

# Shenendehowa

## Central Schools

*What do you mean by that?*

### Breaking down bias

*He is from a "good" family  
She lives in a "certain" neighborhood  
He is from a "broken" home  
She is "a particular race," so she is smart  
He's not from "here"  
That's not an "American" name  
"Those" kids are aggressive*

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in a subconscious manner.

Learned stereotypes in the American culture are pervasive, even if a person does not consciously believe in the stereotype.

Stereotypes are everywhere...race, religion, income, weight, sex, sexual orientation. In fact, they play a key role in how people interact with each other.

The key to successfully addressing bias is awareness. People can train their brain to recognize bias simply by thinking "What did I (or you) mean by that?"

Over the past couple of years, Shenendehowa has embarked on efforts to improve the collective "cultural competence" of the entire system.

The objective of focusing on cultural competence is to promote success for all students, preserving their distinctiveness and sense of significance. Cultural competence seeks to recognize organizational structures that are responsible for producing inequalities and bias behaviors.

This year, efforts have been focused on bringing awareness to implicit bias and its impact on the systemic cultural competency.

For example, research has shown that schools have a history of unequal discipline and disproportionate disciplinary actions for black, hispanic or low income students.

Determining good or bad behavior and the disciplinary

*Continued on page 2*



*Koda sixth-grade students receive their Chromebooks*

*1:1 student technology initiative*

### Limitless opportunities for learning and collaboration

Teaching students to navigate the sea of digital resources provides limitless opportunities for learning and makes classrooms more relevant to their lives.

In September, Shenendehowa began piloting a 1:1 initiative providing all sixth-grade students with a Chromebook for school and home that will stay with them until they graduate.

While it is called the one-to-one technology initiative, it is not just about the device. It is about a fundamental change in the culture of teaching and learning. Technology is only an effective tool if teachers have the skills to use it effectively and students accept greater responsibility for their own learning.

That's why an extensive implementation plan, including teacher training and identification of resources, began more than a year ago for the 1:1 roll out. The ultimate goal is student engagement--fueling a passion for learning.

"Helping students become digitally literate and providing opportunities for online collaboration and coopera-

*Continued on page 3*

### *Implicit Bias , continued from page 1*

action is often subjective. For example, disruptive or disrespectful behavior may be dependent on cultural context of the student and the adult involved.

The Iceberg Concept of Culture talks about the invisible attributes of culture hidden below the surface. These include body language and eye contact; personal space; concepts of justice, fairness, and punishment; patterns of superior/subordinate relations; and nonverbal communication patterns and gestures. Misinterpretation of these can lead to misunderstanding and negative outcomes.

The goal of the district is to foster, facilitate and support culturally responsive behavioral and academic structures.

Behavioral structures from a culturally responsive perspective means asking questions about what rules are being set, by whom, and for what purpose.

Academic structures from a culturally responsive perspective means placing students in academic progressions based on data and not on socially constructed identities. It means understanding how culture affects learning, reasoning, problem solving and communicating. It is about using the knowledge of students to create schools and classrooms so that every student can thrive.

“Everyone has biases,” said Superintendent L. Oliver Robinson. “A key component to creating a culturally competent organization is to help people reflect on their personal assumptions and biases. You can only change what you are willing to acknowledge.” ♦



*Karigon students enjoy designing, building and sculpting with the new Zolo toys for Karigon's Makerspace (creative, DIY spaces where people can gather to create, invent, and learn).*



*Skano/Tesago celebrate 50 years. In May 1964, residents voted to purchase 51 acres adjoining the campus to build elementary schools. In November 1964, residents voted on a \$2.3 million proposition to build the “South Elementary Building.” In 1966, Tesago (courage) and Skano (peace) opened, housing gr. K-6*

Shen High School juniors Thea Peabody (Mouzakes) and Natalie Vandergriff have been selected to attend the Anti-Defamation League's Grosfeld Family National Youth Leadership Mission in Washington, DC.

Only 15 students were selected to represent New York based on an application and interview process.



This year, the National Youth Leadership Mission will bring together a diverse group of high school students from Albany, Chicago, Denver, Florida, Los Angeles, New England, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, San Diego, Santa Barbara, St. Louis and Washington, D.C.

The centerpiece of the Mission will be a visit to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Participants will hear about their responsibility to educate themselves and others, and will be reminded that they each possess the power – through their actions and behavior – to make a difference in the lives of others. ♦

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Superintendent  
Dr. L. Oliver Robinson



*1:1 student technology initiative,  
continued from page 1*

tive learning in a safe, responsible manner prepares them for a global economy,” said Dr. L. Oliver Robinson.

“But the success of any technology tool is still dependent on the teacher’s ability to differentiate content delivery, use resources to explore topics in greater depth and develop lessons that are relevant and engaging.”

While the pilot was implemented for the current sixth-grade class, other grades are still able to bring their own device as part of the BYOD initiative that began in 2013. ♦



## Shen launches a spiritwear shop

Shenendehowa is pleased to announce the launch of the Shen Shop for Shenendehowa spiritwear! Visit <https://theshenshop.mybrightsites.com>.

The shop offers a number of different apparel items and customers can customize their apparel with different logos and colors.

Items will be added and changed so check back regularly.

Look for the logo on the district’s webpage to connect to the site. ♦

## Shen’s Bountiful Backpack Program

### Addressing weekend food insecurities for children

The free and reduced price meal program is a great way to ensure that all students have the nutrition they need to be successful in school. However, many children have limited food resources over the weekend and this can have an impact on their learning and their overall well-being.

Shenendehowa has more than 1,100 gr. K-8 children who receive free or reduced price meals at school. This year, Shen launched a districtwide Bountiful Back Pack Program in partnership with the Regional Food Bank of NENY to meet the needs of some of these children who may have food insecurities over the weekend. The program provides backpacks filled with food that is child-friendly, non-perishable and easily-consumed. Bags are packed each week and discreetly distributed by school staff to participating children every Friday afternoon.

Each bag includes...

- 2 breakfast items (cereal, oatmeal packets, graham crackers, granola bars)
- 3 entrées (mac & cheese, PB & J, SpaghettiOs, tuna fish, soup)
- 2 juice boxes (100% juice)
- Milk card for 1 gallon of milk (distributed every other week)
- 1 loaf of bread
- Fresh fruits (apples, oranges, etc.)
- Canned vegetables (distributed once a month)
- 2 snacks (cookies, popcorn, pudding, etc.)

### Students helping students

Students from the High School’s Community Based Work Program will play a critical role in assembling the backpacks each week for distribution. It provides an opportunity to develop life skills and a sense of pride knowing that their work is so important to the well being of other students.

### How can you help with the backpack program?

Shenendehowa’s Bountiful Backpack program is funded entirely by local donations. The average cost of one backpack full of food is \$6.10. The cost to sponsor a child for a full school year is \$183.00.

To make a contribution, mail donations to:

The Regional Food Bank of NENY  
965 Albany-Shaker Road  
Latham, New York 12110

Be sure to indicate that you’d like the funds to be directed to “Shenendehowa’s Bountiful Backpack Program.”

To make a donation online, go to <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/1415634>. You must indicate **Shen’s Bountiful Backpack Program** in the text box under the “Adopt-A-Program” link to ensure that the funds are credited to the district’s account. ♦



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Superintendent  
Dr. L. Oliver Robinson  
Editor  
Kelly DeFeciani

5 Chelsea PLace, Clifton Park, NY

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Shenendehowa *Central Schools*

FALL 2016

*Committed to Excellence in all things*

## This is Shen...achieving on all fronts

“The recent accolades and recognitions demonstrates an unwavering commitment to excellence by administrators as instructional leaders, teachers as instructional experts, staff as professionals, students as connoisseurs of knowledge and the community as staunch supporters of our efforts each and every day,” said Dr. L. Oliver Robinson. “The synergy of all of our efforts continuously places us at the top.”

### Business Review 2016:

- Shen rated in the top five as a high performing district.
- Shen has the 3rd lowest per pupil cost, in the region.
- Shen has all elementary schools ranked in the top 100 in the region, with seven in the top 50, and three in the top 10 (Tesago, Chango and Skano).

### Newsweek 2016:

- Shen is the top ranked high school in the region.
- Shen is ranked 246 out of more than 15,800 public high schools across the country based on achievement and college readiness indicators.

### Buffalo Business First

- Shen ranked #1 out of more than 460 upstate school districts, in terms of level of proficiency (3 and 4) on NYS standardized assessments for gr. 3-8.

### Academics

- Shenendehowa High School had more semi-finalists in the prestigious National Merit Scholarship process than any other Capital Region high school.
- A Shen High School student earned the highest possible ACT composite score of 36.

- Shen High School has the highest number of students take the ACT in last five years at 349 up from 235 five years ago AND the composite score of 25.7 is at an all-time high, almost 2 points higher than state average of 23.9.

### Athletics

- The Athletic Department won the Kerr Cup Championship, conducted by the New York State Sportswriters Association, as the #1 athletic program in NYS for the second consecutive year.
- Shen athletes have 10 consecutive seasons of all athletic teams making NYSPHSAA Scholar Athlete.
- The Athletic Department has its 3rd consecutive season as being recognized as a NYSPHSAA Scholar Athlete “School of Distinction.”

### Fine Arts/clubs

- Shen High School Varsity Colorguard wins the World Championship, finishing their season undefeated.
- Tesago Elementary chorus receives a Silver Rating at the NYSSMA Majors Festival.
- Shen MS Olympics of the Visual Arts Team takes 2nd place at the Olympics of the Visual Arts (OVA) competition.
- Team 20 Robotics Team recognized at the NY Tech Valley FIRST Competition with the Gracious Professionalism Award.
- Shen’s Shining Stars Colorguard team performs at halftime of the Harlem Globetrotters performance at the Times Union Center. ♦

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Shenendehowa is  
the first district to  
receive the  
“No Place for Hate”  
recognition district-  
wide from the Anti-  
Defamation League