

## INSIDE THE WINTER EDITION



### Learning after the bell

Worcester schools offer expanded-day program

→ Page 3



### Getting a Head Start

Worcester's youngest get ready for kindergarten

→ Pages 8-9



### In the business

99 reasons for WPS to be grateful

→ Page 11



### Pedal power

South High alum finds success in cycling

→ Page 16

# Perfection<sup>2</sup>

## Twins score 800 on math SAT

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Achieving the coveted 800 on a portion of the SATs is a rare accomplishment.

Achieving the score alongside your twin is perfection squared.

Twin brothers, Soaib Rashid and Sabbir Rashid, seniors at South High Community School, each earned a perfect score of 800 on the mathematics portion of the SATs. Soaib earned 800 on the first attempt when he took the test in May. Sabbir first scored 770 and reached 800 in October.

"We went into it saying, 'OK, you get an 800, I'll get an 800,'" said Sabbir. "I guess we were pretty confident."

"After the first time, we were like, 'Sabbir's due next,'" said Soaib.

Aware of their innate ability to succeed in math, the twins

Twins Soaib, left, and Sabbir Rashid both scored 800 on the math SAT.



See PERFECTION Page 12

# Degrees of difficulty

## Teacher makes remarkable turnaround

BY CAITLIN BOWLER

Ten years ago, Andrea Safford was at a crossroads. A junior in high school and an expectant mother, overwhelmed, she was on the verge of dropping out when staff at the Comprehensive Skills Center (now the Gerald Creamer Center or GCC) convinced her to return to school and finish her high school degree.

Safford, 26 and a lifelong Spanish speaker, graduated from the GCC in 1999 and is now a successful and highly involved teacher of English as a Second Language at South High School — where she began her high

See SAFFORD Page 12



South High ESL teacher Andrea Safford, front, and students, from left, Bryan Saldivar, Beatriz Matos and Cristian Matos display her four diplomas, from South High School through her master's degree. PHOTO: REBA SALDANHA



# EDUCATOR

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## 2007 WPS grads accepted to top colleges

Members of the Worcester Public Schools Class of 2007 received acceptances from top colleges and universities throughout the country. Congratulations to those students and their families.

The following is a list of schools to which 2007 WPS graduates were accepted:

Adirondack Community College  
Alfred Community College  
Alvernia College  
American International College  
Anna Maria College  
Arcadia College  
Art Institute of Atlanta  
Assumption College  
Atlantic Union College  
Bates College  
Bay Path College  
Bay State College  
Becker College  
Benjamin Franklin  
Bentley College  
Berklee College of Music  
Boston College  
Boston University

Brandeis University  
Bridgewater State College  
Brigham Young University  
Brown University  
Bryant University  
Bunker Hill Community College  
Brigham Young University  
California Community College  
City University of New York  
Clark Atlanta University  
Clark University  
Colby College  
Colby-Sawyer College  
College of the Holy Cross  
Concordia University  
Cornell University  
Curry College  
Dartmouth College  
Dean College  
Dickinson College  
Dubuque University  
East LA Community College  
Eastern Nazarene College  
Elmira College  
Elms College  
Emerson College  
Emmanuel College  
Fashion Institute of Technology  
Fisher College  
Fitchburg State College  
Florida A & M University  
Fordham University  
Forsyth Tech Community Coll.  
Framingham State College

Franklin Pierce College  
Full Sail College, Florida  
George Washington University  
Harrington College  
Hesser College  
Hofstra University  
Howard University  
Johnson & Wales  
Keene State College  
Lasell College  
Lesley University  
Lincoln Technical Institute  
Lincoln University  
Livingston College  
Macintosh College  
Marymount College  
MassArt  
Mass. Bay Community College  
Mass. College of Liberal Arts  
Mass. College of Pharmacy  
McGill University  
Merrimack College  
Messiah College  
Mitchell College  
Morgan State University  
Mt. Holyoke College  
Mt. Ida College  
Mt. Wachusett Community Coll.  
New England Institute of Art  
New England Tech  
New Hampshire Tech. College  
New Horizon Technical  
Newbury College  
Nichols College

Northeastern University  
Oakwood College  
Pace University  
Parsons College  
Penn State University  
Plymouth State University  
Portland State Community Coll.  
Post University  
Providence College  
Purdue University  
Quinnipiac University  
Quinsigamond Community College  
Regent College  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Rhode Island College  
Rhode Island Community Coll.  
Rhodes College  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Roger Williams University  
Rose State College  
Roxbury Community College  
Salem State College  
Salter School  
Salve Regina College  
Skidmore College  
Smith College  
Southern Connecticut Univ.  
St. Anselm College  
St. John University  
St. Michael's College  
State University of New York  
Stockbridge College of

Agriculture  
Stonehill College  
Suffolk University  
Syracuse University  
Temple University  
Tufts University  
UMass Amherst  
UMass Boston  
UMass Dartmouth  
UMass Lowell  
Universal Technical Institute  
University of Bridgeport  
University of Colorado  
University of Connecticut  
University of Florida  
University of Hawaii  
University of Maine  
University of Maryland  
University of Puerto Rico  
University of Southern Maine  
University of South Florida  
University of Southern Vermont  
University of Tampa  
University of Texas  
University of Vermont  
Vassar College  
Wentworth Institute  
Western New England College  
Westfield State College  
Wheaton College  
Wheelock College  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
Worcester State College  
Yale University

## WPS joins districts throughout nation to build better leaders in the classroom

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

In Worcester, school officials believe in teamwork. "Together Everyone Achieves More."

Now, the city's educators are applying that model at the national level.

Joining other districts from Massachusetts, Ohio, Kentucky and Oregon, the Worcester Public Schools (WPS) has become involved in Harvard University's Executive Leadership Program for Educators (ExEL). The program, which began in 2006, is a multi-year collaborative effort of the Harvard Business School, the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the John F. Kennedy School of Government. It aims to help district and state superintendents and their teams bring high quality teaching and learning to scale. The program is funded in part by Intel Corporation.

"All three of the Harvard schools have had programs run through them that have worked with urban districts to try to improve conditions in those districts around teaching and learning," said Dr. Lee Teitel, director of ExEL. "So it's a collaboration of those schools on one hand — bringing a lot of rich, different ideas to the case — and the urban school districts and the state departments of education on the other."

ExEL is designed to establish a consensus on what high-quality teaching and learning is; align ideas at all levels of the organization; and assess progress through ongoing diagnostics. The program also calls to improve the relationships within each state between and among districts.

"Our goal is to first and foremost help the districts and state teams improve the instructional focus and coherence of their programs, through the different stratum that we use," said

Teitel. "Often, those groups have a common interest but also a lot of diverse issues that show up in terms of the regulatory side and accountability."

The WPS became involved with the program in July when its eight-member team, led by Superintendent Dr. James Caradonio, attended a week-long training at Harvard.

"We were really thrilled to work with Worcester," said Teitel. "Our goal is to work with the large urban districts and we saw it as a good opportunity to extend and deepen and help continue the improvement work that is already being done in the WPS."

The Worcester team joined representatives from Boston, Springfield and Chelsea and three urban districts from Oregon. In the summer of 2006, the first cohort of districts from Ohio and Kentucky joined the program. Teitel says he expects to be adding two more states in the next year.

Each of the districts will be involved in ExEL for three years. They will benefit from on-line learning and support, and an experienced coach who will provide regular on-site visits and telephone communication. One of the tasks that participants take on is learning how to use the Public Education Leadership Program (PELP) Coherence Framework. Designed for school systems with at least 30,000 enrolled students, PELP was established to help leaders drive improved performance. The teams will also participate in and help plan a state network that meets regularly to exchange ideas and share approaches and best practices.

"In three years, people can really get some traction in applying the models in their own districts and networks," said Teitel. "It's a model that will hopefully grow across districts."



### Burncoat students help ring in 2008

Students who participated in the Puppeteer Club have been part of an exciting and unique enrichment activity. They designed and created a variety of puppets that were used in the First Night Worcester celebration. Some of the tropical creations that were produced by using paper-maché and other everyday objects including giant flowers, suns and birds. The characters that were created look like something you might see in a Mardi Gras parade.



# For two more Worcester schools, there are enough hours in the day

Expanded Learning Time offers  
more time for enrichment courses

By RICH FAHEY

Students in two more Worcester schools are benefitting from the experience of a longer school day.

The City View Discovery School and the Chandler Elementary School were among the nine schools added to the state's Expanded Learning Time program in September. There are now 18 schools in eight districts across the state whose school days are at least 25 percent longer than normal. Worcester's Jacob Hiatt Magnet School was a charter member of the expanded day program when it began in September 2006.

Albert Ganem, principal at the City View for the past seven years, said the key to getting the program off to a good start was communication among himself, parents and staff.

"Right from the very beginning, we surveyed parents and staff to see what they felt about the idea," he said. "We kept them informed all along the way and we worked as a team with the administration to make sure everything went smoothly."

The school day runs from 8:20 a.m. to 4:10 p.m., with seven academic periods followed by an enrichment period from 3:15-4:10 each afternoon. The school's concentrations in science and math have led to some interesting enrichment courses, such as robotics and cooking.

"It can be almost anything as long as it has a math or science component," said Ganem. "For instance, in cooking class you do a lot of measuring of ingredients."

At Chandler, Principal Mark Berthiaume has structured the day a little differently, adding a 45-minute period before the start of the former school day and another 45-minute segment to the end of the day. As a result, students report at 7:45 a.m. and leave at 3:20 p.m.

"My biggest concern was finding more time for learning," said Berthiaume, who has been principal at Chandler for four years and before that spent 10 years at Lake View Elementary.

Students now spend 155 minutes a day in reading and English language arts; math is now 90 minutes, instead of 60. There is also expanded time for social studies and science. In addition, the 45 percent of students in the schools who are English Language Learners are spending more time with their ELL teacher and their regular classroom teacher. Special education students are also part of the equation when it comes to added instruction time. The school has 320 students.

"Our program cuts across the entire school population," said Berthiaume.

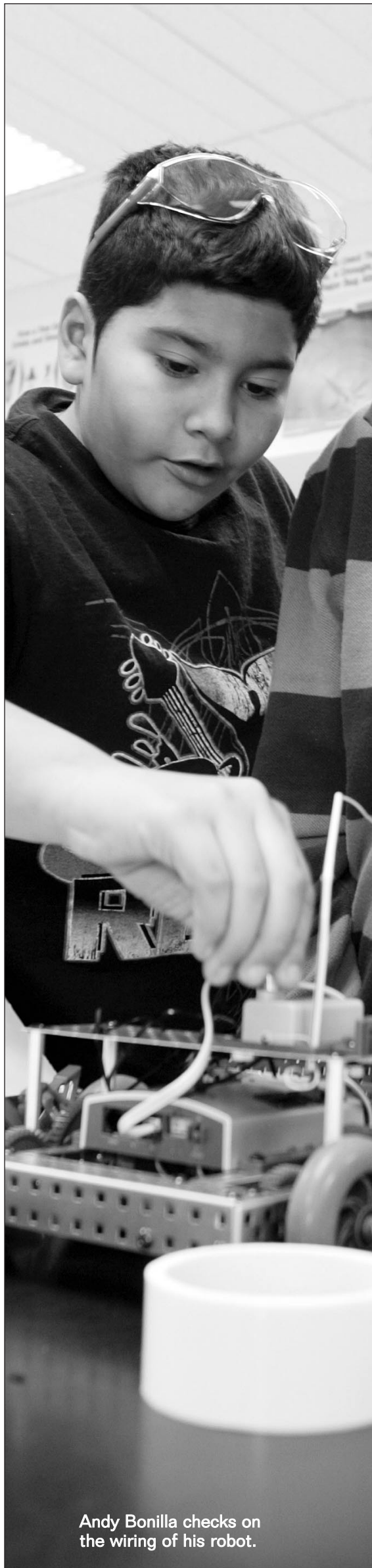
There are enrichment programs that are presented in conjunction with the Worcester YMCA, New England Fitness, and the Worcester Center for the Crafts. "These are places and programs most of my kids ordinarily wouldn't get to," he said. In addition, the school works on other projects with the Worcester County District Attorney's office, Clark University, and Junior Achievement.

The longer day has been an adjustment period for students, staff and principals, who tend to be the first to arrive and the last to leave. Berthiaume said his day routinely runs from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

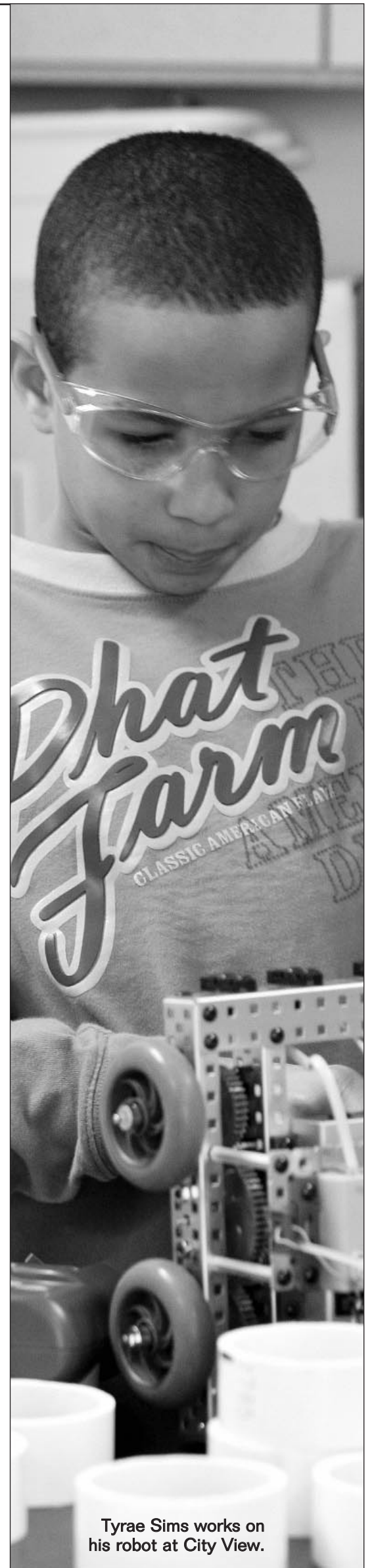
Ganem said the adjustment to the longer day has gone well for his students, although many kindergartners who were not only adjusting to a full day of school but an extended day were "pretty tired" by the end of the school day, and he had taken to riding the school bus with them to make sure they got home safely.

Ganem said he also drew heavily on the experiences of students at Jacob Hiatt and Principal Patricia Gaudette in setting up his program. "We weren't going to reinvent the wheel," he said. "There was a lot we could learn from them."

The support for Expanded Learning Time continues to grow. The Senate joined the House of Representatives and Gov. Deval Patrick in doubling funding for Massachusetts' ELT Initiative to \$13 million for this school year.



Andy Bonilla checks on  
the wiring of his robot.



Tyrae Sims works on  
his robot at City View.



# Exxon Mobil grant will fuel college partnerships

BY RICH FAHEY

Worcester Public Schools administrators are “very optimistic” that three of the district’s schools will receive grant money for a program that emphasizes school/college partnerships as a means of increasing the number of under-represented students who take — and pass — Advanced Placement (AP) tests.

Massachusetts is one of seven states nationwide that have been chosen to receive up to \$13.2 million over the next six years from the National Math and Science Initiative’s (NMSI) Advanced Placement® training and incentive program. NMSI is a new nonprofit funded primarily by Exxon Mobil Corporation, designed to help America maintain its global leadership position in technological innovation.

Fran Arena, director of curriculum and professional development for Worcester Public Schools, said the WPS applied for grants for three high schools — Doherty, North and Claremont Academy — and their feeder middle schools — Forest Grove, Worcester East and Claremont Academy, grades 7 and 8.

South High and Sullivan Middle School were not included in the

process because they are already receiving grants from the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program, which seeks to turn B- and C students into A students who take AP courses.

“Our ongoing partnership with WPI and the University of Massachusetts is one of the key factors,” said Arena, regarding the district’s desire to participate in NMSI. Arena added that WPS

“ We want the graduates of Massachusetts schools to be ready to compete for any job in the new economy.”

Gov. Deval L. Patrick

worked hard for months on the highly competitive grant applications.

If funded, the grants would provide for extensive professional development aimed at increasing the number of under-represented students in AP courses, and increasing the numbers of students who score a 3, 4 or 5 on those tests.

Arena said the pool of students taking the courses has increased significantly in recent years while the scores have not decreased, which is a positive sign. WPS Superintendent Dr. James Caradonio has made increasing the number of students taking AP courses a priority.

Launched in March 2007, NMSI was developed in response to the call for action by the National Academies’ 2005 blue-ribbon panel report on the need to improve American students’ performance in math and science coursework. Exxon Mobil Corporation announced its support for the initiative with a commitment of \$125 million. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation have also signed on to help fund the initiative.

Research demonstrates that students who have access to strong AP programs are more prepared to do college level work in math, science, and engineering.

The news that Massachusetts was one of the states selected for the grants was warmly greeted by state officials, including Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Murray, former Worcester mayor.

“This award is great news for the Commonwealth as we continue to move forward the governor’s vision to improve education throughout the state,” he said “We should continue to do all we can to ensure students at every level have the tools they need to reach their full potential.”

“We want the graduates of Massachusetts schools to be ready to compete for any job in the new economy,” said Gov. Deval Patrick. The AP training and incentive program will help us move that agenda forward.”



From left, Christina Roberts of the Junior League of Worcester and Jessica De Los Santos and Zenny Ramos of Hanover Insurance get coats ready for distribution to Worcester students.

## Coats for Kids project leaves students with warm feeling

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Winter is a time of falling snow and falling temperatures. For some children, it’s the joy of snowmen and sledding, candy canes and hot chocolate. For others, it’s a season too difficult to bear without the warmth of a coat.

In Worcester, that’s where Coats for Kids steps in.

The program provides children who attend Worcester Public Schools (WPS) with the necessary winter outerwear to go to school everyday ready to learn. Paula Harrity, WPS coordinator of volunteer services, initiated the program in 1988.

“I saw a lot of teachers using their own funds to provide for the students,” said Harrity. “Some children weren’t even coming to school because they didn’t have a coat. It was really a necessity.”

The program started out relatively small, with nearly 400 coats distributed in the first year. At the time, it was contained to the WPS, but has since grown to assist other organizations including Head Start, Worcester-area shelters and the Worcester Community Partnerships for Children. In 1999, due to the growing demands and workload, the WPS partnered with the Junior League of Worcester (JLW) — a non-profit

organization with the mission of improving and enriching the quality of life for women and children.

Since then, the number of children served has steadily grown. According to recent figures, 1,206 coats were distributed during the 2004-05 school year, 1,387 in 2005-06 and 1,489 in 2006-07.

The new coats, hats and mittens were purchased thanks to the generosity of the general public and major contributions from Hanover Insurance and the TJX Companies. Sears (Auburn location) and BJ’s Wholesale Club have also been active throughout the years and the Worcester Credit Union and the Worcester Education Development Foundation recently came on board. JLW members and WPS volunteers use the funds to purchase and distribute the outerwear.

According to Harrity, it’s the combined efforts, both large-scale and small, that keep the program running.

“We’ll have individuals sponsor a child and go out and do the shopping,” she said. “Then we’ll have organizations, businesses and colleges that will sponsor 10, 20, 40 kids. Every call makes a difference.”

Monetary donations can be sent to Junior League of Worcester, 42 Whitman Road, Worcester, MA 01609, with checks made out to: JLW/Coats for Kids.





# Community success story

Clark Street Developmental Learning Center students, from left, Monica Valente, Matthew Morse, and Tim Bibaud work hard during a lesson.



Sixth-grade students Jaderian Seay, left, and Brian Saal play basketball.

## Clark Street sets the standard for Worcester Community Schools

BY RICH FAHEY

The administrator of Worcester's Community Schools program says for the program to succeed, it requires a "buy-in" by administrators, students, parents and staff. When that happens, the results can be profound, said John Trainor, facilitator of the program.

Trainor pointed to the Clark Street Developmental Learning Center as a school that has grasped the concept and run with it. A total of nine schools on all three levels — high school, middle school and elementary — have active community school programs.

"All of our principals who have programs have bought into the concept, and Clark Street is a great example of that," said Trainor.

Principal Marie Morse said the Clark School community has come together around the concept, and it is paying dividends in the form of higher test scores. Recent aggregate MCAS scores have shown an increase of 6.1 points in math and 6.9 points in English Language Arts on the Composite Performance Index (CPI) scale.

The first hour of the after-school program held on Tuesdays and Thursdays is devoted to academics, including an MCAS review program in Grades 3-6. "The PTO has made copies for us of every MCAS test since 1999," said Morse.

The second hour is for enrichment: programs including chess, cooking, knitting, theater, and scrapbook-making. Programs are changed three times a year. About 120 students — 40 percent of the school's enrollment — are part of the program.

The school is also proud of its non-competitive Biddy Basketball

League for grades 1-6, with practices held on Tuesdays and Thursdays and games on Saturday. The program is funded by community sponsors.

Morse said the league is an incentive for positive behavior. Those who aren't making satisfactory progress in academics and behavior aren't eligible, but she hasn't had to rule anyone out yet.

Morse said having the parents around the school three times a week also opens the channels of communication between staff and parents. "We've had a decrease in behavior problems," the principal said. "The climate is very good. The feeling is that this is a safe, healthy place to be."

Morse said the community schools concept has taken root in many other ways, including a spaghetti dinner that drew 275 people; a pancake breakfast; a Halloween party; giving away 70 turkeys and 50 full dinners at Thanksgiving; Toys for Tots program at Christmas; and evening activities for adult members of the community.

Morse was appointed acting principal of Clark Street in January 2007 and assumed full-time status in June. She has been at the school for 15 years.

Trainor said that due to the combination of after-school programs available — the Canterbury Street Magnet School has a program from 6-8 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays, for example — it is possible for students to be in school and after-school programs from morning until 8 p.m. at least two days a week. In the summer, the Community Schools program kicks in from noon-7 p.m. each day, with the 21st Century School program occupying the morning hours.

He said research has shown that the hours between 4-8 p.m. are very important when it comes to the pitfalls that can befall unsupervised kids.

Community schools are funded with \$275,000 in the school budget. "I think it shows that the city believes in the program," he said. "In return, I think we give great value for the dollar."



# Lifetime achievement

## Harvey learns it's never too late to accomplish her goals

By BILL BROTHERTON

Janice Harvey is proof positive that age is no barrier to success. About to turn 51, she earned a college degree in May and is now teaching English at Worcester Technical High School.

It's been a lifelong goal.

"I'm completely and utterly a Worcester kid," she said. "I started at Harlow Street (School) as a 4-year-old, graduated from South High in 1974 ... and now I'm back, teaching English. Amazing."

It's been quite a journey.

Harvey was a single mom, at home raising her kids (Brooke Bottcher, now 26, and John Bottcher, 22) and doing fill-in jobs. She painted murals, worked for a florist and served as a window dresser for Lerner Shops. "But I was writing, too. Always writing," she said.

Eventually she got work as an instructional assistant in the school system, helping a special education teacher (Nancy Zaitchik) in the classroom.

She did this for 17 years. "I worked with autistic kids, gifted kids. I absolutely loved it," Harvey said.

One day, her principal, noticing her potential, said, "You're going to be 50 years old one day, no matter what. Do you want to hit 50 with a degree or don't you?"

She decided to go for it. "I set a goal. I would not allow

myself to turn 50 without having a degree."

Last May, eight years after she enrolled at Clark University, she had an English degree.

Harvey is well-known in Worcester for her colorful column and feature stories in *Worcester Magazine*. She has won many writing awards. "I've always loved to write. My brother, nine years older than me, is a playwright and English professor. As a kid, there was always a book in my hand. I would read a book after he finished with it."

One day, Harvey decided to send an article to *Worcester Magazine* about watching the special education kids get off the bus. "I submitted. They accepted. I couldn't believe it. I was a single mother, not a writer. What was I thinking?"

That column won an award, and it started a rare, privileged relationship with Worcester residents. "I get to mouth off on every issue, and have been twice a month for 11 years," she said, with a chuckle. "I'm not exactly a wallflower ... I was voted Most Argumentative in high school."

She says teaching is the most fun. "I'm teaching in this amazing, \$90 million jewel of a school. I'm teaching Shakespeare to kids who are in sheet metal ... but I teach how it applies to them. Yes, iambic pentameter is fine and good, but how does Shakespeare apply to these kids' lives, that's what I try to communicate."

Janice Harvey loves her job at Worcester Tech.



## Worcester elementary schools bring coaching into the classroom

By RICH FAHEY

When a sports team is victorious, the players often attribute it to superior coaching. Teachers in a large number of Worcester elementary schools now have special coaches for math, reading and writing, and administrators hope their efforts will bear fruit in higher test scores.

The 20 special instructors are federally-funded under the Title I program, said Joan Fitton, manager of governmental relations and elementary initiatives for Worcester Public Schools.

Each of the instructors works with teachers at two schools every other week. Schools are selected based on the percentage of students who qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch

under federal standards — any school at 40 percent or more is eligible — and the need to make improvements in test scores under the No Child Left Behind Act. In Worcester, 18 of 33 elementary schools have math coaches and 19 of 33 have reading and writing coaches.

"The coaches have been spending time getting up to speed on the latest data about the teachers they'll be coaching," Fitton said. "They like to get as complete a portrait of a school as possible."

The coaches have also been meeting with school principals to determine specific areas of need. The job description for a reading/writing coach is "to positively impact student reading/writing achievement at

assigned sites through support, training, coaching, and mentoring, in order to build school and teacher capacity by increasing teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge."

That means helping the teachers help their students. Assisting in implementing the program is Nassem Jaffir of Mass. Insight for Education, a non-profit group that is working to improve public school performance.

The reading and writing coaches attended special workshops last summer to prepare for the program and continue to receive weekly training. Those coaches who are not yet certified as reading specialists are receiving additional training toward their certification. All those wanting to remain with the program

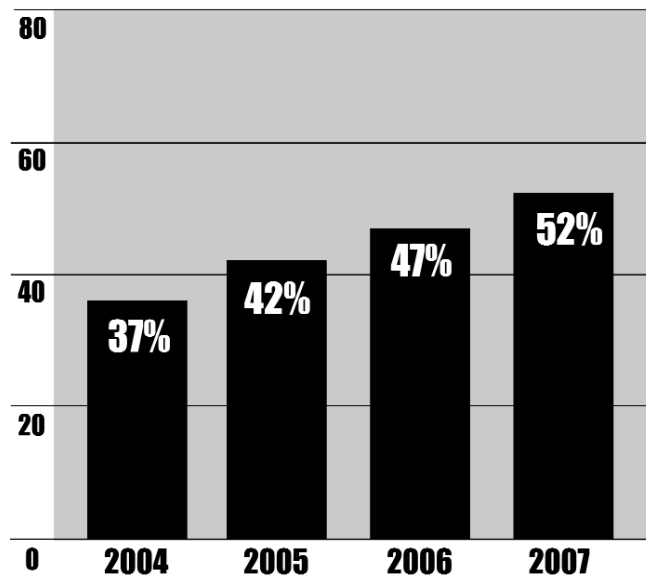
past this year must agree to fulfill state requirements to take and pass the appropriate Massachusetts Test for Educational Licensure (MTEL) by June 2008.

The math coaches also attended a workshop last spring, underwent 10 days of summer mathematics training, receive weekly training during school hours and are preparing for the Elementary Mathematics MTEL test. To stay in the program beyond this year, they must fulfill state requirements to take and pass the Mathematics MTEL test.

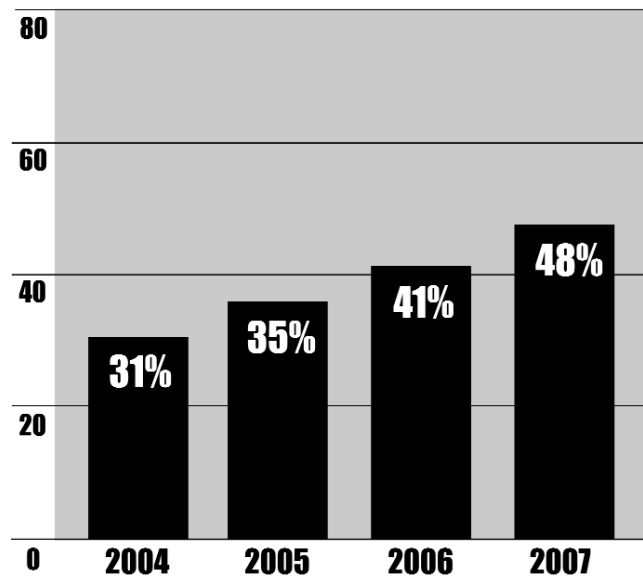
"We'll not only be looking to help students having problems; we want to raise the level of achievement for all students," said Fitton.

# MCAS scores on the rise in Worcester

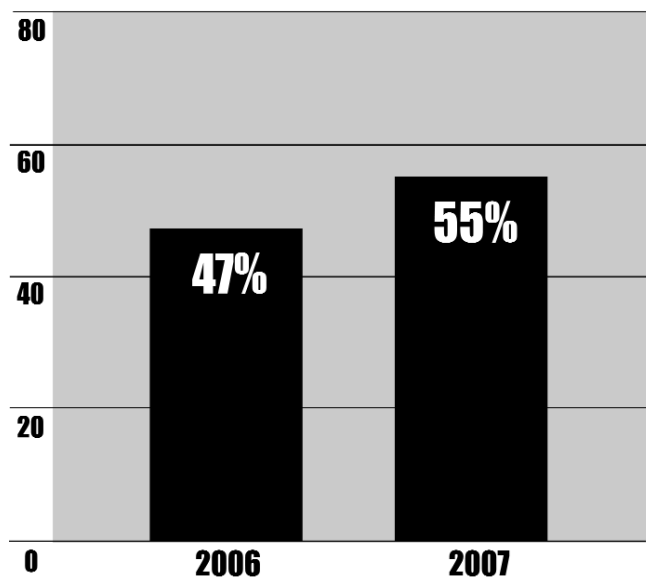
**Grade 10 - English Language Arts**  
Percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced



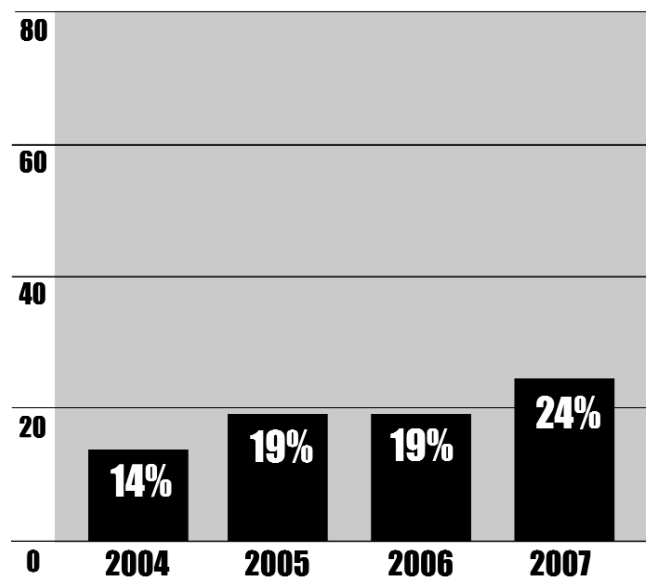
**Grade 10 - Mathematics**  
Percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced



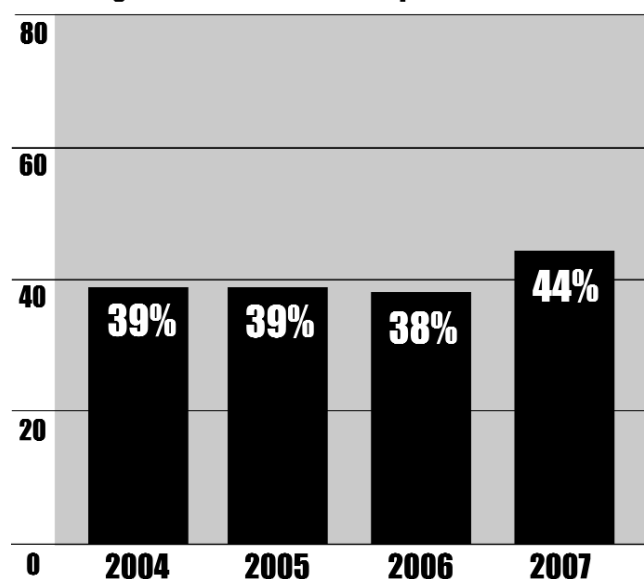
**Grade 8 - English Language Arts**  
Percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced



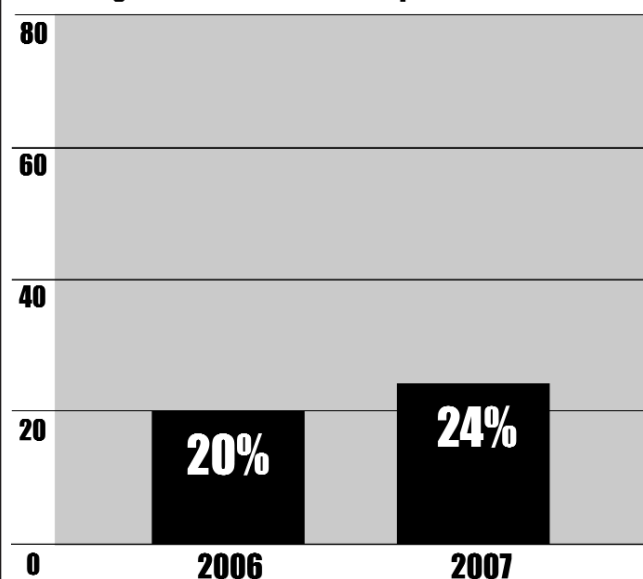
**Grade 8 - Mathematics**  
Percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced



**Grade 7 - English Language Arts**  
Percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced



**Grade 7 - Mathematics**  
Percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced



\* Grade 8 ELA and grade 7 math MCAS exams were taken for the first time in 2006.

## Middle schools take on an important task: MCAS

By RICH FAHEY

A Worcester Public Schools educator says there are several factors contributing to lagging test scores at the middle-school level, and why middle schoolers have special educational needs.

There's a lot going on in those years, and it has very little to do with math — or English Language Arts, for that matter.

"It has a lot to do with the developmental nature of human beings," said Deputy Superintendent Dr. Stephen E. Mills. "Scientists tell us that boys and girls 11, 12, 13 and 14 are the most complex human beings on earth. They're changing dramatically — physically, emotionally."

All those changes are, to say the least, distracting. And that's why educators are constantly revising and reworking middle school education. Mills said he was part of a group, for instance, that redesigned the town of Shrewsbury's junior high system 20 years ago.

In Worcester, a 29-member Middle School Task Force is working to bring up middle school MCAS scores in the area of English Language Arts and math under the No Child Left Behind Act, which requires intervention if schools don't meet certain guidelines for improvement.

All four of Worcester's comprehensive middle schools are in need of intervention. Eighty-one percent of the students in grade 8 were in the failing or needs improvement category in 2006 in math, but Worcester is far from the only district struggling. The figures are much the same in other urban systems and statewide, where 60 percent of grade 8 students fall into those two categories.

The task force, which first convened in 2005, includes all of the middle-school principals, who meet monthly to chart progress. One of the innovations the group has come up with is special diagnostic tests for all students at the end of grade 6, so teachers and administrators will have an understanding of students' academic strengths and weaknesses when they arrive in the fall.

Other accomplishments include:

- ◆ a creation of a seventh-grade literacy course to supplement the current ELA program. All seventh-graders now receive a double dose of English language arts;
- ◆ a double dose of Connected Math in the eighth grade as students prepare for the MCAS;
- ◆ a dramatic increase in both promotional and graduation requirements so that more students are prepared for the ninth grade;
- ◆ comprehensive professional-development initiatives for teachers in reading, writing and mathematics;
- ◆ structuring the middle schools so that teachers have common planning time built into their schedules.

"The literacy skills have to come before the math so students can read and truly understand the math problems," said Mills in explaining the task force's decision to get students up to speed in English skills before addressing needs in mathematics.



# Getting a Head Start

## Federal program helps Worcester's littlest learners prepare for kindergarten

By MEAGHAN CASEY

At sites across the city, Worcester's youngest learners are off to a healthy, happy and hopeful head start.

That's because they are part of Head Start, a federally funded early childhood program for students ages of 3-5. It focuses on school readiness skills that prepare children for kindergarten.

The program took root in Worcester in the early 1970s and at the time, Worcester was one of the first Head Start sites in the nation.

"It started as a much, much smaller eight-week summer program," said Rosemarie Franchi, Worcester's Head Start director. "But, as it blossomed and the funding increased, we were able to create a half-day program. As the years went on and society changed, more needed to be done to meet the needs of all families, especially working families. It became critical to offer longer hours."

Today, the program is still growing. Head Start sites in Worcester offer three options for families: half-day from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; full-day from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; or

extended day from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The program currently serves 770 children at five different locations. Of that number, 590 attend one of the full-day sessions, starting at either 7:30 or 8:00 a.m.

The extended hours were initiated this past August as a result of an Early Reading First grant. The grants are designed to help early childhood centers improve their programs, providing pre-school-age children with an early reading foundation. Worcester was one of only two sites in Massachusetts and only 32 nationwide to receive the grant funding.

Academically, Head Start students work in individual and small groups, while teachers roam the room observing, asking questions, giving help and providing children with opportunities for discussion.

"It's not the old cliché, clay and play," said Franchi. "We're actually preparing students in literacy, math and science, language skills and fitness. It's important for them to be exposed to quality literature and to have someone reading to them as early as possible. Standards have really increased and it's critical that these kids come to school and focus on real issues that will impact their educational success later on, even in kindergarten."

Franchi has been with the Head Start program for 31 years. She began as a teacher and has served as director for 22 years. She credits the commitment of Worcester Public Schools in making the program such a success.

"Worcester's Head Start is only one of two in Massachusetts operated through the public school system," she said. "We align with both the federal and state standards, and the school district's standards. Our classroom teachers and instructional assistants all have their degrees, which is unique and locally designed.

We're able to provide professional development opportunities for our teachers and we develop our curriculum jointly with kindergarten teachers in the WPS. In that way, we're able to offer continuity and a continuum of care for our students, even

after they leave Head Start."

In addition to fostering the children's academic foundation, the program attempts to actively involve parents in the process.

"The overall goals are to enhance a child's growth and development through activities and to strengthen families," said Franchi. "Parents are the primary educators of their children, so it's important for them to be involved and commit to that."

Each Head Start Center has a family center staffed by a family liaison. The liaison works with families to provide ongoing workshops focusing on literacy, nutrition, health and wellness concerns, special needs, and other topics including personal finance and housing. The centers also offer adult education, including GED and ESL classes, on-site days and evenings. Transportation and childcare are provided.

Another important component of Head Start is the social, health, dental and nutritional services offered. Each center has at minimum one full-time nurse available to work with both children and families. A registered dietitian provides individual nutritional counseling and two registered dental hygienists screen children for any dental concerns. The program also provides children with both breakfast and lunch daily.

"All of these pieces, whether it's nutrition, a sound home environment or good oral health, contribute to a child's educational process," said Franchi.

To qualify for Head Start, families must meet income limits established by the federal government. Residents of Worcester should call the Head Start office at 508-799-3608 or 508-799-3254 to apply.



Top, Head Start teacher Lori Silverman works with students; above, Lourdes Zuniga eats breakfast at the Head Start program in the former Mill Swan Elementary School; at right, Osborne Konadu pours himself orange juice.



Above, Head Start volunteer Tig Richardson works with Bradley Rango; at right, Stephanie Silva, left, and Lecani Gonzalez play with blocks and cups during class.



Teacher Melissa Miller works with Cody Currie.



# Six steps to a trouble-free playground

By MEAGHAN CASEY

The playground: a child's oasis for fun and games. In Worcester, school officials are taking steps to ensure that safety is in the mix as well.

The district is following new procedures based on Dr. Curt Hinson's "Six Steps to a Trouble-free Playground." Hinson's outlook is that recess is a time for children to learn through movement, play and social interaction.

"It looked like a great program, and one that would fit into our philosophy," said Colleen O'Brien, director of health, physical education and athletics for Worcester Public Schools. "The goal is to limit, or at least lessen, injuries and any physical or verbal assaults and to teach kids self-responsibility."

The steps are as follows:

1. Teach social skills.
2. Change the games to make them more developmentally appropriate.
3. Change the perception of recess.
4. Move away from threats, punishments, consequences and rewards.
5. Hold a "Game Day."
6. Use recess as a topic for writing and discussion.

The WPS trained all physical education teachers at the elementary school level and brought in new games for students with funding from the Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant. Teachers are organizing inclusive-style activities to ensure that all students are participating in and making the most out of recess.

"Recess shouldn't just be down time," said O'Brien. "We're making it more structured. We want to keep all kids active and engaged."

The plan also establishes levels of behavior, which teaches students that not participating, not following directions, arguing, hitting or displaying a poor attitude is unacceptable. The levels allow children to choose how they wish to act, which is the first step in encouraging responsible behavior and self-control.



Elm Park School students, from left, Erimma Anya, Edeit Montalvo, and Glenda Silva enjoy the playground.

By MEAGHAN CASEY

With confidence, D'Angelo Madera stated his goals: to earn his bachelor's degree in criminal justice and become a state trooper.



D'Angelo Madera

The South High Community School senior is determined to accomplish just that, thanks to his experience in the Junior Achievement (JA) Academy. Developed in the spring of 2007, JA Academy is an after-school mentoring program for local high school students that blends financial literacy and workforce awareness programs with college familiarization and preparation. The Worcester model has been nationally recognized by JA Worldwide as the 2007 recipient of the prestigious MetLife Entrepreneurial Award.

Worcester Public Schools Superintendent Dr. James A. Caradonio said the academy encapsulates what he calls the new three Rs — rigor, relevance and relationship.

"We've got to connect the dots," he said. "The 'because we said so' school doesn't work. Linking with outside partners, like the colleges and businesses involved in this initiative, helps accomplish these goals."

Through the program, students are transported to college campuses for 13 afternoon visits each year. During that time,

## No small achievement: Students make college connection



Graduates of the JA Academy gathered to listen to fellow member D'Angelo Madera speak about his college and career aspirations.

local business volunteers deliver JA programs, and faculty, staff and student leaders from the colleges coordinate admissions and financial aid workshops, along with presentations on issues such as residential life, clubs, activities and academic majors offered at the college.

"We got to go to a college, interact with the students and professors there and get a heads-up about what college is really like," said Madera. "We went over what we want to achieve and how we're going to do it. It's like going to pre-school before kindergarten. You

need that in-between, that time to prep yourself for what's ahead."

"Being on a college campus is wonderful," said South High Principal Maureen Ciccone. "All of the students who participated were first-generation college hopefuls and I think every single one that went through the program was convinced they could go to college."

Madera plans to enroll in college in the fall and is applying to Worcester State College — the site that hosted the South High students.

"I wasn't really considering Worcester State

before, but after being there on campus for two years, it feels like home," he said. "I'm already used to it and feel comfortable there."

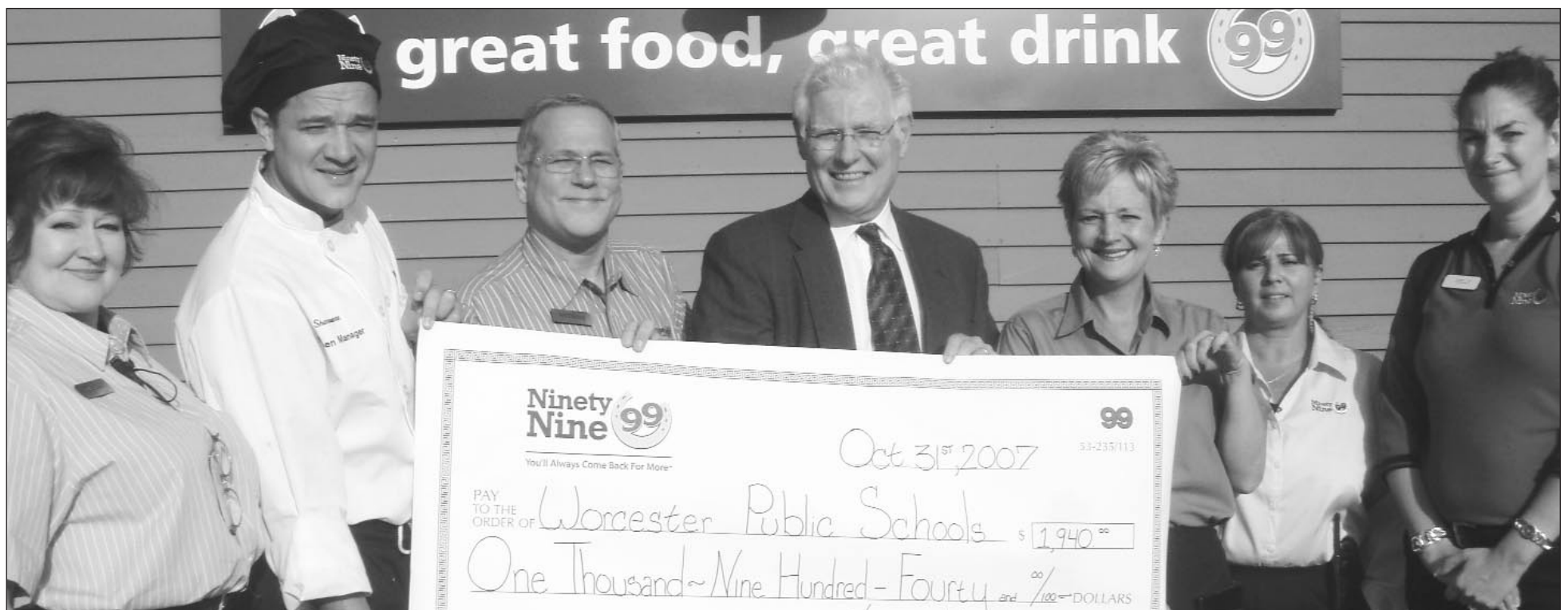
South High and Burncoat High piloted the JA Academy last spring. South partnered with EBS Foran Insurance at Worcester State and Burncoat partnered with the Hanover Insurance Group at Assumption College.

"Our partnership with South High School has been a wonderful experience not only for the students but for our faculty and staff as well," said Janelle C. Ashley, president of Worcester State College. "Everyone's enthusiasm, energy and creativity have contributed to making these sessions so successful."

In addition to Madera, 17 other South High students graduated from the JA Academy in November. Each student who successfully completed the program received one elective credit from the WPS; certification that they completed the pre-employment training course Success Skills for participation in the YouthWorks summer employment program; and an opportunity to compete for JA college scholarships.

This spring, a new crop of juniors will enroll in the program. The program is also expanding to three other WPS high schools. North High School students will be hosted by the College of the Holy Cross, Doherty High School will partner with UPS at Anna Maria College and Worcester Technical High School will partner with Stonebridge at Quinsigamond Community College.





From left, Ninety Nine supervisor Deborah Fitzgibbons, kitchen manager Shamaronne Lopes, General Managing Partner Anthony DeCiccio, Superintendent of Schools Dr. James A. Caradonio, Ninety Nine server Susan Bergeron, hostess Maryanne Army and bartender Kelly Eastwood.

# Schools have 99 reasons to be grateful

BY RICH FAHEY

When three Ninety Nine Restaurants in Worcester had “yard sales,” one of the big winners was Worcester Public Schools.

The restaurants have been undergoing renovations, and as part of that process have been auctioning off the local memorabilia that are a staple of the restaurants. Some 70 restaurants have already conducted silent auctions in the “Dressed to the Nines” program, raising about \$240,000 to date, with the final total expected to be about \$500,000.

The three Worcester restaurants have presented checks for a total of almost \$12,000 to the Worcester Educational Development Foundation (WEDF). The restaurants are also supporting the Worcester Boys & Girls Club.

Anthony DeCiccio is the managing general partner of the Ninety Nine restaurant in southwest Worcester, on Route 20. DeCiccio, whose family was a mainstay of the Worcester restaurant scene with the Cypress Room Restaurant, said it is important for those who earn their living from people in the community to give back.

“This is a family-oriented business and many of these students are our customers,” said DeCiccio, who has been a manager in Worcester for three years and has been with the company for nine years.

Some of the memorabilia depicted well-known area landmarks such as St. Vincent’s Hospital, the Lake Quinsigamond area, or streetscapes of famous intersections such as Main and Front streets. Plaques from old-time Worcester businesses also drew a lot of interest.

DeCiccio said he put 200 pieces of memorabilia out to bid, and about 190 were bid on.

Christine Kinch, a spokesperson for the restaurant chain, said the company also typically presents checks to local groups when they enter a new market.

Stephen Mills, deputy superintendent of Worcester Public Schools, is the founder and president of the WEDF. The group, formed in summer 2005, has already raised funds for

the \$2 million renovation of Foley Stadium and has raised an additional \$500,000 in a variety of other ways, including payroll deductions and a musical program at Mechanics Hall that raises about \$30,000 a year.

The WEDF also awards 20 “mini-grants” worth \$500 each twice a year to support teachers in offering special projects tied to their curriculum. The foundation not only works to support academic programs, but also areas such as the performing arts. WEDF has also provided scholarships and awards for students and teachers, acquired and repaired

musical instruments and funded college preparation programs.

“When I heard we were getting some money from the restaurants from memorabilia they had sold, I thought it might be for a few hundred dollars,” said Mills. “I was very pleasantly surprised to find out the amounts of the checks we were getting.”

*Worcester property owners who wish to contribute to the WEDF will find a box on their real estate bill to check off to contribute.*



From left, Superintendent Dr. James Caradonio, Ninety Nine server Deb Saksa, bartender Tricia Broadard, hostess Denise Ingram, server Mellissa Bruso, server Corey Morris and General Managing Partner Don Prescott.



# Twins score 800 on math SAT

PERFECTION: from Page 1

set a goal and reached it.

“To be honest, we didn’t do a lot of preparation,” said Sabbir. “We took classes at MIT, more for the English section. Math just comes naturally to us.”

Captains of South High’s math team, the twins have been active mathletes for four years. They credit their math team training as a factor in their testing success.

“The math team questions are actually harder and more involved than the SATs, so we were prepared in that sense,” said Soaib.

They also credit their long-standing interest in the subject.

“The best thing about math is that it doesn’t change,” said Soaib. “Once you know a concept, it carries through. You can’t really forget it because you constantly keep using it.”

Born in Bangladesh, the boys moved to the U.S. at age 2.

“Our family came for a better life and more opportunities,” said Sabbir.

In Worcester, they attended Heard Street Elementary and Sullivan Middle School. In seventh grade, they enrolled in the Goddard Scholars Magnet Program — an accelerated program at South High, in collaboration with Sullivan Middle and Clark University, in which mathematics and science courses are strongly emphasized.

“It was a really good start,” said Soaib. “We were pretty focused on school work.”

The two admit their high school journey was not always so goal-oriented, but are happy to be where they are today.

“It was a huge transition from ninth grade to this point,” said Sabbir. “I guess we grew up.”

“When the PSATs revealed how truly gifted these brothers

were, teachers started demanding more,” said South High Principal Maureen Ciccone, explaining that the boys earned 76 out of 80 possible points on that exam.

“We had the same score and I think we even got the same question wrong,” said Sabbir, marveling at their similarities.

The similarities extend beyond the classroom as well. The boys are just as

“The best thing about math is that it doesn’t change. Once you know a concept, it carries through. You can’t really forget it because you constantly keep using it.”

”

Soaib Rashid

in sync in their interests and extra-curricula activities. Both tutor elementary school students in math, are co-captains of the indoor track team, run outdoor track and played football one year. They are also both involved in a band outside of school. Sabbir plays the drums; Soaib, the guitar.

Despite their likeness to one another, the twins’ relationship is not a competitive one.

“It’s a cooperative competition,” said Sabbir. “We work with each other, not against each other.”

The Rashids’ natural interest in math and science seems to run in the family. Their mother, Jahanara Begum, was studying chemistry in Bangladesh before coming to the U.S., and now tutors students at Worcester State College. Their sister, Sabrina, graduated from South High in 2005. Also a Goddard Scholar, Sabrina is studying business at UMass Amherst.

As for college, the twins agree they want to pursue an engineering degree at a Boston school. They are applying to four of the same schools and admit it is likely they will begin that chapter of their lives side-by-side.



South High School ESL teacher Andrea Safford works with Cristian Matos, left, and Beatriz Matos.

## South High teacher completes remarkable turnaround

SAFFORD: from Page 1

school career before switching to the alternative program at the GCC in 1997.

The Gerald Creamer Center is an alternative learning center dedicated to giving students a second chance at completing their high school education. Connected to the School Age Mothers (SAM) program, which provides child care and parenting classes, the school holds a shorter day that starts later and offers smaller classes allowing students to receive more individual attention. The school’s mission is to get floundering students back on track, both as students and as future contributing citizens.

“I had my family and the many teachers at the CSC behind me this whole way,” said Safford. “There were teachers there who really helped me and pushed me when they saw that I wasn’t living up to my potential. I have had a lot of incredible support.”

After her junior year at the CSC, Safford could have returned to South High or stayed on, and with the encouragement of several teachers she joined a program that allowed her to take her final classes at Quinsigamond Community College, tuition-free.

“At Quinsigamond I realized I could do college work,” said Safford. “Going to college did not seem so far-fetched.”

She earned her associate degree in liberal arts and then transferred to Clark University where she earned a degree in international development, all the while working part time at Worcester’s Family Health Center as a medical assistant. After graduation Safford began working as a GED instructor and it was in this setting that she decided to pursue a career in education full-time, enrolling at Cambridge College where she earned her master’s in education, focusing specifically on

ESL.

“I realized that in my GED classes, 75 percent of my students were English language learners. I had already been using some of the techniques that were now being discussed in my classes and, importantly, I had really enjoyed working with these students. It was a good fit,” she said.

So it is that for Safford, life has come full circle. She now teaches ESL students at the school where she first began her high school career and is very involved in all aspects of the school, attending athletic contests and serving as one of two teachers who run the school’s Black Student Union.

“Teaching ESL can be very challenging, but the rewards are great. My students are very motivated to learn English. They work really hard, and I do my best to create a safe environment where they can make mistakes, knowing those are a critical part of the learning process,” said Safford.

There is a solidified framework Safford and other ESL teachers employ to teach students. Safford tailors lessons to suit individual students’ needs. Finally, she sees herself as her students’ teacher, but also their advocate.

“I spend a lot of time advocating for my students and helping them to navigate school bureaucracy to get what they need. I also encourage them to participate in other activities,” she said.

At the Gerald Creamer Center, the staff still remember Safford.

“While she was here,” said David Juneau, now the center’s lead teacher, “Andrea was a very respected and well liked person who worked hard and was committed to success. She has proven that if you have goals and you consistently work hard you can surpass your own expectations. We’re very, very proud of her.”



# From Iceland to Worcester

## Foreign educators learn about Worcester's PBIS success

By MEAGHAN CASEY

Though separated by hundreds of miles of the Atlantic Ocean, a group of visitors from Iceland proved there are no boundaries when it comes to learning.

The group, which included 47 educators from the Njardvikur School in Reykjanes, visited Worcester in October. They were interested in finding out about Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) implementation in Worcester Public Schools.

The WPS prepared a panel discussion for the Icelandic educators, held at Worcester Technical High School, with representatives from Worcester East Middle School, Elm Park, Chandler Magnet and Vernon Hill schools. The discussion focused on successful PBIS strategies used in each school, as well as challenges that the PBIS teams have faced.

"The day was organized with two specific goals in minds," said Martha Wally, PBIS coordinator for the WPS. "One, to tell them how we implement PBIS at the universal and secondary levels (of PBIS), and two, to give them an overview of our wrap-around intervention with our students with chronic and intense behavior problems."

PBIS was initiated in the WPS in 2003. Implementation is now taking place in 18 elementary schools, five middle schools and two alternative programs. According to Wally, establishing a school-wide system of PBIS promotes positive learning environments in schools. The system helps personnel feel more confident in their ability to support all students in achieving high academic and behavioral standards.

The PBIS approach is three-fold. Primary prevention focuses on the direct teaching of

behavioral expectations. The emphasis is on preventing problem behavior from occurring. At the secondary level, the focus is on reducing the numbers of cases of problem behavior in students who require a greater level of support. Intervention at this level includes social-skills training, mentoring, check-and-connect homework clubs and anti-bullying programs. At the tertiary level, an individualized approach is necessary and family involvement is encouraged.

As part of the panel discussion, Dr. Anthony Irsfeld from the University of Massachusetts Medical School's Communities of Care spoke about the basic philosophy of wrap-around social services and how to engage schools and families in working together for improved outcomes for challenging students.

"We've been pleased with the attention, nationally and internationally, that we've received regarding district level implementation," said Wally. "We're often asked to present at national conferences and are often contacted by other districts to provide more information about how we train and support our schools. In Worcester, we've had great support from the administrative team to bring PBIS to any school in the district that requests training and technical assistance."

Wally was contacted by the Iceland group about a three-day New England tour. The attendees represented one of five schools in Reykjanes and one that serves students ages 6 to 16. In addition to Worcester, Wally arranged for them to visit the May Institute and talk to a New Hampshire leadership team that implemented PBIS as a statewide initiative.



From top to bottom: Worcester Public Schools Superintendent Dr. James Caradonio addresses Icelandic teachers about the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in the Worcester Public Schools; visiting teachers from Iceland Gudridur Vilbertdottir, left, and Thorunn Magnúsdóttir read the *Worcester Educator* prior to the presentation; Dr. Anthony Irsfeld of Central Massachusetts Communities of Care speaks about his work in the PBIS program.

Visiting Icelandic teachers, from left, Gudny Karlsdóttir, Holmfríður Karlsdóttir, and Anna Hulda Einaríðsdóttir listen during the PBIS presentation.



# WORCESTER DIRECTORY SCHOOLS

## North Quadrant

Donald Kelley, Quadrant Manager  
(508) 799-3221

### High school

**North High School**  
Dave Ellworthy, Principal  
150 Harrington Way, Worcester 01604  
(508) 799-3370

### Middle school

**Worcester East Middle School**  
Rose Dawkins, Principal  
420 Grafton St., Worcester 01604  
(508) 799-3430

### Elementary schools

**Belmont Street Community School**  
Dr. Susan Proulx, Principal  
170 Belmont St., Worcester 01605  
(508) 799-3588

**City View School**  
Albert Ganem, Principal  
80 Prospect St., Worcester 01605  
(508) 799-3670

**Grafton Street School**  
MaryAnn Binkoski, Principal  
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**Lake View School**  
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**Rice Square School**  
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**Roosevelt School**  
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**Union Hill School**  
Denise Bahosh, Principal  
1 Chapin St., Worcester 01604  
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## South Quadrant

Margaret Venditti, Quadrant Manager  
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### High schools

**Claremont Academy**  
June Eressy, Principal  
15 Claremont St., Worcester 01610  
(508) 799-3077

**Comprehensive Skills Center**  
Timothy Whalen, Coordinator  
120 Granite St., Worcester 01604  
(508) 799-3476

**South High School**  
Maureen Ciccone, Principal  
170 Apricot St., Worcester 01603  
(508) 799-3325

**University Park Campus School**  
June Eressy, Principal  
12 Freeland St., Worcester 01603  
(508) 799-3591

**Worcester Alternative School**  
Dr. Michael O’Neil, Coordinator  
22 Waverly St., Worcester 01604  
(508) 799-3245

### Middle school

**Sullivan Middle School**  
Robert Jennings, Principal  
140 Apricot St., Worcester 01603  
(508) 799-3350

### Elementary schools

**Canterbury Street Magnet School**  
Elizabeth Army, Principal  
129 Canterbury St., Worcester 01603  
(508) 799-3484

**Columbus Park Preparatory Academy**  
Dr. Dolores Gribouski, Principal  
75 Lovell St., Worcester 01603  
(508) 799-3490

**Gates Lane School**  
Bette Carr, Principal  
1238 Main St., Worcester 01603  
(508) 799-3488

**Goddard School**  
Marion Guerra, Principal  
14 Richards St., Worcester 01603  
(508) 799-3594

**Heard Street School**  
Thomas Brindisi, Principal  
200 Heard St., Worcester 01603  
(508) 799-3525

**Quinsigamond School**  
Debbie Mitchell, Principal  
14 Blackstone River Rd., Worcester 01607  
(508) 799-3502

**Vernon Hill School**  
Joanna Bowolick, Principal  
211 Providence St., Worcester 01607  
(508) 799-3630

**Woodland Academy**  
Patricia E. Padilla, Principal  
15 Claremont St., Worcester 01610  
(508) 799-3557

## Burncoat Quadrant

Margaret Venditti, Quadrant Manager (508) 799-3264

### High school

**Burncoat High School**  
William Foley, Acting Principal  
179 Burncoat St., Worcester 01606  
(508) 799-3300

### Middle school

**Burncoat Middle School**  
Lisa Houlihan, Principal  
135 Burncoat St., Worcester 01606  
(508) 799-3390

### Elementary schools

**Burncoat Street Preparatory School**  
Ann Swenson, Principal  
526 Burncoat St., Worcester 01606  
(508) 799-3537

**Clark Street Developmental Learning Center**  
Marie Morse, Principal  
280 Clark St., Worcester 01606  
(508) 799-3545

**Lincoln Street School**  
Mary Beth Pulsifer, Acting Principal  
549 Lincoln St., Worcester 01605  
(508) 799-3504

**McGrath Elementary School**  
Dr. Deborah Sinkis, Principal  
493 Grove St., Worcester 01605  
(508) 799-3584

**Norrback Avenue School**  
Deborah Daley, Acting Principal  
44 Malden St., Worcester 01606  
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**Thorndyke Road School**  
Elaine Zingarelli, Principal  
30 Thorndyke Road, Worcester 01606  
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**Wawecus Road School**  
Paula Proctor, Principal  
20 Wawecus Road, Worcester 01605  
(508) 799-3527

**Worcester Arts Magnet School**  
Susan O’Neil, Principal  
15 St. Nicholas Ave., Worcester 01606  
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## Doherty Quadrant

Donald Kelley, Quadrant Manager  
(508) 799-3221

### High school

**Doherty Memorial High School**  
Sally Maloney, Principal  
299 Highland St., Worcester 01602  
(508) 799-3270

### Middle school

**Forest Grove Middle School**  
Maureen McCullough, Principal  
495 Grove St., Worcester 01605  
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### Elementary schools

**Chandler Magnet School**  
Ivonne Perez, Principal  
525 Chandler St., Worcester 01602  
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**Chandler Street Elementary School**  
Mark Berthiaume, Principal  
114 Chandler St., Worcester 01609  
(508) 799-3572

**Elm Park Community School**  
Ruthann Melancon, Principal  
23 N. Ashland St., Worcester 01609  
(508) 799-3568

**Flagg Street School**  
Dr. Sheila Graham, Principal  
115 Flagg St., Worcester 01602  
(508) 799-3522

**Jacob Hiatt Magnet School**  
Patricia Gaudette, Principal  
772 Main St., Worcester 01610  
(508) 799-3601

**May Street School**  
Dr. Karrie Allen, Principal  
265 May St., Worcester 01602  
(508) 799-3520

**Midland Street School**  
Patricia McCullough, Principal  
18 Midland St., Worcester 01602  
(508) 799-3548

**Nelson Place School**  
Malachi Kelley, Principal  
35 Nelson Place, Worcester 01605  
(508) 799-3506

**Tatnuck Magnet School**  
Thomas Pappas, Principal  
1083 Pleasant St., Worcester 01602  
(508) 799-3554

**West Tatnuck School**  
Steven Soldi, Principal  
300 Mower St., Worcester 01602  
(508) 799-3596

## Technical

Donald Kelley  
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**Worcester Technical High School**  
Sheila Frias, Principal  
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Elementary Schools

Belmont Community School

Belmont Street Community School is a busy place this year. In addition to engaging in project activities aimed at strengthening math and English language arts skills, students in the 21st Century After-School Program benefit from lessons presented by representatives from the Worcester Art Museum, Berg Florists, and East West Karate. Belmont's chorus has a full schedule, including a holiday performance at Betty Price Park and singing the national anthem at a Worcester Sharks game. A highlight of the school's community partnerships are monthly celebrations at Seabury Heights, at which Belmont Students of the Month are treated to baked goods and craft activities, prepared by the residents.

Canterbury Street Magnet School

Canterbury Street Magnet School is beginning a school-wide focus on bullying. Working with Terry Fontaine, adjustment counselor, and joining with PBIS internal coach Dee Dee Naughton, the staff addresses monthly themes on good citizenship with students.

Chandler Magnet School

Each autumn the students and staff at Chandler Magnet invite grandparents to the school for the annual Grandparents' Day. Students in grades K-6 along with their grandparents took part in various activities including math games, an arts and craft activity and journal writing. Those students and their grandparents who attended were photographed. A picture was sent home in the special frame that the grandparent and child put together and pictures were posted on the school bulletin board. When the activities were finished, students and grandparents went to the cafeteria for refreshments and more picture taking.

Columbus Park

Based on their keen interest in government, politics and current events, Eltjon Skendaj and Kristi Xhelili from Columbus Park School were selected to participate in the 2008 People to People World Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C. They will spend the April vacation working with students from across the U.S. and around the world to study and discuss the qualities of leadership. All leadership forum participants will also receive training from members of the U.S. Congress and other government agencies, tour Williamsburg and visit national landmarks in the D.C. area.

Elm Park

Elm Park Community School has implemented the Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum, Steps to Respect Bullying Prevention Curriculum, Positive Behavioral Intervention System (PBIS) and the incentive of Spirit Club for those students who reach the high achieving benchmarks established by the three programs and school expectations. This is a school community and family effort that occurs on a monthly basis.

Flagg Street

On the evening of Nov. 7, Flagg Street School was experiencing a blizzard — a blizzard of books, that is. Literacy Night was in full swing. Guest readers included members of the Worcester Sharks, Worcester Tornadoes, School Committee, City Council, and parents. All were gathered to celebrate literacy.

Gates Lane School

Gates Lane School is celebrating the accomplishment grade 4 student Leah Simulis, who had a piece of artwork entitled "Catching Geckos" selected to represent Massachusetts in the Very Special Art's ArtLink program in the

CultureScope exhibition in Washington, D.C. "Catching Geckos" has been selected by the Very Special Arts editorial review committee to be featured in the VSA 2008 calendar for the month of June. Besides being available to the general public, copies of the calendar are presented to members of the U.S. Congress.

Grafton Street School

The mission at Grafton Street School is to create a strong partnership among parents, teachers, students and the greater community. Joanne Warren Dance Studio, the Worcester Art Museum and the YWCA collaborate with Grafton Street on "after hours" through the 21st Century Community Learning Program. Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, Quinsigamond Community College Dental Clinic, Holy Cross College and Junior Achievement enrich daily activities by providing volunteers and special programs. For the second year Grafton Street piloted an afternoon of parent conferences and classroom visits instead of the traditional Know Your Schools Night.

Heard Street School

Music teacher Aaron Mott and the fifth- and sixth-grade chorus have been very active in the community this year. On Sept. 11 and Veteran's Day they provided a nice touch with patriotic songs. They helped get the crowd into the holiday spirit with their singing at the tree lighting ceremony in Webster Square on Dec. 5 and also sang carols at the Millbury Credit Union, Webster Square branch, on Dec. 14.

Jacob Hiatt Magnet School

Jacob Hiatt Magnet Schools' Expanded Learning Time initiative was well represented at the Expanded Learning Time Summit at UMass Boston on Nov. 30, 2007. Jacob Hiatt was one of 10 schools in five cities across the state to receive a Massachusetts Department of Education Expanded Learning Time grant in the 2006-07 school year and it continues in its second year of implementation.

Lincoln Street School

Lincoln Street School started the Book Buddies Program. Every Wednesday, intermediate students "buddy up" with primary students to share a book. This builds reading fluency and a love of books while encouraging relationships across the grade levels. Even our most academically challenged readers share picture books with our pre-school. Students look forward to being with their buddies each week.

May Street School

May Street School continues implementation of key WPS initiatives, while targeting additional focus on the area of instruction. In collaboration with Worcester Arts Magnet, all staff members have embarked on a year-long professional development program with Research for Better Teaching (RBT), with emphasis on three key instructional strategies. Faculty members meet 2-3 times each month with a consultant and utilize faculty meetings to reinforce the successful implementation of such strategies within the context of the classroom.

Midland Street School

Midland Street School again is partnering with the Big Brother/Big Sister Association and the National Honor Society at Doherty High School to offer individual math tutoring and mentoring to fourth, fifth and sixth grades. The Midland students are paired with students from Doherty High for an hour after school each Wednesday afternoon.

Nelson Place

Nelson Place has a variety of positive programs and events taking place within the school. Meteorologist A.J.



Burnett from Fox 25 News visited grade 4. Engineering is Elementary is being implemented in grade 4. Mrs. Cleary was trained at WPI from a grant provided through Intel. And, a veteran's breakfast was held in November. All students were encouraged to invite any family member that served in the military.

Norrback School

Norrback Avenue School is excited to have received a grant from the Saint-Gobain Corporation which will allow the school to bring in a professional storyteller and improvisational theatre and movement specialist to present and conduct literacy sessions for all students, as well as provide a parent literacy evening. These storytelling sessions will be used as a bridge to improve writing through demonstration and discussion.

Quinsigamond School

The students at Quinsigamond School are reading at home in record numbers thanks to the Accelerated Reader program. Youngsters in grades 1-6 sign out books on a regular basis and are expected to read for 20 to 30 minutes each evening. After completing their books, they take the accompanying Accelerated Reader comprehension test online and receive their test scores immediately. The instant feedback generated by these computerized assessments has proven to be very motivating for the children.

Rice Square

Rice Square School is working to implement a new Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) system. All staff at Rice Square School are on board and working together to bring this program to the school and students. The staff believes that if the components of PBIS such as respect, responsibility, cooperation, and other highly valued character traits are taught and encouraged, students will have a school climate conducive to academic and individual success where individual differences are valued rather than criticized.

Roosevelt School

Through PBIS, Roosevelt School is committed to creating a positive, safe and consistent school environment. This year the focus is on team-building activities. School celebrations have incorporated activities where classes work together on a monthly project. In October each class worked together to create a scarecrow. Every class was able to go out and view the scarecrows and participate in a fall celebration. In November, each class ran together in the Turkey Trot. The team activity for December was scheduled to be snow sculpting.

Tatnuck School

At Tatnuck Magnet School each month the recipients of Student of the Month are recognized at the Breakfast with the Principal celebration. The students, parents and siblings are treated to an assortment of food and drink. The Tatnuck Parent Association makes this family-involvement activity possible through their generosity and support.

Thorndyke School

Thorndyke Road School believes that parent involvement is a key component to a successful educational experience for students. One of the most effective and unique parent involvement programs at the school is the Kindergarten Parents' Group. Reaching out to parents as their

children enter school builds a solid and strong foundation, getting both child and parent off to a great start. Relevant guest speakers are invited to meet with parents as a small group and discuss pertinent parental issues and concerns. Parents then work on a related school activity they can use at home to engage and support their child's learning.

Union Hill School

Union Hill teachers are in the process of re-inventing the PBIS behavior program and will be implementing it school-wide in 2008.

Vernon Hill School

The 21st Century After-School Program is in full swing at Vernon Hill School. Students in grades 3-5 have been attending the three-hour program since late September. Classes have been immersed in projects ranging from writing letters to authors to discovering how meteorologists forecast weather.

West Tatnuck

This year, West Tatnuck began an exciting partnership with Quinsigamond Community College to establish an after-school robotics program for 11 students in sixth grader. Through the direction of math teacher Susan Lopez, the West Tatnuck Twisters have emerged as a team of critical thinkers that have built a highly versatile and competitive robot. Students Luke Brennan, Winona Bouthsarath, Bailey King, Molly Caisse, Melanie Pinto, Emma Duke, Kenny Nguyen, Meaghan Whalen, Caroline Pellegrini, Eddie Sanchez, and Lenny Boyer make up the team.

Woodland Academy

In conjunction with the Family Health Center of Worcester, sixth-grade students have been participating in a ballroom dance and exercise program called Dance, Dance, Exercise, with dance instructor Javier Salort from World Rhythms. We have established family math nights and family reading nights for the entire Woodland Family.

Worcester Arts Magnet School

At Worcester Arts Magnet School, learning in and through the arts continues to engage learners of all ages. Fourth-grade students and teachers hosted the first storytelling festival, with storyteller Katie Green. It was funded through the Worcester Cultural Commission and the Parent Teacher Group. Students learned regional stories of the U.S. to share with the school community during Thanksgiving week. Students visited the special decorative arts exhibit at the Worcester Art Museum, "An American Vision: Treasures from the Winterthur Museum."

Middle Schools

Sullivan Middle School

For the past three years, students from Forest Grove and Sullivan middle schools have been sleeping for science as part of a project funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). A group of students from each school have volunteered (with parent/guardian consent) to participate in the Young Adolescent Sleep-Smart study, directed by Amy Wolfson, Ph.D, Professor of Psychology at Holy Cross. Assisted by Holy Cross psychology and biology majors and recent graduates, Dr. Wolfson's research examines sleep and daytime functioning in middle-school-age adolescents. As part of the study, students are asked to wear an actigraph for a week at a time while completing a sleep/wake diary. An actigraph is battery-operated device that records levels of activity. The

diary asks about participants' caffeine use, bed and wake times, mood, and TV, video game, and/or computer use.

Worcester East Middle School

Once again Worcester East Middle School, with support from Worcester Pipeline Collaborative, provided 60 students with the opportunity to get a glimpse into the life of medical students at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. During the Hands on Science Night program students were fascinated with the workings of the human heart, lungs, brain, and kidney.

Girls' Academy for Positive Change is an after-school program at WEMS which provides girls with skills and strategies to make good choices. They are taught to problem-solve, develop healthy peer/adult relationships and build self esteem. Students are paired with a mentor from the YWCA.

High Schools/Alternative

Doherty Memorial

Doherty Memorial High School welcomed members of the community into its classes as it hosted its annual Career Day on Nov. 29. More than 60 speakers, from all walks of life, shared their time and their talents with Doherty students and teachers. Guest speakers included engineers, community activists, members of the military, Worcester Fire Department and Mass. State Police as well as nurses, attorneys, models, small business owners and elected officials.

Gerald Creamer Center

The community service class worked in collaboration with the Worcester Health Department in stuffing anti-tobacco calendars in envelopes to be distributed throughout the city. Robert Mahoney and his classes worked in conjunction with Bill McKeon from the Health Department to stuff more than 16,000 envelopes.

North High School

North High's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Welcoming Committee sponsored its annual Live Show on Nov. 16. For the past 11 years, the performances that make up the Live Show have highlighted the various cultures that are represented in the student body at North High. Produced and performed entirely by North High students, this year's performance featured Indian, Latino, African, Asian, American, and other cultures, showcased through the media of traditional and contemporary song and dance.

University Park Campus School

Teacher Shannon Hammond and a group of more than 20 high school students are participating in an after-school book group that focuses on the challenges of poverty in America and around the globe. In its second year, the group has already gone to see several influential speakers, including Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, and Jonathan Kozol, famed author and social commentator.

Worcester Technical High School

Worcester Technical High School and Matthew 25 have been partnering on house-renovation projects for more than 15 years. Matthew 25 was founded in Worcester by Rev. Fred Enman, who worked at Holy Cross. College. A legal-aid lawyer by trade, he graduated from Boston College Law School before becoming a Jesuit. Rev. The current house project was a home donated by the Mustard Seed. Funding for this project was started with a \$50,000 donation from Worcester's St. Vincent DePaul Society.



# SPORTS

THE WORCESTER EDUCATOR

## Power of the pedal

### South High alum finds success in cycling

By CAITLIN BOWLER

After years of training, 2007 South High graduate Danny Esteves is taking his passion semi-pro. This fall the accomplished cyclist signed with the New York-based Sakonnet Technology team, which holds eight under-25 riders who compete in races around the world alongside professionals. For Esteves, membership on the team will allow him to transition from the world of juniors.

Those who have coached Esteves are not surprised that he found a place with the Sakonnet team as an 18-year-old. Toby Stanton, founder of the elite Hot Tubes racing team based in Worcester, has watched Esteves compete as a member of Hot Tubes for three racing seasons and has been continually impressed.

"Danny is an amazing rider and one of the most polished young guys I've ever seen. He's a tough, gritty kid," said Stanton. "He's riding at a professional level and he's on that trajectory to make it."

Esteves started racing as a nine-year-old in the Dominican Republic, where his family lived before moving to Worcester in 2001.

"My dad was really into riding when he was younger and he encouraged me to get into it," said Esteves. "I was reluctant at first, but finally entered a local mountain bike race when I was nine and won it. That was really exciting and after that I just kept riding."

Esteves' successes only got bigger. When he was 11 he won the Dominican Republic's national championship races in both the road and mountain bike divisions for the 12-13-year-old class. He repeated the feat the following year at age 12, but in the 14-year-old class.

After moving to Worcester at age 12 Esteves was without a bike or connections to the sport and stopped riding for two years.

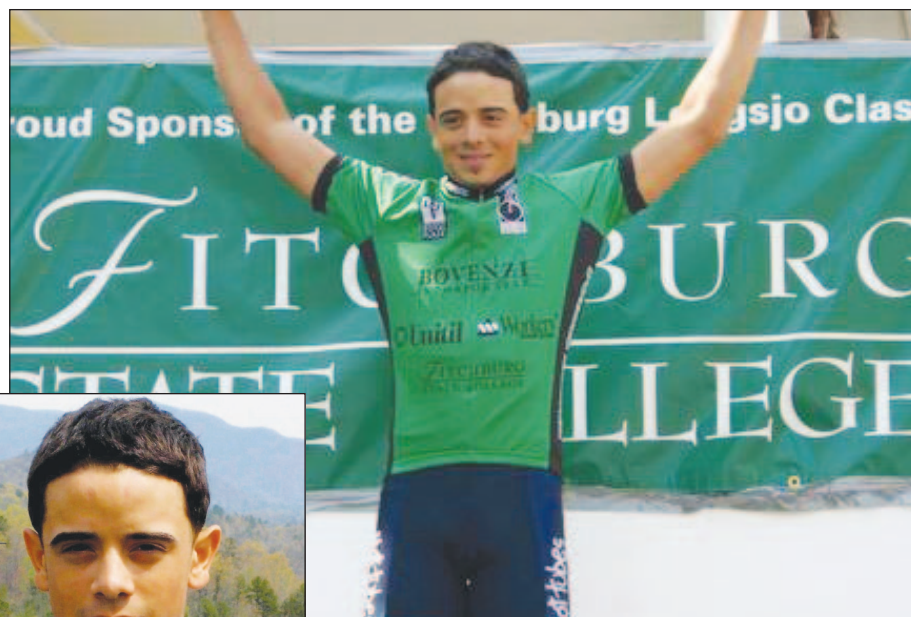
Perusing a local bike shop with his father two years later he met Worcester resident Jorge Ramirez, a Colombian cycling enthusiast, who eventually lent Esteves a bike and gear, which allowed him to start training again.

Esteves discovered the Hot Tubes team soon after, while looking at bikes in Stanton's Worcester shop.

With Hot Tubes, Esteves found both adventure and success. This past year the team competed in races around the world, including Bermuda, the Bahamas, France, Holland, Belgium, Ireland and Canada.

Esteves had considered attending Colorado State University to study and train with its highly competitive team, but ultimately decided to take a year off from school to focus exclusively on cycling.

"I'm definitely not leaving school behind," said Esteves, "I'm just seeing where cycling will take me."



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**Danny Esteves**

