and students to purchase 48 turkeys for families in the community; canned goods were also collected for FoodShare.
- HJMS students participated in a Pajama Day and raised \$800 for childhood cancer research.
- Students in "MakerSpace" at HJMS knitted many hats to give away to local shelters.
- Many students participated in the annual Lions Peace Poster contest; the 1st place winner from HJMS won the Hartford district award.
- 100% of Central School students received a school-based recognition award for positive choices made during the 2018-2019 school year.
- At Central School's Read-A-Thon school-wide event, \$5,721.43 was raised in order to celebrate reading and support grade level charities of choice.
- Central School donated \$1,268 and collected lots of donated food during the Jack Bannan Memorial Turkey Trot for families in need.
- The Squadron Line Take Action Club raised over \$8,300 to support multiple local campaigns that helped several local service organizations as well as a global campaign.
- Tariffville School collected supplies and donations to support wildlife at the State Park at Great Pond and the Simsbury Animal Shelter.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

All students will participate in a rigorous and engaging learning experience that balances academics with personal, social, civic, and physical development, enabling them to be successful.



U.S. News & World Report Top 10 Best Public High Schools in Connecticut

- Darien High School
- Weston High School
- Ridgefield High School
- New Canaan High School
- Staples High School
- #6 Simsbury High School**
- Wilton High School
- West Hartford High Schools
- Greenwich High School
- Canton High School

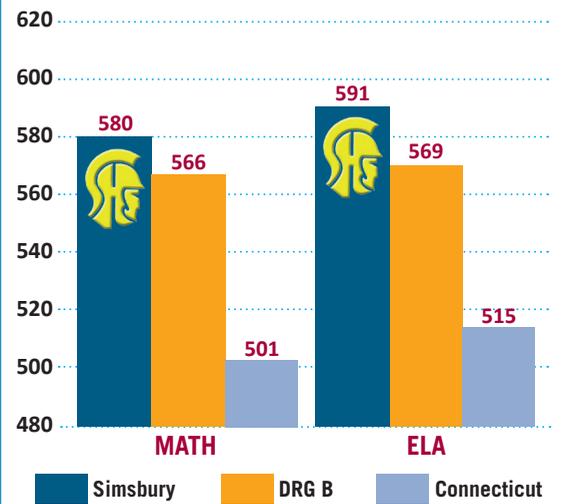


2019 DRG B High School Comparisons: CSDE Reporting

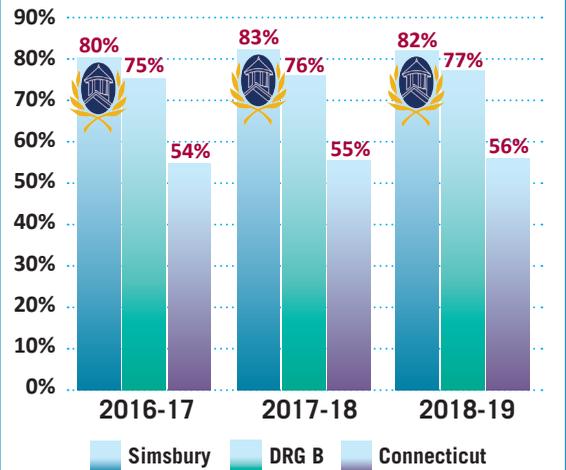
High School	SAT ELA: Grade 11	SAT Math: Grade 11	Combined
Avon High School	584	590	1174
Simsbury High School	591	580	1171
Daniel Hand High School (Madison)	579	579	1158
Guilford High School	578	577	1155
Glastonbury High School	571	583	1154
Greenwich High School	580	571	1151
Farmington High School	577	574	1151
Fairfield Ludlowe/Ward High Schools	566	570	1136
Pomperaug Region 15 High School	566	570	1136
Masuk High School (Monroe)	564	570	1134
Cheshire High School	571	562	1133
Amity Regional High School (Region 5)	569	563	1132
Trumbull High School	559	567	1126
Granby Memorial High School	571	552	1123
West Hartford Conard/Hall High Schools	566	557	1123
South Windsor High School	556	554	1110
Brookfield High School	549	550	1099
New Fairfield High School	546	522	1068
Average Score in DRG B			1135
Statewide Average Score			1016

NOTE: District Reference Group (DRG) groupings are a comparison of school districts based on economic factors. The above are all towns in DRG B.

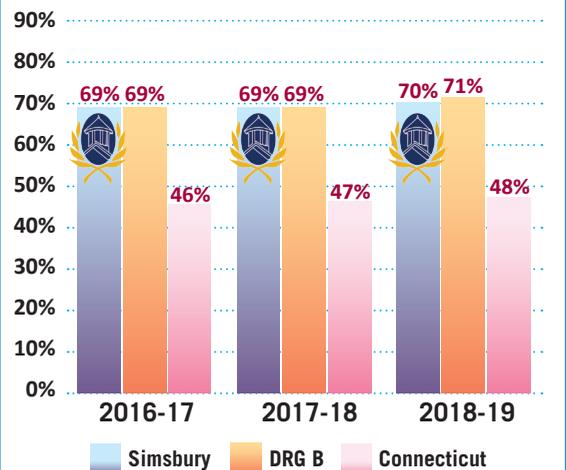
2019 CT SAT Test Day: Grade 11 Students



Percentage of Simsbury Students Meeting Goal on SBAC ELA (Grades 3-8)



Percentage of Simsbury Students Meeting Goal on SBAC Math (Grades 3-8)



Class of 2019 Advanced Placement Achievement

Year of Graduation	Percentage of SHS Students Completing at Least One AP Course	Percentage of SHS Students Achieving a Score of 3 or Above on AP Exam
2011	56%	79%
2012	60%	82%
2013	69%	80%
2014	73%	78%
2015	68%	79%
2016	69%	82%
2017	71%	82%
2018	76%	86%
2019	75%	80%

PROFESSIONALISM All staff will contribute to a challenging, collaborative, and focused environment that fosters continuous improvement.

Theory of Action on Teacher Collaboration Richard DuFour (1998), provides this definition to teacher collaboration in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs): “Educators committed to working collaboratively in on-going processes of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve.” PLCs operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators. In Simsbury, we continually find ways to build collaborative communities of practice for our educators through PLCs, peer visitations and school-based rounds that foster participation from administrators and classroom teachers on issues related to instructional practice and student achievement.



In November and March, Simsbury Public Schools held workshops for educators to engage, enhance, and extend student learning. These opportunities gave teachers a chance to share their knowledge and learn new approaches to teaching, whether high tech, low tech, or no tech.

Effective Teacher Indicator #6

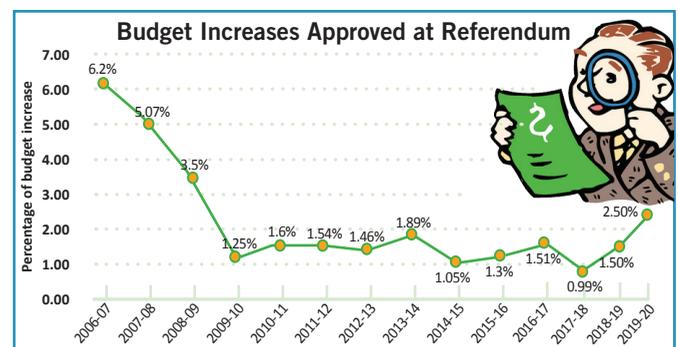
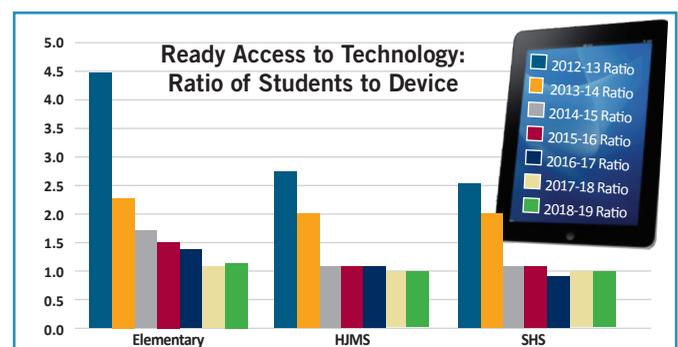
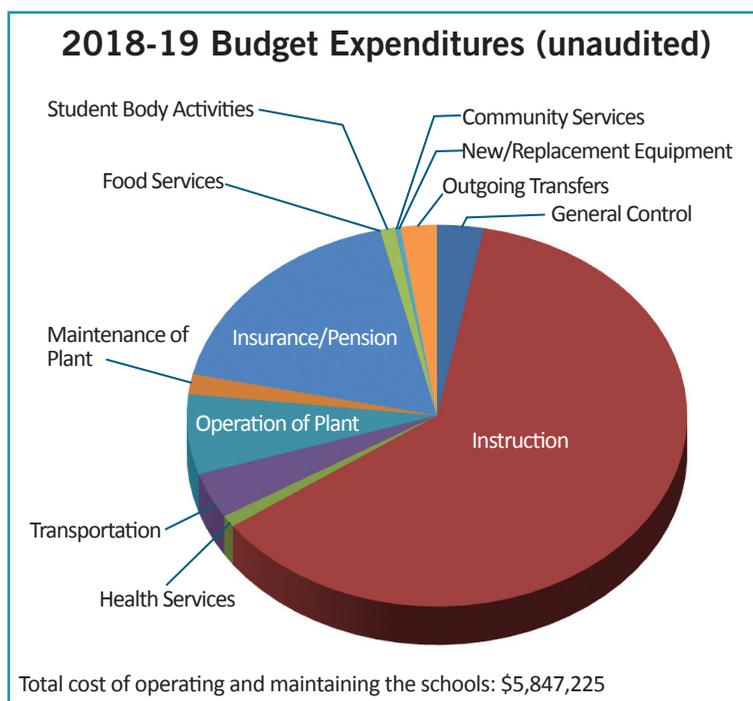
Highly effective teaching in every classroom is supported by highly effective leaders in every school building. Our leaders support teachers so that they can facilitate learning experiences that are meaningful to students and prepare them for their futures. Our teachers work hard to support and encourage students to be engaged in inquiry-based learning opportunities that require the use of collaborative, creative, and critical thinking skills.

Every year, our school leaders work collaboratively with their school leadership teams in identifying a leadership challenge so that school-based teams have the opportunity to engage in quality cycle of rounds that provides professional colleagues to work together to reflect on current practices; refine and build new skills; share ideas; learn from one another; conduct classroom research; and/or solve problems of practice that result in documentation of effective instructional strategies and methodologies that positively impact teaching and student learning.

The Simsbury Public Schools provide the rich and rigorous academic foundation required of students in an ever-changing global society. We believe that all students deserve a guaranteed, viable, and relevant learning experience that encompasses the learning standards at each grade level. Therefore, educators in Simsbury have had the structures and time to work collaboratively with colleagues to focus on using various kinds of data to guide daily practice and improve instructional decision making that will positively impact student learning outcomes.

In Simsbury continuous improvement is at the heart of our collaborative efforts across the district. We believe that the practices embedded in the collaborative work of our Professional Learning Communities are what define the success and extent of their impact on the school and the organization as a whole. We recognize that through this collaborative commitment, we can strengthen leadership and teacher practices, thus positively impacting student achievement.

RESOURCES All resources will be utilized efficiently and effectively towards the district’s vision and goals.



SCHOOL CULTURE Simsbury Public Schools will provide a physically and emotionally safe and supportive environment.

2019 Elementary Discipline Data

92% of students did not require Tier 2* behavior intervention



98% of students received school based recognition



*Tier 2 behavior intervention is defined by an action/consequence taken by administration and/or referral to the Student Intervention Team (SIT) process for behavior.

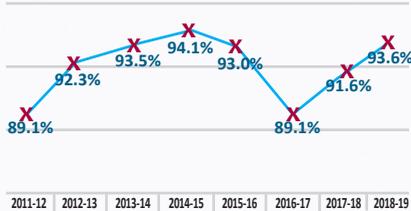
Supported Training & Employment Program (STEP) provides job exploration experiences for students ages 17-21 who receive special services.



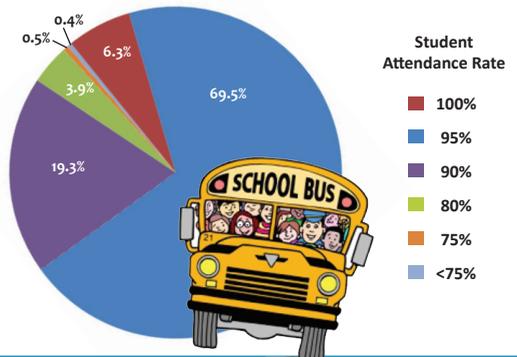
SHS provides therapy dogs to help with stress during finals week.

SHS/HJMS Office Referrals

(% of students with 1 or less office referrals)



2018-19 District-wide Absenteeism



OUR COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL SAFETY

A commitment to school safety remains a focal point in the continuous improvement plan of the Simsbury Public Schools. Projects involving new entryways at Central School and Simsbury High School were the most prominent of many physical improvements to our buildings. The new entrances create a locked vestibule that visitors must enter before gaining access to the main office. In addition, bollards were installed as another layer of protection near main offices, and security screens were added on the first floor of Henry James. More physical improvements will happen over time as the district continues to use capital improvement funding for these important upgrades.

We also increased our commitment to school safety with the addition of a new position dedicated to that goal. After an extensive interview process, Mark Critz, a 25-year veteran of the Simsbury Police Department, became our school district's first Director of Safety and Security. In that role, Mark will establish a visible and professional presence in our schools in order to review current procedures, make recommendations for improvements, and build positive relationships with administrators and school safety teams. Mark's previous work as both a School Resource Officer and a youth detective in Simsbury make him a perfect choice for the role as he understands both law enforcement and the culture of our schools. In addition to this resource, our full-time School Resource Officers remain in place—Laurel Harrington at SHS and Todd Kushman primarily at Henry James with outreach to the elementary schools.

Finally, we want to highlight the work the district is doing to bring educational programming from The Sandy Hook Promise to our various schools. At the elementary level, we celebrated "Start with Hello" week as each school conducted activities to build community and reduce so-



HJMS Principal Scott Baker and Assistant Principal Anjanette Belmonte pose with (l. to r.), Olivia Jarvis, Abby Slater, Elena Bontatibus, Kaeden Stefanik, Niles Arango, and Aiden O'Brien, next to an architect's rendering of the renovated building depicting the final phase of HJMS's building project, which included school security updates.

cial isolation. At HJMS and SHS, a new program called "Say Something" will be introduced in 2019-20. This training helps students and adults recognize warning signs of teens who might be in crisis and act to say something to a trusted adult. The program even features a 24/7 anonymous reporting system that students will learn how to access as part of their training. Administrators at both the school and district level will receive notifications about any tips that are provided and thus be able to follow up appropriately when kids express concerns. "Say Something" is an important new tool in our ongoing efforts to keep school safe.



VISION OF A GRADUATE



CRITICAL THINKER

- Engage in problem solving, inquiry, and reflective thinking
- Develop compelling questions
- Analyze information to consider varied perspectives
- Evaluate information to reason and solve problems

COMMUNICATOR

- Listen actively
- Lift conversations by asking and responding to questions
- Deliver clear, concise, accurate ideas through spoken and written language
- Demonstrate an awareness of audience by adjusting purposefully

COLLABORATOR

- Perform a variety of roles and responsibilities
- Function interdependently and flexibly with others
- Seek and contribute feedback
- Embrace contradictions and divergent ideas to accomplish a common goal

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNER

- Take initiative and responsibility for learning and productivity
- Use "experts" and other resources to pursue goals
- Demonstrate resilience, optimism, and perseverance
- Accomplish tasks through self-advocacy, self-confidence, and a growth mindset

INNOVATOR

- Empower creativity and develop skills
- Use a variety of techniques as part of a process to enhance outcomes
- View failure as an opportunity to learn, persevere, and show flexibility
- Challenge the status quo, push boundaries, and achieve growth

GLOBAL CITIZEN

- Exemplify empathy, compassion, and respect in interactions with others
- Consider diverse perspectives and cultures
- Act responsibly and ethically
- Recognize impact of actions and civic decisions