



# Shenendehowa

## Central School District

the  
great  
plains

### *Alternative scheduling options...*

## **Re-evaluating classrooms and the school day to create deeper, more differentiated learning experiences**

Remember the good ole days, students were told to sit still, in rows and be quiet while the teacher lectured. The most important skill was the ability to memorize facts.

That was fine when you had to go to the library for an encyclopedia...but that is not the case anymore. Facts are at their fingertips, more accessible than ever before.

To enter the global economy upon graduation, students need to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, collaborators, and technically competent people.

This requires educators to reevaluate the structure of classrooms and the school day...to not be prisoners of past assumptions.

Over the years, district officials have routinely heard from teachers about what might be possible if they had more time with students.

In a 40-minute class, too often it seems like a mad rush to pack in the facts or concepts. Lacking the time necessary to explore material in different contexts, using different teaching/learning approaches, is a missed opportunity for deep, authentic and differentiated learning.

Longer periods may also provide opportunities for more meaningful relationships between teachers and student because there is more time for creative and interactive classroom activities.

Shenendehowa has embarked on a study to determine the best scheduling model for grades 6-12 (middle and high school) to improve student engagement, achievement and 21st century learning. The secondary class schedules are currently being examined for possible change in the 2021-22 school year.

Based on research and site visits to other schools, administrators developed a document outlining the key elements necessary for evaluating student schedules. All schedules

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### **Shenendehowa Pep Band**

*The newly created Shenendehowa Pep Band debuted at the Shen Homecoming 2019.*

## **Celebrating 10 years of SHENsational...**

On March 21, 2020, the district will celebrate 10 years of SHENsational, a festival highlighting the backgrounds, cultures, and viewpoints that strengthen our community and make us SHEN!

In 2009, the Shenendehowa Diversity Committee, made up of parents, staff, board members and community residents was created to provide the community with knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of our richly diverse population. As part of the effort to encourage increased understanding, the committee has been providing opportunities for multicultural experiences that acknowledge diverse values, and prepare all students for more active participation in a global society.

In 2010, SHENsational was the launching point for the committee's work. Since then, the committee has

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**SHENSational, continued from page 1**

launched a number of initiatives to promote culturally responsive education. Among those are cultural competence professional development, investing in library books that represent all cultures, implicit bias identification in policies, discipline and curriculum, as well as community forums.

This year, the district committee is also looking at ways to have forms and other documents translated into different languages.

The committee is also piloting the Name Project. This will enable students or their parent/guardian to record the pronunciation of their name in Infinite Campus (the district's student data system). Staff members will then be able to hear the proper pronunciation.

**Be a Part of SHENSational 2020!**

The committee would like this 10-year celebration to be the biggest yet. Celebrating all things Shen! There are many different opportunities for participation:

- World Village - Families and groups of families can showcase their heritage, languages, culture, and countries of origin. Each country will have a table in the cafeteria where they can display maps, flags, information, cultural artifacts, and food. Traditional dress is welcome and encouraged!
- Cultural Performances - Individuals or groups may give short presentations (audio/visual equipment provided) about their countries or languages, perform traditional songs, dances, poetry, skits, or special skills such as martial arts or calligraphy.
- Crafts/Games - Individuals

or groups may set up cultural crafts or games.

- International Fashion Show - Individuals model traditional clothes or submit traditional clothes for student volunteers to model during the Fashion Show.

If you have any questions or would like to sign up to participate, please contact Kelly DeFeciani at 518-881-0611 or email [defekell@shenet.org](mailto:defekell@shenet.org)

**Girls' Varsity Golf Team**

*The newly created Girls' Varsity Golf Team won second place in NYSPHSAA Section 2 Championship.*

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

Celebrating  
10 years of  
SHENSational!

March 21, 2020

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Shen High School  
East

**Happenings at Shen...**

*Marissa Fabrizi's global 10 class use Chromebooks to study the Enlightenment period.*



*Gowana students in Jessica Clermont's 6th-grade art class use painting to demonstrate their knowledge of color schemes.*



## Alternative Scheduling, continued from page 1

will be evaluated based on their effectiveness in meeting the following elements:

- Addresses all characteristics of the Profile of Engaged Classroom (see <https://sites.google.com/shenschools.org/shen-alternative-schedule/home>)
- Allows for deep and authentic learning
- Maximizes time for learning by minimizing number of transitions
- Enhances student safety
- Supports student wellness and mental health
- Provides manageable preparation for the next day
- Preserves students accessing same (or more) classes - do no harm clause
- Reduces the likelihood that students leaving school early for appointments miss the same class

### What has been done to date

In the Fall of 2017, administrators began gathering information, researching and studying different scheduling options and visiting schools with different schedules.

In the Spring 2018, a survey was e-mailed to all secondary parents, students and staff to gauge interest in and awareness of different scheduling options.

In the Winter of 2019, a district committee made up of administrators and teachers was formed to review scheduling options and provide feedback.

In the Spring of 2019, the district invited 2,000 randomly selected parents, teachers and students to participate in four focus groups on

three different scheduling options.

The district also held an Open Forum for anyone who had an interest in learning and providing feedback about the different scheduling options being considered.

### Next Steps

After research, soliciting input, and discussion, serious consideration is being given to shifting the MS and High School schedule to classes that meet for a longer period of time, less frequently (i.e. an 80-minute, every other day or 60-minute rotating block).

“While there are many details to be worked out and a final decision has not been made, it’s important to recognize that there is no perfect schedule,” said Deputy Superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Wood. “There will always be barriers to creating a perfect schedule and will also always be some classes students are unable to access, just like what happens with the current scheduling model.”

To help with this process, the district has hired a scheduling consultant to work with the committee to look at how different schedules are being constructed in similar size districts that are using alternating blocks and rotating blocks, identify the variables and review professional development options that support teachers when making a change in schedule.

The goal is to have a final decision mid-year in the 2019-20 school year for consideration with implementation likely in the 2021-22 school year.

There is still a lot of work to be done. The district has created a web page on the district’s site to provide information to parents, students and the public as it becomes available and decisions are made (<https://sites.google.com/shenschools.org/shen-alternative-schedule/home>). There will also be plenty of opportunities for feedback along the way.

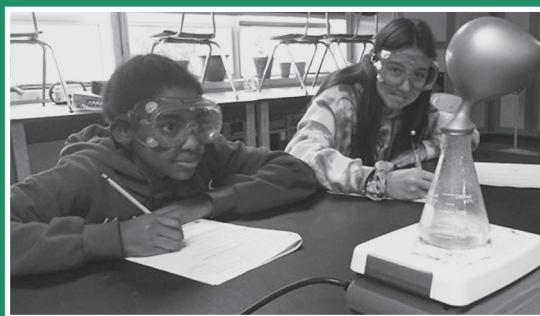
As with any change, rumors and misinformation can create unnecessary anxiety. If you hear something that you would like clarified or answered, please e-mail [defekell@shenet.org](mailto:defekell@shenet.org). We will also provide answers to questions on the newly created web page. ■

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## Happenings at Shen...



*Ms. Monteiro's second grade class at Chango create with Brain Bins, tubs that are integrated into the classroom to promote problem-solving, unstructured inquiry, imaginative play, and an opportunity for students to develop social competency.*



*Koda students in Daniel Eckard's science class investigate how the addition/removal of thermal energy affects particle motion and the expansion of matter. Part of the Next Generation Science standard, students added ice to a beaker and heated through two-phase changes while analyzing the changes in the system.*

## Capital Project Update

Anyone driving on the Shen campus this summer witnessed the mad dash to get major construction projects done when school is not in session. Some of the projects completed this summer include:

- Moving the roadway in the High School East loop, expanding the parking lot, creating a new egress for student parking by the tennis courts.
- Reconfiguring campus roadways and adding center turning lanes in key spots.
- Creating “pull-off” spots that will eventually have campus maps installed.
- Installing new structures for road drainage.
- Repaving the Acadia/Koda parking lot and the main lot/roadway between the pool and the bus garage.
- Replacing the High School West gym roof.
- Renovating the High School East kitchen and cafeteria.
- Renovating the campus elementary cafeteria floors with epoxy.
- Installing snow slides on the roof of the district office to prevent roof leakage.
- Renovating the Little Theatre in High School East.

Next up in the construction line up is the installation of wayfinding signs on campus. This includes buildings, fields, directional maps, and some internal signage as well.

With any luck, the plans for the renovation of the High School East technology wing will be approved by the New York State Education Department in time for construction to begin at the end of this school year.

## Happenings at Shen...



*Shenendehowa High school students visit Shatekon to help make quilts which will be sent out to those in need in the community.*

## Shen staff e-mail conversion

Shenendehowa staff e-mail will be converting from SHENET.ORG to SHENSCHOOLS.ORG. Currently the district runs both with staff using both e-mail systems and students using shenschools.org.

The goal is to complete the transition by January 1, 2020. E-mails sent to shenet.org will automatically be forwarded to shenschools.org.

Just like “shenet.org,” the “shenschools.org” addresses for staff will be the first four letters of the last name followed by the first four letters of the first name, then @shenschools.org