

the
great
plains

Shenendehowa

Central Schools

Common Core Learning Standards

Building blocks of knowledge

Last spring, students in grades 3-8 took the N.Y.S. English Language Arts (ELA) and math exams. Performance across the state decreased significantly. This is true for Shenendehowa students as well.

This was largely due to the fact that the state was “building the plane in the air,” so to speak. The exams marked the first time students were tested on the new Common Core Learning Standards. However, most schools had not fully implemented the standards prior to the tests.

This is not the first time that standards or assessments have changed, nor will it be the last. And performance on the exams will improve. It always does.

The new Common Core Learning Standards are rigorous national learning standards that have been adopted by New York and states across the country. By having common standards, all students across the country will have the opportunity to learn the same skills.

They are a set of clear guidelines showing what students should be able to do in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and mathematics. With these standards, students start by learning basic skills in more depth in early grades and build up to mastering more difficult skills and concepts—think of the process as building blocks of knowledge. You have to make sure that the foundation is solid before you can add the next block.

For example:

- In reading, students will read more non-fiction and informational text; talk about reading using

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Bring your own device to school...

This could be the last of the backpack generation

For years now, students have come to school and what do we tell them? Power down the electronics!

But what if we could use the power of those little devices to teach children the way they live and learn?

“At Shen, we believe that learning in the 21st century is enhanced through the integration of innovative technology and we want to capitalize on its potential to transform and modernize education,” said Superintendent Dr. L. Oliver Robinson.

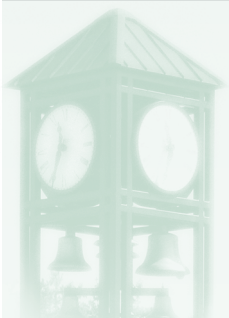
This year, as the result of the WiFi project approved last October, the district will provide a secure and filtered, wireless network where students in grades 6-12 may use their personally-owned devices in class for instructional purposes (BYOD-Bring Your Own Device).

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NYSED recognized Shenendehowa High School and Tesago Elementary School as Reward Schools for having made the most progress or having the highest achievement in the State with no significant gaps in student achievement.



High School West was recognized as a “No Place For Hate” Gold Star School by the Anti-Defamation League.



Common Core Learning Standards: building blocks of knowledge, continued from pg. 1

evidence gathered from the material read; and grow their vocabularies through conversation, reading and direct instruction.

- In writing, students will write more logical arguments using research, sound reasoning and evidence.
- In mathematics, students will spend more time on fewer concepts; develop speed and accuracy in solving problems; and understand how to use math in real-world situations.

Common Core Implementation at Shen

Shen has a long-standing commitment to excellence and tradition of preparing students for college and career readiness. The district will continue to implement the Common Core through professional development and curriculum mapping.

The Shenendehowa Center for Innovative Learning (CIL) provides teachers with a continuum of effective strategies that support all students meeting or exceeding the Common Core.

This summer, the Shen CIL held a Summer Academy for Educators, offering a number of professional development courses in Common Core including:

- Using the Workshop Model to Embed the Common Core - Explore options for inclusion of text complexity, higher -level questions and vocabulary
- Close Reading and Text-Based Questioning (Common Core) - Teach students to independently read and analyze complex text.
- Elementary Math Common Core Fractions - Strategies to develop a conceptual understanding of frac-

tions and fraction operations for their students.

Courses at the CIL are offered year round and are developed to support the district's goals and objectives for the year.

Curriculum maps are another tool being used by the district to implement the Common Core. They are an electronic database for every K-12 course that:

- Determines a sequence for delivering content and provide a clear scope for what must be taught to all students.
- Ensures consistency and collaboration by aligning the curriculum both horizontally (within a grade level) and vertically (K-12), organizing content, skills, assessments, and resources.

- Makes appropriate, immediate modifications to the curriculum by mapping what's actually taught and when it's taught so that teachers can compare this with the test data.

"As we move forward with the Common Core this year, we are confident that all of the pieces will fall into place," said Dr. Elizabeth Wood, assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction and assessment.

"The new assessment results will provide us with a baseline from which we can measure the district's progress on the implementation. We will use the results to adjust curriculum and target staff development when necessary." ■

The District's Character Education Committee will be recognizing community members who demonstrate outstanding character. To nominate individuals who cultivate, foster and demonstrate the virtues and skills of civic engagement and social responsibility, please contact Rebecca Carman at carmrebe@shenet.org



At the first football game in September, Mazzone Hospitality donated \$27,000 and the Columbia football team donated \$400 to the Shenendehowa Educational Foundation in honor of Chris Stewart and Deanna Rivers.

The athletic department also held a "Kicking it off for CAPTAIN" event. This is the beginning of a year-long, student-athlete community service project called "Captains for CAPTAIN." The goal of the project is to have all Shen student athletes and teams support CAPTAIN Youth and Family Services. Team programs were sold raising \$1,000 to help kick off this effort.

Bring your own device (BYOD): last backpack generation, continued from pg. 1

When deemed appropriate by the teacher, students will be permitted to use their devices for the purpose of:

- research
- collaboration
- accessing filtered, instructional websites
- tracking classroom assignments
- monitoring the Infinite Campus Portal
- and other teacher-approved, instructional activities (i.e., taking notes)

Devices capable of accessing the internet using a WiFi connection are acceptable with the exception of gaming devices (Nintendo DS/PSP). Acceptable devices include:

- Laptops/Netbooks/Chromebooks
- Tablets (iPad, Android, etc.)
- Smart Phones
- E-reader (Kindle, Nook, etc.)
- iPod touch

It is not mandatory for students to bring devices, even if they do own one.

“We understand that there are many reasons why students may not have access to a device,” said Dr. Robinson. “It may be lost, broken or forgotten. Parents may not want it brought to school or families may not be able to afford one.”

When a classroom teacher integrates devices into their instruction to enhance learning and requires their use, district-provided devices will be available.

In fact, as part of the 2013-14 budget, the district purchased:

- 240 iPads - elementary classrooms
- 550 Chromebooks - middle school,

- 200 Chromebooks - high school

Security

Students using their personal devices will be required to connect to the district-provided, guest wireless network. This provides filtered internet access as per the federal Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Cellular (3G/4G) data plans do not use the filtered internet connection and their use is a violation of district policy.

As part of the BYOD program, students will receive instruction in appropriate and safe online behavior.

Students are expected to adhere to the policies, procedures, and guidelines established for safe and productive use of technology. This includes the student Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), the District Code of Conduct, and the Dignity for all Students Act.

As with all misconduct, students that choose to ignore, circumvent, or violate policies will face consequences. These consequences may include, but are not limited, to revocation of BYOD privileges, confiscation of devices (to be returned to parents or guardians), or other discipline as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

BYOD opens the door for “Tech books”

Remember when the news was reporting stories about students having back problems from carting those heavy textbooks around in their backpacks? Well those days may soon be gone.

BYOD opens the door to the latest technological innovation called “tech books.”

After conducting a thorough review

of science textbooks for the middle school level, Shenendehowa selected its first “techbook,” an online digital textbook. The move to techbooks was appealing for many reasons including:

- embedded videos from the Discovery Channel.
- detailed descriptions in the text, with built-in vocabulary definitions and audiobook features.
- content that is updated routinely by the publisher.

Students will be able to use school-provided Chromebooks to access the techbook in school and will also be able to log-in with Internet access at home. Students unable to access the techbook at home will be given priority access in study halls and will also be able to request copies of the material in paper format. ■



“At Shen, we believe that learning in the 21st century is enhanced through the integration of innovative technology and we want to capitalize on its potential to transform and modernize education,”

Dr. L. Oliver Robinson



Arongen gr. 5 students work together exploring strategies for building spaghetti towers, while they get to know each other on the first day of school.

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Announcements

Changes to STAR Legislation

New legislation requires all homeowners receiving a Basic STAR exemption to register with the New York State Tax Department in order to receive the exemption in 2014 and subsequent years. The tax department mailed instructions to all homeowners who currently receive Basic STAR.

STAR stands for School Tax Assessment Relief. It is a New York State school tax relief program that began in 1997 and provides a partial exemption from school property taxes for homeowners.

There are two different categories under the STAR program:

- Basic STAR is for those who own and live in their own home.
- Enhanced STAR is for seniors, age 65 and above, whose combined household income does not exceed \$74,700. Senior citizens receiving the Enhanced STAR exemption are not affected by the new registration requirement.

Registration for Basic STAR will continue through December 31, 2013. You can register for the STAR exemption online at <http://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star13/default.htm/> or by calling (518) 457-2036.

Drama Club to present "Lost in Yonkers"

Shen High School's Drama Club announces Fall production of Neil Simon's "Lost In Yonkers." It will be presented on Thursday, and Friday, November 14 and 15, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, November 16, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. For more information, go to <http://shendrama.weebly.com>.

Athletic Hall of Fame Induction

The Shenendehowa Athletic Department is pleased to announce that the following team and individuals have been selected for induction as the 2013 Class of the Shenendehowa Athletic Hall of Fame: the 1987 Boys Basketball team and athletes Bradley Acker, Brenna Doty, David Jakob, Bill Norris, Bill Macarthur, Connie Hosterman, and Tom O'Donnell.

The fifth annual Hall of Fame induction ceremony/dinner will take place at the Hall of Springs Restaurant in Saratoga, New York on Thursday, October 17th.

2013-14 Goals and Objectives

The Board of Education adopted the 2013-14 goals in August. The goals can be found on the district's Web site at http://www.shenet.org/DL_ProfileOfShen/2013_14GoalsBrochure.pdf.

Capital Project Update

Last October, resident approved a referendum to address facility needs, provide WiFi access and renovate an existing PE room to provide a physical fitness center at the high school. To date, the exterior repairs to high school east and the middle school complex are partially complete with the balance of work to be completed next summer.

The WiFi project bids are expected to be awarded at the end of September with work starting shortly thereafter. In the mean time, the district installed additional access points (AP's) in the middle schools and elementary schools, to accommodate use of tech books.

Renovation of the PE fitness center and all other projects were recently approved by the SED, however the work will not begin until the spring.

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Volunteers Wanted!

Shen is recruiting residents, area college students and others interested in working with students, helping staff and supporting school activities. Please go to the district's community services web page to learn more or call 881-0611.