Our Vision

As a leader among schools and a source of pride in our community, the Canton Public Schools enrich the present and shape the future of its students by opening minds and transforming lives.

Our Mission

Our mission is to prepare independent, productive, respectful and responsible citizens who contribute to an ever-changing world. We pursue continuous improvement while honoring our strong educational legacy and traditions. We unite with families and the community to provide challenging educational experiences that promote the intellectual, physical, social and emotional potential of our students.
from the superintendent

When we climbed on to the school bus for the first time twelve years ago, we couldn't see much beyond the day that was to come. All that mattered was playground politics, learning numbers, letters and colors, and memorizing our knees as we tried to catch up to our new friends. We learned how to read while sitting in beanbags, learned how to write with orange, purple or green Magic Markers, and sang songs about the weather. Monday was the best day ever because of new class mates. All learned in music class, known famously to all learned in music class, known famously to all.

The Canton Board of Education is once again partnering with the Valley Press to bring you our Spring 2015 issue of Raising the Bar. This year, I am excited to share with you our newly adopted five-year Strategic Coherence Plan. The Board of Education, working together with a committee of community stakeholders, spend several months developing this important document, which will guide our goal-setting and prioritization of resources through 2020. I am also pleased to share with you news of the many achievements of our students and staff, and details of several new initiatives, including full day kindergarten, and an increased focus on STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) within our curriculum. We also have provided details of our budget for the 2015-2016 school year. As always, we evaluate all spending in terms of whether it will increase rigor and opportunity, provide equal access to quality resources, and improve student learning. The Board and our administrators are constantly seeking innovative ways to improve student success with minimal budget impact, and this year we present a budget with a 82% increase over last year’s spending. We appreciate your continued support of our students, who are developing the skills they will need to find success and happiness in their adult lives. You can find our new Strategic Coherence Plan, and much other information about our schools on our website, www.cantonschools.org. As always, I welcome your questions or comments.

Katie Hill
Senior

WALL OF FAME

Mrs. Kelly Casorio and Mrs. Christina Starr brought a group of students to the Connecticut Association of Schools Middle Level Student Leadership Conference at Trinity College. A number of 7th grade students that are a part of the CMS Student Council attended and brought back ideas that can be used at our school. Their day consisted of various workshops and team building activities with other students from around the state. Many parents have said that their kids already have their sights on next year, as the world competition is only weeks away. CMS Students at the CT Association of Schools (CAS) Leadership Conference

Spotlight on Education

Katherine A. Young is looking to attend Emerson College in the fall, majoring in journalism.
A helping hand outside the classroom

Students in the district dedicate themselves to their education and their community through a variety of participation in activities to benefit others.

Students at Cherry Brook Primary School are especially active in the annual Lip Synch fundraiser organized by assistant principal Lisa Deltano, math and science coordinator. The group volunteered at Neighbors Helping Neighbors, sponsored by Focus on Canton. The group picked up trash at each of the school campuses in town. During Teacher Appreciation Week they painted the staff bathrooms. CATA has also raised funds for a number of charities and assisted with the Prisms Concert.

In honor of the school’s 100th day in session, Cherry Brook celebrated with a food collection. Each grade level was assigned a specific food, such as macaroni and cheese for pizza, and classes were responsible for collecting 100 of those particular items. Each day of the drive was selected to correspond to a collection of CATA’s goals, and tally sheet tallied up what had been brought. In this year, through the collection, 2,886 items were donated to the Canton Food Shelf.

In some cases it’s not just the students who are giving back, the staff at Cherry Brook created a Mitten Tree in November and collected hats and mittens, which were donated to Canton families in need. “I think kids, by participating in these kinds of activities, feel they are part of not only the Cherry Brook Primary School community, but the Canton Collect 1,000 items for the Canton Food Pantry.

Although many would not call it an official service project in the traditional sense, Ms. Hamad said that her school’s student council hosts a Veteran’s Day program in which local veterans are invited to the school to talk to students and are treated to a reception. Science teacher Cheryl Adams works with her team of students to create wooden flags that are presented to the veterans.

The Pulseras Project was a fundraiser this past spring, and it was in Spanish and Spanish. I1 classes sold pulseras, or hand-woven bracelets, to raise $1,570 for Nicaraguan youth. Students also made and sold puzzle pieces for the puzzle pieces for Down Syndrome Awareness.

The 275 students at Canton Middle School are divided into teams, who enjoy participating in community service activities.

Principal Pamela Hamad explained that this past fall math teacher Scott Spencer helped a student with disabilities create a robot as part of the high school’s robotics team.

A helping hand outside the classroom

STEM takes center stage

According to Marsha Jorgensen, science department chair for grades 7-12, it all comes down to jobs.

“There is a six percent increase in STEM-related jobs,” Ms. Jorgensen said. “For students to be thinking of these as potential careers,” she added, “those are where the jobs are going to be.”

Ms. Jorgensen is referring to the emphasis in school on science, math, engineering and technology.

Canton has begun to incorporate more opportunities for its students to work with these particular areas of study.

Ms. Jorgensen explained that the district has started a K-12 science committee to look at the district standards, in part, to ensure that these concepts such as design and investigation are integrated into the science curriculum.

The current after-school robotics program at Canton Middle School is supported with a possible implementation soon. Ms. Jorgensen said it is possible the academy will have an even greater emphasis on technological education of the Farmington River and Mills Pond.

In addition, there has been special attention paid to STEM. This school year was the second time students in the district have had an opportunity to participate in an after-school robotics club that participates in a statewide competition.

This is also the first year that a robotics team has participated at Canton Brook School. Team FT38983, or the Warriors, is overseen by ChHS physics teacher Stephen Riley. The team has a core group of about 20 students. It will design projects in engineering and mathematics, and will compete in the Sunstate League. Ms. Jorgensen said that the team is prepared for the future.

In addition, the elementary level has an environmental theme due to the proximity of the school to the Farmington River.

“We had a pretty good turnout,” said Donna Liebel, administrative assistant to the principal. “I think Canton is noteworthy for supporting the arts. I would argue science is just as creative, it does not need to be separated,” she said. “We are expanding our area and how it applies to life.” Ms. Liebel agreed along with the school’s technology coordinator, Lisa Deltano.

“Can students be prepared for the future?”

Among the district’s offerings are biology, laboratory chemistry, and forensics, which are offered as electives. In the future, Ms. Jorgensen said, subjects such as astronomy, anatomy and physiology will be added to the high school’s offerings, joining such subjects as AP Biology, AP Chemistry and AP Physics.

With STEM receiving more attention lately, some critics fear that the attention to these subjects will take away from other disciplines, such as the arts. Ms. Jorgensen does not see it that way.

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Ms. Jorgensen said that the common core is a nice way for kids who have special needs to be involved in the school community. “It brings me such joy to work with these students,” Ms. Jorgensen said. “They’re always trying to do something different.”

Many students in Ms. Jorgensen’s science classes are part of the National Honor Society. “For starters, the fields often incorporate something out of it,” Ms. Jorgensen said. “They’re always trying to do something different.”

“Kids become very independent learners and problem solvers,” Ms. Deltano said. “Being able to teach kids with others is very important.”

Students at CIS can also participate in ICER, Invent, Classify, Experiment and Research, which is an independent study project and recent their findings to the public. Last year was the first year the project was offered at Cherry Brook and 60 students participated. This year as many as 80 students are participating. “They can pick an area of interest, whether it’s covered in the classroom or not to further research. In May three CIS students and six from Cherry Brook will compete at the Inventor Convention based on independent work,” Ms. Jorgensen said. “All of these incorporate student’s use of mathematical knowledge to a purpose. They are not using skills in isolation,” Ms. Deltano said.

“Because our curriculum is very heavy in reading, writing and math, we don’t have time to fit in technology in every single subject, but I always try to incorporate it into other subjects, sometimes as an enrichment,” Ms. Jorgensen said.
2015-2016 Board of Education Budget
Annual Budget Meeting, Monday, May 11 at 7 p.m. at Canton High School Auditorium

Executive Summary
Reflects specific areas as a % of Total Budget

Family Expenditures
Below is the 2015 – 2016 fee structure that families contribute to curricular and extra-curricular activities. These fees offset the cost of these courses and programs. *Financial assistance is available for all programs for qualifying families.

Curricular Areas
- Culinary Arts: $20 per semester
- Woodshop: $25 per semester
- Jewelry: $40 per semester
- Ceramics: $20 per semester
- Photography: $50 per semester

Athletics
- Sports (excluding Football): $100 (per season, per player)
- Football: $225 (per season, per player)

Extra-Curricular Music - CHS
- CMEA Regional Auditions: $15 per student
- CMEA Regional Festival: $30 per student
- CMEA All-State Auditions: $20 per student
- CMEA All-State Festival: $25 per student
- UMASS Jazz (CHS Jazz Ensemble): $75 per student

Extra-Curricular Music - CMS
- CMEA Regional Auditions: $8 per student
- CMEA Regional Festival: $15 per student
- Grade 8 Band and Chorus Festival: $60 per student

Other
- CPAT: $100 per session
- Pre-school (3 year old child): $960 per child
- Pre-school (4 year old child): $1,200 per child

New Initiatives by Funding Source
- General Fund
- Open Choice 13-14 STEM
- Open Choice 14-15
- Open Choice 15-16

Executive Summary
Reflects specific areas as a % of Total Budget

New Initiatives by Funding Source
- General Fund
- Open Choice 13-14 STEM
- Open Choice 14-15
- Open Choice 15-16

Capital Improvement Projects
2015-2016 CIP - Prioritized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CIP-CHS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Track &amp; Field Long Term Maintenance</td>
<td>$88,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIP-CBPS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Water System Maintenance</td>
<td>$21,904</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIP-CIS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Roof Repair - Slate Roof</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIP-CIS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Replace Main doors to GIS</td>
<td>$42,314</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIP-CIS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Repair Chimney/Replace Liner</td>
<td>$13,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIP-CBPS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Insulation Third Grade Hallway Ceiling-CBPS</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIP-CHS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tractor - Snow and Other - CHS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Old tractor to go to CBPS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIP-CHS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Replace Tile Floor Tech Ed Room, Band Room, Custod</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ian Room, Hallway between Gym and Locker Rooms, 2nd floor auditorium, Coach’s Office &amp; Storage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total Prioritized CIP</td>
<td>$264,500</td>
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</table>
### Student Achievement

#### Canton High School Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total AP Students in your school: 101</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Totals for this view:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Total Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of AP Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Subject Totals</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language &amp; Composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Literature &amp; Composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Government &amp; Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculus AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Language &amp; Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Canton’s Results vs. Global Results

- **2014 Scholastic Aptitude (SAT) Scores as Reported by College Board**
  - SAT Scores, Class of 2014
  - The Scholastic Aptitude Test is a pre-admission test in math, reading, and writing and is accepted by most colleges as part of the admission process. The 2014 SAT scores demonstrated that our students continue to perform above both the national and state averages. Notably, Canton’s combined score was one of the highest in the Farmington Valley and the state.

#### SAT

#### March 2014 CMT Science Scores as Reported by the State Department of Education (SDE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Grade</strong></th>
<th><strong>Met Goal</strong></th>
<th><strong>Met Proficiency</strong></th>
<th><strong>Advanced</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### CMT

- Students in grades 3 to 8 showed incremental growth over time on their CMT scores. Canton continues to be at the top of our District Reference Group and state averages.

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**What is AP...or “Advanced Placement”**?

The College Board’s Advanced Placement Program (AP) is an extensive program that offers high school students the chance to participate in college level classes, thereby broadening their intellectual horizons and preparing them for college work. It also plays a large part in the college admissions process, showing both a student’s intellectual capacity and his or her genuine interest in learning. The program also allows students to earn college credit for high performance; many colleges award 3 credits for scores of 3 or above on various AP exams. Overall Canton students perform exceptionally well and are one of the highest in the Farmington Valley and the state.

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**Connecticut Public Schools**

**AP® Success by District: Class of 2014**

- Percentage of 12th-graders who scored 3 or greater on an AP Exam during high school.
- Less than 1%
- 1-9%
- 10-19%
- 20-29%
- 30% or greater

**Notes:**
- The data represent students taking a particular AP exam during high school.
- AP exam scores will be available online after the 2012–13 school year. A degree of caution should be exercised when reviewing performance estimates, as data may not reflect school year. A degree of caution should be exercised when reviewing performance estimates, as data may not reflect school year.

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Perri Murdica joins District as director of Pupil Personal Services

Perri Murdica, Ed. D. began her role as Director of Pupil Personnel Services in Canton on July 1, 2014 in which she oversees, among other things, special education in the district.

She began her career as a special education paraprofessional and went on to become a special education teacher, a position she held for seven years in Southington. She was hired by the State Department of Education as an educational consultant before moving into the Bureau of Special Education where she focused on such areas as inclusive practices, early literacy, paraprofessionals and early intervention. Dr. Murdica returned to the Southington School District, this time as the Director of Pupil Personnel Services where she worked for three years before being hired by Canton.

During her time in Southington, she views the following as equally important to her: making sure students have an inclusive education, offer the opportunities for teachers to collaborate with one another better.

Her vision for the Canton School District is “a system of supports that teaches them for only half the day. We'll make sure all of your students receive the time they need to learn and reach their full potential – right from the moment they enter elementary school.”

In December, the Board of Education followed the task force’s advice. It voted to implement Superintendent Kevin Case’s recommendation that full day kindergarten will start in the 2015-16 school year with one half-day session offered for families who do not want their child to attend kindergarten for all children in the state by 2017. He said he is proud the state is moving toward universal pre-kindergarten and noted that some students who get a half-day pre-K experience then attend a kindergarten program that teaches them for only half the day.

“The expectation is we are including all students in the district and the board approved — 20 late-day open sessions. It’s an opportunity for students to get into classes, “ Mr. DiPippo said. Additionally, the new schedule would create more opportunities for teachers to collaborate with their colleagues.

Dr. Perri Murdica, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Full-day Kindergarten comes to Canton

by Alison Jalbert

Canton High School Principal Andrew DiPippo has proposed a new Class of 2019 schedule in which students would have a daily 48-minute lunch period for increased instructional time for students.

The proposal would divide the day into eight periods. Students would attend class meeting days alternating between four full-day sections and four half-day sections.

A committee of teachers recommended the changes after the New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation site visit in 2011 recommended increasing instructional time. The recommendation specifically called for an eight period class meeting day with 48 minutes of instructional time, offering a 50-minute collaborative period for faculty and maintaining the weekly Canton High School Advisory Time.

This change would start when students return to school for the 2015-2016 school year.

“An eight period day affords us the opportunity to create more flexibility for students to get into classes,” Mr. DiPippo said. Additionally, the new schedule would create more opportunities for teachers to collaborate with their colleagues.

The principal has also recommended — and the board approved — 20 late-day open sessions to be held throughout the school year. This will enable students to arrive at school at the regular time and have 50 minutes of free time during the half-day sections before class begins. Those who do not take advantage of this available time would be allowed to arrive at school at 8:20 a.m.

Students could use this time to meet with other students to discuss curriculum related concerns or events they would like to meet with one another. It would provide free time for clubs to meet as well. Students could also spend the time researching in the School Library, preparing for the SAT, or getting in a workout in the gym.

The extra period was an opportunity for students to work outside the curriculum on important school needs,” Mr. DiPippo said.

He added that a Capstone project will be started with the Class of 2019 and the extra time throughout the year would be valuable to those working on these projects.

This new eight period schedule would reduce the passing time between classes from four minutes to ten, eliminate lunch waves but include a daily 48-minute lunch period for students between the 4th and 8th periods in which students have had a difficult time fitting these classes into their schedules.

At the Board of Education meeting on February 5 the high school principal reported that the extended periods would benefit all students. A few might want to take eight classes, others would take seven and select an elective while students who may struggle in some subjects would have additional time to catch up and improve.

Board of Education student representative Mia Tuccillo said at the meeting, “The extra time the teachers have, and it gives them time to plan out classes more effectively. I can see a lot of [students] thriving in that environment if they have more time to plan out their morning. Having that time available … might change the way they learn and take advantage of their time.”

Full-day Kindergarten comes to Canton

by Alison Jalbert

F

ull-day kindergarten is a popular topic at the state level, with Gov. Dannel P. Malloy recently proposing a full-day kindergarten for all children in the state by 2017. He said he is proud the state is moving toward universal pre-kindergarten and noted that some students who get a half-day pre-K experience then attend a kindergarten program that teaches them for only half the day.

“It just doesn't make sense,” he said. “Over the next two years, we'll work with towns that don't yet offer full-day kindergarten. We'll make sure all of your youngsters receive the time they need to learn and reach their full potential – right from the moment they enter elementary school.”

According to the State Department of Education Office of Early Childhood, during the 2013-14 school year there were 132 school districts, 10 charter schools and 14 magnet schools in Connecticut that offered full-day kindergarten.

Seven districts offered extended-day programs to some children, including Canton. Last year parents approached the Board of Education about offering full-day kindergarten, as some cannot afford the tuition necessary for that option. Following the meeting, the weekly cereal meeting day approach was recommended by a kindergarten Task Force, chaired by Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum/Secondary Education, Paula Theriault, which embarked on almost a year of study and analysis.

It examined current research and data, held a community forum on the topic and studied the current kindergarten program in Canton. Visitation were also made to West Hartford and Avon public schools as well as Regional School District 10 to study their programs and their transitions to full-day kindergarten.

“We took the process very seriously and spent the time and energy looking at both qualitative and quantitative information,” Dr. Grossman said. “We knew the recommendation not only affected the children of next year but also the children of future years and the dynamics of what the Canton Public School system will look like for many years to come.”

In December, the Board of Education followed the task force’s advice. It voted to implement Superintendent Kevin Case’s recommendation that full day kindergarten will start in the 2015-16 school year, with one half-day session offered for families who do not want their child in school all day. By the 2016-2017 school year, only full-day kindergarten will be offered. However, since the half-day option did not get a minimum of 15 students interested, there will be full day sections next year.

The proposal would also cause adjustments to the current kindergarten schedule marketing and robotics are among the elective offerings with broad appeal, however in the past students have had a difficult time fitting these classes into their schedules.

By the 2016-17 school year, full-day kindergarten will start in the 2015-16 school year, with one half-day session offered for families who do not want their child in school all day. By the 2016-17 school year, only full-day kindergarten will be offered.

As of press time, the budget is still pending approval.

Kindergarten teachers at Cherry Brook Primary School feel the additional teaching hours will be beneficial to both them and their students.

Kelfy Theriault has worked in the district for eight years and said the community has been split over the issue, but over time, it has come to embrace the idea of full-day kindergarten.

Prior to working in Canton, she taught in West Hartford, which has offered a full-day program for many years. In working on lesson plans for a full versus half-day program, Ms. Theriault said she has approach things differently.

“It’s a little more rushed in half-day curriculum in trying to get [in] all of the things I can teach.”

The benefits extend to general education students as they learn more about their peers and begin to relate.

For general education students in the 21st century they are going to be working with all kinds of people. It gives them such a better understanding of learning differences, diversity, caring and commitment as humans,” she said.

The more students interact with one another the better they get to see first hand the strengths each possess, she added, saying, “for society as a whole, it’s a better place for everybody.”

Differences are ok. Kids learn to understand differences are ok.”

“The real benefit to learning early on is it’s not about tolerance and acceptance but of them being a part of the school — it’s about them having the opportunity for an appropriate education,” Dr. Murdica said.

As Dr. Murdica has gotten to know the Canton School District she has seen what an inclusive environment it is for all students and staff.

“The expectation is we are including students and there is no opposition to that,” she said. “That does not happen by accident, but through the dedication of all the staff.”

New eight period day is coming

The proposal would divide the day into eight periods in which students would attend class meeting days alternating between four full-day sections and four half-day sections.

A committee of teachers recommended the changes after the New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation site visit in 2011 recommended increasing instructional time. The recommendation specifically called for an eight period class meeting day with 48 minutes of instructional time, offering a 50-minute collaborative period for faculty and maintaining the weekly Canton High School Advisory Time.

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I n the music room at Cherry Brook Primary School administrators, teachers, staff, parents and Board of Education members — all members of the Canton Public Schools Technology Planning Committee — gathered to carefully look at the well-crafted presentation in the room. Page by page the group reviewed what is likely to become the district’s new technology plan. The team then met to review and create a new plan. This latest draft outlines goals through 2018.

Although the Canton schools no longer require students to submit a plan Canton has decided to continue with the process because it is essential to move forward in an era of rapid technology change.

The team began meeting in December 2014 after the district worked with BrightBytes. Last fall the data analysis firm administered a survey to all students starting with third grade, staff, teachers, administrators and families with students in grades K to 12. Results were used to draft the new plan, which includes 21st century skills, curriculum and instruction, infrastructure at home, infrastructure at school, professional learning, and supervisory and technological support.

When completed the plan will identify areas of focus such as engaging and empowering learning experiences, assessment, connected teaching and learning, infrastructure for teaching and learning and productivity and efficiency.

“The technology plan serves as our roadmap and our guide for where we want to go on fusing technology into instruction and into the classroom,” Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Jordan Grossman, said.

“We are trying to find the most appropriate way to use technology for instructional and administrative purposes," he said. "Our past three-year plan laid a great foundation for us to form an infrastructure aspect to where we are really imbedding technology into our day-to-day instruction. We are hoping that the next three-year plan, which will serve us from 2015 to 2018, will guide us on how we are going to incorporate technology and really set our course for the use of technology within our schools.”

The Education Committee of Dana Kious said that the plan is important as it offers a different number of perspectives, including that of teachers who understand what technology is needed.

“I really admired their work and dedication,” said she, of the team. “It’s their time to help move our district forward.”

“I think its very important having, seeing in the last 10 to 20 years, the changes that have taken place in the use of technology and learning,” Michael Pelletier, a parent and technology team member said.

Without a plan “it's hard to make decisions with context,” adding that he thinks its good to take a proactive approach. Pelletier said he has two children, a first and a third grader at Cherry Brook Primary School, who is proficient in technology. Their use of devices at home makes it easier for them to use the iPads and Chromebooks at school.

The thing that is most rewarding is the passion every one on the committee has for making the classroom school desirable and successful," Mr. Pelletier said.

Jeff DiMaestro has been a technology administrator in Canton for the past 11 years. DiMaestro said he has had the opportunity to work with several small networks used in the school districts. Now there is one unified, town network and students are using a standard desktop computer and today work with an open WiFi platform.

The plan, he said, is important to continue the necessary changes the district and its students will confront in the ever-changing world of technology.

Mr. DeMaestro said, too, that it is important to maintain and support Bloomington's students various styles of learning.

“I think there are a lot of people like me who are very hands on and learn by doing,” he said.

The newly drafted technology plan will be brought before the Board of Education for their approval at the end of May.

Choosing Canton as part of Open Choice program

Damon Kates, Floyd Campbell and Amyah Harris are part of Open Choice.

This school year 88 students are attending Canton Schools as part of the Open Choice program.

More than 15 years ago the district opted to join the program that enables urban students to attend suburban school districts.

“It’s an opportunity for students in Hartford to come to the suburbs, come to Canton, to a place that has academic rigor, a nurturing school society and the development of more hopeful that more Canton families will step forward to host out-of-town students. Those interested in doing so can volunteer by email at degler@canton-schools.org. Hartford parent Monica Stellmacher’s son, Damon Kates, attends Canton High School and began his education in town in the first grade.

Ms. Stellmacher said that Hartford parents, like those in Canton, are a close community who help ensure their children are getting the most out of their Open Choice experience.

Ms. Stellmacher has added the benefit of knowing exactly what her son may be going through for during her school years she attended school in Farmington, starting in the sixth grade, as part of the program, which at that time was referred to as Project Choice.

She recalls being “terrified” when she first was bussed to the suburbs, but the feeling did not last long.

“It was awesome,” she said of her experience.

“I still have friends I keep in contact with.”

Adding that she is looking forward to being able to select other schools when she gets to Canton High School.

“The education I feel is better,” she said.

“I think it’s a great program that we are providing students with an opportunity to come to a community that welcomes them with open arms and is able to provide the academic rigor to succeed in this world,” Mr. Campbell said.

Schools

A look ahead at technology

Committee creates new five-year Strategic Coherence Plan

Planning for the future

Committee creates new five-year Strategic Coherence Plan

Now “that it has been adopted, building administrators work together to determine what the strategies are,” Ms. Hill said. “We know what the goal is, what it will look like and the indications we met the goal. The next step in the process, that will be pulled together by the administrators in the next few months.”

“It’s interesting, in the course of five years you can see a change. Something that seemed to be a priority three or four years ago, these are the things that have changed. So many things affect what we do on daily basis, we spent time reconsidering these goals,” she said.

Ms. Hill said that if the former plan can be closed and the district is ready to move forward with the new plan.

“We really felt strongly it still reflected what we wanted to see and hear,” said Ms. Hill.

The 2015-2020 Strategic Coherence Plan can be viewed in its entirety on the district’s website at cantonschools.org.


New faces
At the helm of athletic and music departments

Craig DeAngelis, Athletic Director

 Canton's new athletic director brings with him an attitude that athletics are in many ways an extension of the classroom. The lessons being taught on the field are often ones that have less to do with strategy and technique and more to do with life.

"If kids have an opportunity to grow through sport, which they unquestionably do, it's our job to take it seriously and give them the best opportunity," he said.

Mr. DeAngelis played football in high school and later at Central Connecticut State University, where he earned his degree in physical education and health. The lessons instilled by his former coach have stayed with him all this time.

"Plenty of times in my day I can think of things he said in football practice," Mr. DeAngelis said.

"In so many ways sports are a microcosm of what these kids will see in life. If they figure it out here, hopefully they will get it right in life," he said.

Mr. DeAngelis, who came to his post last summer, said he was impressed with the new facility at the middle and high school and the community support it received.

"I think it's important to maximize the facilities, show towns we care about what is going to take place," he said.

The music director sees his role as not only teaching music to his students, but learning from them as well.

"As far as I am concerned, the best thing I can do this year is take it all in and oversee everything that is going on and learn," he said, adding that he would like to put his own imprint on the music program.

"We want to grow," he said. "I want to think of that personally, that I continue to grow as a person, musician and as a teacher."

Mr. Mastroianni has been busy the first few months in his new job with a full concert at the high school; attending the Berkley Jazz Festival in January; Prisms, and a multi-me dia program in February; and another music program in February.

This spring there will be the concert in the park and marching in the Memorial Day Parade to prepare for.

Away from the classroom, Mr. Mastroianni has worked as a professional musician since he was a teenager. He has recorded with a number of artists and has three recordings as a bandleader under his belt. He also performs with his own quartet and arranges music for, and performs with, a 16-piece jazz orchestra.

John Mastroianni, Band Director

In 2014, Mr. Mastroianni was named the Connecticut Teacher of the Year while band director at Hall High School in West Hartford, a position he held for 16 years.

Teaching is something he loves to do. "I wake up every single day and say, 'This is cool.' I get to do something I love. Not really a lot of people can say that," he said. His one wish for his students would be that they find something that they are passionate about as well.

Mr. Mastroianni joined the staff at Canton Middle School and Canton High School at the beginning of the school year. He was good friends with former music director Tom Scavone and said he anticipated a "total mutiny" when he arrived in town.

"I'm overwhelmed by the warm welcome and hospitality," he said.

The new website will have what she referred to as "mega menus," or larger menus with more information for users to find the information they are looking for more quickly. The individual information for users to find the information they are looking for more quickly. The individual pages will now be linked to Google.

"That's going to be "awesome," Lorie Carlson, administrative assistant at Canton Middle School, said of being able to post information herself.

"Like other school staff, she has been going through special training to learn the program. "It's going to be more streamlined," Ms. Carlson said. "It will be easier, we won't have to call someone to do it for us."

Brendan Lonergan is the assistant district website coordinator.