



# Shenendehowa

## Central School District

*the  
great  
plains*

### *Boundless Possibilities...Redefining Normal*

#### **Steadfast Focus on Evolving as a Learning Community**

The 2022-2023 school year began in early September with a level of excitement that was palpable across all school buildings. Students, teachers and staff alike felt the positive energy and the boundless opportunities that awaited the school community. Each and every day, the actualization of the mission fuels the collective Commitment to Excellence. All resources, processes and initiatives are focused on helping every student develop the tools they need to succeed and thrive in a knowledge-driven society. We are committed to do more, so all our students can be more and do better.

A safe learning community is our top priority. Shenendehowa has a comprehensive district-wide safety plan, building level Emergency Response Plans, as well as school Emergency Response Teams in every building. This year, protocols, training and communication efforts have been further enhanced through collaborative work with school Emergency Response Teams, the district's SAVE Committee, and local and state law enforcement. An additional School Resource Officer (SRO) was hired, bringing the total to three SRO's helping to keep our schools safe while continuing to build relationships with students and our law enforcement partners. An early warning and threat assessment tool has also been implemented to help alert teachers and staff of a potential threat in real-time. In addition, the district conducts updated training with all related service providers in the threat assessment process.

As we look ahead to the exciting opportunities this school year brings, students and staff were welcomed with new initiatives and programs at the elementary, middle and high school levels:

- Expanded technology district-wide with 170 interactive panels (stationary) and 50 interactive mobile panels (pictured on the bottom left) that allow teachers and students the ability to work collaboratively in a dynamic learning space;
- Shifted to 60 minute block scheduling at the Middle School level, creating a balanced opportunity for higher level thinking and application with continued opportunities for one-on-one teacher support;
- Enhanced multi-tiered systems of support with universal screener benchmark assessments for grades K-8 throughout the school year; helping students receive more support or additional enrichment in real-time.



*Second graders in Ms. Beck and Mrs. Kinne's classes at Shatekon Elementary use their brand new interactive mobile panel to work on different math skills.*

### *Shenendehowa is Hiring!*



**Hiring for Excellence:**  
Shenendehowa seeks  
culturally proficient  
individuals who  
actively promote  
the highest levels  
of achievement for  
*every student.*

Scan the QR Code with your smartphone or visit  
[www.shenet.org/employment](http://www.shenet.org/employment) to make a  
difference in the lives of students, today.

## High School Earns National Recognition as Special Olympics Unified Champion School

Special Olympics New York honored Shen High School with National Banner status this fall in recognition of the school's leadership in creating an inclusive school community. The distinction marks the highest level of achievement within the Special Olympics Unified Sports movement. Shen is only the 16th school district in New York to achieve this honor.

Shen High School has offered Unified Sports since 2014, earning Unified Champion School status. Students with and without intellectual disabilities play on the same sports teams in both Unified Basketball and Unified Bowling. Last school year, Shen High School implemented Unified Physical Education which allows juniors and seniors in general Physical Education courses to enroll in the Unified P.E. course, which provides for an inclusive experience for students with and without disabilities.

The future is bright for the Unified program at Shenendehowa with plans to model Unified P.E. at the Middle School level while continuing to provide inclusive opportunities throughout the district.



*Unified Sports and Unified P.E. students celebrate their National Banner status at the Spirit Rally before Homecoming.*

## Community Skills Development and the Mehta Family: Paying it Forward for Future Shen Students



*Josh prepares food at High School East.*

Once a Plainsmen, always a Plainsmen. That statement certainly rings true for Josh Mehta, a graduate of Shen and current employee in the Food Service Department at High School East. During his final two years at Shen, Josh participated in the Community Skills Development program.

The program consists of 19 students with special needs who have IEP (Individualized Education Program) goals as it relates to accessing the community. The students are between the ages of 18-21 and have completed a minimum of 12 years of school. The vocational curriculum focuses on increasing students' skills for independent living while working towards a NYS Career Development and Occupational Studies Credential (CDOS).

"The Community Skills Development program helped me develop important life skills and work-related skills I now use in my job today," Josh said.

The Mehta family prides themselves on giving back to the community and they share that commitment to philanthropy with their children. When Josh's parents asked what he would like to support, he immediately thought of the program at Shen and how he could make an impact on future students.

From the generosity of the Mehta family, the 48-hour Immersion Experience was created. The three year grant will provide two Immersion Experiences per year. The first experience kicked off in April 2022 with 18 students participating. Students were taught essential life skills that simulated an experience for learning independent life skills at a local hotel. The next Immersion Experience is this fall.

"I wanted to give back to help my friends and teachers," Josh said. "I look forward to supporting this program every year and reconnecting with students and teachers during the Immersion Program."



*Josh visits with Immersion Program students in April.*

## Chango Elementary becomes the fourth Shen school to receive National Blue Ribbon status

On September 15 of this year, Chango Elementary was named a 2022 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. Chango is one of 297 schools nationwide, including 20 schools in New York state to receive this honor in 2022.

Chango was selected as a National Blue Ribbon school for overall academic performance, excelling in the Exemplary High-Performing Schools category. Exemplary High-Performing Schools are measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests.

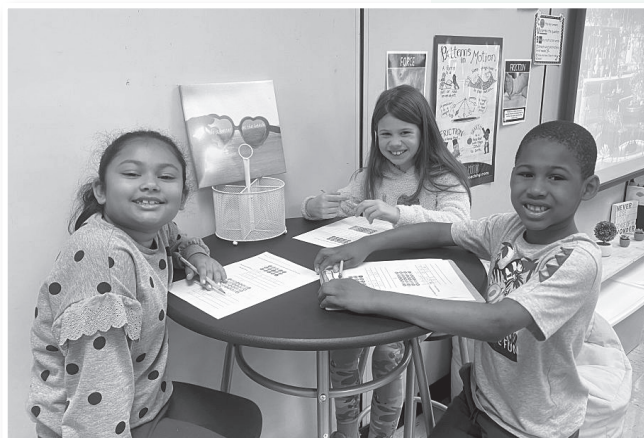
This is the fourth school in the Shenendehowa Central School District to earn this recognition. Previous recipients include: Tesago Elementary (2013), Orenda Elementary (1990), and Gowana Junior High School (1989).

"The district is extremely proud of Chango Elementary School," Superintendent Dr. L. Oliver Robinson stated. "Through the contributions of all our students, teachers, staff, PTA, parents within the Chango family and the leadership of both former Principal Karin Skarka and current Principal Michelle Rawson, the school excels at offering a positive learning environment for all children to thrive and flourish."

Chango will receive the prestigious National Blue Ribbon School flag at the official ceremony this November in Washington, D.C.



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*Ms. Salvi's students at Chango Elementary work on math skills, focusing on the community property in small groups.*



### Q: Where can I find more information about safety and security at Shen?

A: Scanning the QR code to the left will lead directly to the Safety and Security page on the district's website. This page has comprehensive resources, including the district's Emergency Response policy, regulation and plan which are approved by the Board of Education every year and always available to the public.

--> **Did you know...** that both the district-wide SAVE Committee and building level Emergency Response Teams are trained using the Incident Command System?

--> **Safety is everyone's priority at Shenendehowa.** If you see something, say something; call the Emergency Response number at: 518-603-4923.

### Q: How is future-ready furniture being utilized in the classroom environment?

A: Future-ready furniture grants were awarded to 16 teachers this academic year. The grant highlights the use of innovation to promote social interaction and creativity. Future ready furniture grants were scored on a handful of categories: student creativity, student voice and choice in learning, social interaction, redefining learning tasks, vibrant classroom environment, and alignment to specific research.

--> **One example: Ms. Temphest at Arongen Elementary.** The grant allowed her first grade classroom to transform from traditional desks in rows to dynamic seating options, enhancing creativity and group work (*inset right*).



## Capital Project Updates (Phase I)

The past six months of 2022 kicked off Phase I of the Capital Project approved by voters in May 2021. A lot of activity happened across the district to update facilities, expand educational spaces and make necessary improvements for aging buildings. Some of the completed projects include:

- High School East back parking lot and sidewalk redesign and repaving, adding 65 parking spaces for teachers and staff, including additional handicapped spaces;
- Two multi-purpose turf fields behind Koda Middle School to be utilized for Middle School Physical Education, athletics and community use (pictured on the right);
- Partial roof replacements at High School East and West;
- Arongen Elementary A/C upgrade and boiler replacement;
- Both High School West and Arongen Elementary select window replacements;
- High School East main gym floor replacement.



*Two multi-purpose turf fields now host Physical Education classes across all three middle schools.*

## Phase II for Summer 2023

Targeted for summer of 2023, Phase II will start with a large portion of the Capital Project focusing on Gowana Middle School. The two priorities for Gowana improvements focus on essential safety needs and key educational enhancements.

Transitioning the Gowana main office from its current location to directly in front of the main entrance will provide increased safety and security for visitors, students and staff. The move will create two new instructional spaces, including upgrades to the art room.

In addition to the Gowana project, other Phase II project highlights include:

- Upgraded LED lighting and science rooms at all three middle schools;
- A/C installation at all Elementary schools (except Arongen and Shatekon, which already have A/C);
- Repaving of School Drive (main campus roadway).



*65 additional parking spots were added behind High School East.*