



Where students are
known, valued and challenged.

Middle School Program of Studies

The Sharon Academy Culture & Curriculum

2021-2022

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August, 2021

Dear Students and Parents,

Whether you are in the process of considering TSA middle school or have already joined our learning community, the intent of this Program of Studies is to provide the information you will need to learn about our program and our community.

The Program of Studies looks closely at the culture and curriculum of the school – what we do and why we do it. Along with our Handbook, this booklet will give you the information you need for your time here at TSA.

The middle school strives to offer a rigorous and relevant academic curriculum, while also addressing the social, emotional, and developmental needs of young adolescents in a safe and nurturing environment. We work hard, and do a lot of laughing in the process. If you would like to come see for yourself, parents are always welcome!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew H. Lane".

Andrew Lane
Director of the Middle School



Sept 2021

PROGRAM of STUDIES

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Our Middle School Students, 2019 2020



Sept 2021



The mission of The Sharon Academy is to nurture intelligent, independent, and creative thinking in a small school community, awakening students to their immense potential and the difference they can make in the world.

About The Sharon Academy Culture and Curriculum

The spirit of The Sharon Academy's mission is integral to the operation and the vision of our school. We intentionally and deliberately incorporate our mission into our practices each day – it is the foundation of our school's community.

TSA's faculty and staff work together as a team, dedicated to the implementation of the mission and the support of students. The faculty's ability to cooperate and plan together as a team is evident throughout our program, and throughout daily interactions with each other and with students.

TSA helps students determine where their interests and passions lie, and then encourages students to pursue them. Courses are designed to give students the opportunity to explore, wrestle with, question, and find meaning in the subject being taught. Curricula are developed to foster creativity and independent thought. Many of the school's events are intended to help students expand and deepen their intellectual, ethical, emotional, artistic and physical selves. Leadership opportunities abound within the program.

TSA faculty and staff systematically and regularly care for the emotional well-being of students. We have carefully developed and maintained a web of systems and processes that allow staff and faculty members to know every student. We pride ourselves on maintaining an environment in which students feel safe to discuss issues of identity, whether those issues be cultural, academic, racial, or religious.

TSA can best be described as a hybrid of public and private education offering the advantages of a small school environment. Our goal is to create a school with high academic standards where students feel safe – a place where students come first; where they are able to be themselves, be accepted socially, and challenged academically.

Proficiency and TSA's 7 Gateway Standards

In order for students to succeed in the world outside of school, students need to be able to go *beyond* the content they learn in class. Employers and colleges are reporting that they are lacking applicants who are flexible, creative, active, engaged and thoughtful learners; problem solvers who are able to dig deeply and communicate effectively. *Please see Appendix A for the National Association of Colleges and Employers analysis of the key attributes employers seek.*

At TSA, students learn how to learn.

In a world in which there is more and more information to be consumed, learning can no longer be measured solely as mastery of a set of content: there is simply too much to know. Students need a suite of well-practiced skills that allow them to *apply* their knowledge to problem solving through acquiring and synthesizing information, using imagination, persevering, and communicating. Along with learning content in their classes, students must be explicitly taught and evaluated on the skills they order to successfully transition to life after high school.

At TSA, we use a proficiency-based system for learning, teaching and assessment. TSA's Proficiency program was designed and built from the ground up to give students the tools they need to learn how to learn, while teaching them transferable skills. The Proficiency system at TSA prepares students for success in life after middle and high school.

At TSA, Proficiency means:

- **Mastering skills and content:** Students gain the skills that will make them leaders on college campuses, in the workplace, and as citizens.
- **An emphasis on feedback and progress:** Student work is assessed using rubrics and a "scale of mastery". Student work is evaluated in relationship to meeting the standard set in the rubric: "Starting" to meet the standard, "Progressing", "Meeting", or Exceeding". Students also earn a letter grade, which represents their overall achievement in the course. Additionally, students are asked to reflect on their learning by asking: "How am I progressing? What have I accomplished? What can I do to improve?" rather than, "What grade did I get?" By giving targeted and specific feedback, the proficiency-based system gives students more information about their learning progress. It helps them better understand where they are already proficient, and where they need to focus more effort.

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- **Multiple opportunities:** Students will have multiple opportunities within a single class to demonstrate mastery of a content standard, and will have opportunities across many classes and school experiences (such as Circus) to demonstrate mastery of transferable skills. Opportunities to revise work are frequently given.
 - **Offering support and appropriate challenge:** Tracking student progress against clear standards means we can more readily identify when a student needs support to meet the standard, and also when a student can use additional challenges and encouragement to exceed the standard.

Transferable Skills: TSA's Gateway Standards

To provide a unified vision of the skills we value and teach, the middle and high school have developed descriptions of 7 transferable skills that students will begin working on as soon as they begin at TSA, and master in order to graduate. These skills are taught and evaluated along with content knowledge. They are called the Gateway Standards, and they are as follows:

- 1) **ACQUIRE:** Acquire Information Critically
- 2) **REASON:** Think Critically and Reason to Construct Arguments
- 3) **DESIGN:** Demonstrate Creativity in Problem Solving and Design
- 4) **COMMUNICATE:** Communicate Effectively
- 5) **SELF-DIRECT:** Take Responsibility for Learning and Growth
- 6) **ENGAGE:** Commit to Community and Responsible Citizenship
- 7) **SUSTAIN:** Explore Social, Emotional, and Physical Well-being

Each Gateway Standard is further broken down into performance indicators. A performance indicator is a specific skill, related to the Gateway Standard, that a student will need to demonstrate mastery of (for a full list of TSA's Standards and skills, please see *page 13 in the Quick Reference section*).

Curriculum Overview

The Integrated Curriculum

The middle school program is a two-year cycle in which 7th and 8th graders are grouped together in multi-age classrooms. The central themes of the two-year curriculum are identity, personal responsibility, and action. Guiding questions are: "Who am I?", "What do I believe?", "What are my responsibilities?", and "How can I make a difference?" The content is guided by the Vermont Framework of Standards Grade

Expectations and by The Common Core. Our teaching methods are guided by TSA's Mission Statement, The Vermont Framework of Standards Vital Results, the Coalition of Essential School's Ten Principles, TSA's Vision of a Graduate, and TSA's Proficiency Standards.

Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Art use an interdisciplinary approach to explore the central questions. The curriculum is also integrated within each discipline. For example, the Science curriculum

draws from various branches of science such as Earth Science, Physical Science, and Biology rather than treating each branch as a separate frame of reference. Social Studies examines U.S. and world events that relate to the guiding questions listed above, rather than taking a linear and compartmentalized approach. Language Arts deepens the exploration of topics covered in Science and Social Studies through reflective writing and reading and analyzing works of fiction.



Curriculum Units

The middle school cycles through a two-year curriculum. We believe that "less is more" and have limited our studies to six units throughout the two years. We also have several opportunities for students to explore beyond the curriculum units: for example, the writing of poetry and/or short stories within the Language Arts curriculum, our annual Science Fair, Social Studies debates, and our annual Circus.

Year A

In Year A, the middle school curriculum examines the themes of identity, responsibility, and action through three content themes: Human Rights, Food and Hunger, and Energy and Sustainability.

The year begins with the theme of **Human Rights**. In Social Studies, we explore the structure of the US government and our rights as citizens of Vermont and of the United States. This includes a study of our founding documents and their relevance to our lives. Science class explores what all living things have in common, the structures and functions of cells, and genetics. With this knowledge, we are ready to investigate how humans are all similar but different because of both environmental and genetic factors. Students are then prepared to question why some people have been afforded different rights throughout history. Health class addresses human reproduction and development from egg to birth. In Language Arts, students read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee and *The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas. Both of these books explore themes of prejudice and justice at different times in American history. The culminating writing project for this unit is a persuasive essay about a controversial human rights issue.

The Human Rights unit is followed by a study of issues surrounding the theme of **Food and Hunger**. In Social Studies we examine the ways in which government policies affect the cost and availability of food in America. We research food justice issues affecting Vermont, the U.S., and the wider world. We look at individuals and organizations working to address global hunger and think about what we can do to improve access to healthy and affordable food in our own community. Science explores nutrition, digestion, and how photosynthesis is the source of energy in the food web. Students analyze the nutritional content of food, build a model of digestion, use a calorimeter, and experiment with how plants build biomass from sunlight. Our afternoon Health class looks at personal food habits and teaches some basic cooking skills. In Language Arts, students read *Black Potatoes*, by Susan Campbell Bartoletti, a book about the Irish potato famine. This book also



Parents view the ceramic "meals" students created in Art Class as a part of the Food and Hunger unit

explores agrarian societies, the impact of food on history, and the relationships between those who have food and those who do not. In Art class, students build ceramic meals coupled with a written analysis of the nutritional value of their model meal. Finally, students spend an intensive three-week period researching and writing *Our Times*, a newsletter that educates the community about a variety of food issues. The newsletter is printed at a local press and is widely distributed throughout the community and on-line.

Next we move into the study of **Energy and Sustainability**. The unit opens with a showing and discussion of the controversial documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, to introduce students to the complex relationship between resource consumption and

climate change. In Social Studies, we study the history of industrialization and energy use. As we learn about the Industrial Revolution in Vermont and the US, we discuss the ethical and environmental impact of our modern resource consumption. In Science, we study energy, energy transfers, and basic principles of electricity and electrical generators. We also look at the composition of the atmosphere to understand the term "carbon footprint" and to draw connections between climate change and energy use. In



Social Studies: Learning to card wool while learning about the Industrial Revolution in the Energy unit

Language Arts, students read *October Sky*, by Homer Hickam, a coming-of-age story about boys growing up in a coal mining town. Using knowledge they've gained throughout this unit, students research a sustainability-related issue in our own community and give an oral presentation proposing a change they believe would lead to more responsible, efficient resource use.

Year B

Year B's curriculum examines the themes of *identity, responsibility, and action* from three content areas: Living in Vermont, This I Believe, and Immigration.

The first theme, **Living in Vermont**, asks students to reflect on how Vermont's cultural traditions, physical landscape, climate, and biome help to shape who they are as individuals. In Social Studies, students use primary sources to investigate Vermont's history and culture, with particular attention paid to the indigenous peoples of this region. Students learn how to analyze maps, photos, and census data in order to make logical deductions about the past. They also practice making their own maps and



Science: Students catching rusty crayfish in the White River to study invasive species

reflecting on how Vermont culture compares to other regions through multi-media exchanges with students in other parts of the world. In Science, students spend a great deal of time outside learning ecology and biodiversity through a local lens. Students collect and study the Rusty Crayfish, an invasive species in the White River; do a biodiversity inventory of the local forest; learn to identify native trees and examine how their adaptations make them uniquely adapted to our climate; and analyze data about local bobcat, deer and hare populations to draw conclusions about food webs. Students apply their map and compass skills from Social Studies on an orienteering course focused on tree identification. In

Language Arts, we read literature that stimulates discussion about setting and identity, such as *Return to Sender*, by Julia Alvarez. In Art, students study the artist Andy Goldsworthy and create art from the Vermont landscape using natural materials. The whole school takes a day to climb Mount Cardigan to hone their map and compass skills, look at the ecology of the mountaintop and practice landscape artwork.

The second theme of the year asks students to consider their identity through the lens of **World Beliefs**. Students ask themselves how science, religion, and family values shape who they are and what they believe. The Social Studies curriculum focuses on major world religions and the traditions and cultures that have arisen from these religions. After learning how Judaism, Christianity, and Islam address the philosophical questions of "What happens after death?" and "How should I live my life?", students have a chance to research a world religion of their choosing. Over the course of a month, they hone their research and writing skills, culminating in a final oral presentation to teach others about their chosen religion. In Language Arts, book selections include *Refugee* by Alan Gratz, the story of three refugees whose lives overlap and intertwine, and *Night* by Elie Wiesel, the story of the author's experience in a concentration camp. Students write a personal essay entitled "This I Believe," outlining a personal belief or ideal. As a counterpoint to the study of religion, Science class examines how scientific theories develop from a body of evidence and are subject to change. Students explore the basic properties of matter, and study basic chemistry to look at life and the origin of the universe through a scientific lens.



Art: Student making art in the forest behind The Sharon Academy High School after studying Andy Goldsworthy



Art Class

We end the year examining the question "Who Am I?" through the theme of Origins. In Social Studies students study immigration and refugee issues. Students analyze political cartoons to understand historical immigration trends and research current controversies about undocumented immigrants and refugees. Using their understanding of U.S. and international policies, students work in teams to present thoughtful, well-researched arguments in our end-of-year debates.

Other Classes and Subjects

Middle School Math • Math class is not a part of the Integrated Curriculum. The middle school runs four or five math classes (depending on the students' needs and abilities) that are grouped according to skill level. Students move through a standard 7th and 8th grade math curriculum in either one or two years. Faster paced students will move on to Algebra 1 in the 8th grade.

Study All (two hours per week) • Study All (held twice a week) is a class that is designed to help students with their organizational skills, study habits, mental health and wellness strategies, presentation skills, and time management. We also cover important content such as: bullying, online safety, sex education, drugs and alcohol education (8th grade only), how the brain learns, and more. Students will also work on their Personal Learning Plan, an ongoing portfolio of activities that will help them reflect on personal and academic interests, goals, strengths and challenges. (Please see page 13 for more information on Personal Learning Plans.)

Spanish (two hours per week) • Students will cover basic grammar, vocabulary, and a survey of Spanish-speaking cultures and history. Their progress towards proficiency will be assessed in 4 realms; speaking, listening, writing, and reading. After two years of middle school Spanish students are eligible to enter Spanish 2 in the high school.

Current Events (one hour per week) • Current Events is viewed as an extension of the Social Studies curriculum. Students follow and discuss the news and are introduced to the stock market in Social Studies class once a week.

Art (two hours per week) • Art is closely tied to the core curriculum. Projects are coordinated with the core themes. Students are exposed to a wide variety of media

and learn basic skills and techniques in art. Each student is encouraged to develop his or her own creativity through experimentation and risk taking. The "Middle School Book", a two year compilation of middle school work, is created and organized in art class. Student artwork is displayed as much as possible in the school's main hallway.

Community Meeting (thirty minutes per week) • Students meet each week to plan community events, resolve community conflicts and issues, and build relationships in the community through games and other cooperative activities.

ESP Class - Emotional, Social, Physical (two hours per week) • We offer a wide variety of activities throughout the school year to help students be physically active and emotionally/socially aware, such as: fitness activities, archery, yoga, goal-setting, and team-building.

Intentional Curricular Elements



Students present their findings at the Science Fair

Science Fair • Every year, students spend six to eight weeks designing and conducting experiments as a part of our Science Fair. Students work with our science teacher to develop their own scientific question and carry out the experiments. This culminates in a public poster session of their results in June, where students give in-depth descriptions of their research to the public. For a list of last year's Science Fair projects, please see the following page.

Circus • Each year, Troy Wunderle, a trained circus performer and ringmaster, comes to TSA and transforms the school into a circus. Under Wunderle's careful tutelage, the middle school devotes the better part of two weeks to learning and practicing circus skills including clowning, juggling, unicycle riding, gymnastics, stilt walking. All the while, the students are learning about teamwork, collaboration, and responsibility. Importantly, they are also learning how to use failure as a stepping stone to success.

Students also help to write the script for the clowning acts, arrange and perform live music, coordinate the advertising for the show, set up the staging and seating, build the props and scenery and invent pre-circus games for younger children. The circus is an ideal medium for developing physical, emotional and social competence in our

students. The circus performance is a popular annual event in the community, usually drawing a crowd of over 600 spectators.

Transferable Skills • Twenty-first century skills such as critical thinking, perseverance, creative problem solving, effective communication (written and verbal), and commitment to community are practiced throughout the curriculum. Students read six or more assigned books each year and three more of their own choosing. Developmentally appropriate literature is selected for its value in terms of language, voice, and relevance. Students exercise analytical skills as they read and discuss writing style and themes. Reading of textbooks and other non-fiction (i.e. articles from current journals, news media, books) is regularly assigned in Science and Social Studies and discussed both in terms of the content and the reading skills required. Writing is intensive throughout the curriculum. Students are continually practicing the basic rules of grammar and punctuation. In longer pieces of writing, the emphasis is on research, the production of original work, and the mechanics and style of writing. Discussion-based classrooms give ample opportunity for listening and speaking. Students are required to deliver numerous oral presentations throughout the two years.



The Middle School Circus

Demonstration of Learning • In all components of the curriculum, we strive to create opportunities that meet the different learning styles and needs of all students by providing leveled and varied assignment options and by creating individual learning plans when needed. Student learning is demonstrated in a variety of ways through writing, presentations, speeches, plays, displays, art projects, research papers, journals, debates, experiments, simulations, and model construction.

Social and Emotional Well-Being • The social-emotional curriculum is an important focus of the middle school years. The staff is committed to helping each student navigate middle school feeling safe and supported.

- Each spring the entire school spends time at the Hulbert Outdoor Center to build group interactive skills, leadership skills and to strengthen community.
- We have an all-school meeting once a week to voice and solve community issues.
- “Study All”, an all purpose class, meets for two hours a week in a small intimate group setting to foster social-emotional learning and to present the health

curriculum.

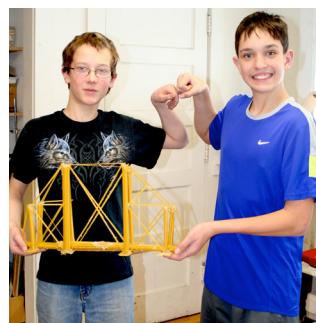
- Students are assigned an advisor to monitor their academic success, their social/emotional well being, and to keep communication open between parents, teachers, and students.
- Class groupings are reshuffled every six weeks to allow students the chance to work with everyone in the middle school.
- Three dances and a semi-formal are held each year.
- The school counselor meets regularly with all students, identifying “at risk” individuals and mentoring the staff on how to address student behavioral and emotional issues competently.

Physical Activity • The middle school recognizes the need for middle level students to be active. Lunch/recess is forty minutes long and students are encouraged to go outside. In the winter, we make arrangements for students to ski or snowboard at a local ski area on Wednesday afternoons. Field trips such as climbing a mountain or spending days in the woods are integrated in the curriculum. All students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular sports. The Emotional, Social and Physical Wellness (ESP) class includes physical activity most sessions.

Sustainability • Sustainability practices are steadily becoming part of our middle school culture. Each year we look for new ways to model and practice sustainable habits. Whenever possible, we incorporate sustainability issues into the curriculum. We recycle, compost, and reuse as much as possible. We take a field trip to a local landfill to learn more about the long-term impact of our trash.

Sports • Our after-school sports program includes soccer, basketball, baseball, Ultimate and track. Many students also participate on a rock climbing team. Each winter, we partner with Suicide Six Ski Area to provide an opportunity for students to ski there on Wednesday afternoons. Additionally, if a student wishes to play a sport that TSA does not offer (for instance: Football or Girl's Lacrosse) the Vermont Principals Association provides opportunities for students to play that sport with another school.

Extra Curricular Competitions • Middle school teams have competed in the MathCounts regional competition, Jr Iron Chef, and in the Department of Energy sponsored National Science Bowl at both the regional and national



Students build pasta bridges
in Science class

levels. The school also sends an interested student to the National Geographic Geography Bee each year. Many students participate in a local Robotics team.

Student Support

Advisory • The Advisory Program at TSA exists to support students in making the most of their experience as members of the TSA community. TSA's Advisory Program allows students to connect with at least one teacher in the school with whom they maintain contact throughout middle school and from whom they can receive academic and social/emotional support. It is our intent that students will remain with the same advisor for middle school so that they can build a relationship. However, there is an advisory selection process if students do not feel that their advisor meets their needs.

The specific purposes of advisory are:

- Academic: to monitor student progress, make sure requirements are being met, set academic goals and help students reach them. Discuss progress reports with students and parents, and help them develop a greater understanding of TSA's mission;
- Social/Emotional: to provide another touchpoint between students and adults to monitor students' social and emotional well being;
- Community Service: to support students in selecting and performing meaningful Community Service;
- Community and Communication: to converse about community issues, including school governance, while also strengthening communication between students, staff and parents and to share school-related announcements and information;

Personalized Learning Plans • All TSA middle school students create a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) in Study All. The PLP is an ongoing portfolio of activities that will help students reflect on personal and academic interests, goals, strengths and challenges. The PLP is also a portfolio of students' academic work. These plans help students share their progress with their families at conferences and is a record of their best middle school work at the time of graduation. For more information on this statewide initiative please visit <http://education.vermont.gov/plpworkinggroup/main>

Academic Student Services • At TSA, we want all students to experience academic success and to perform to the best of their abilities. We recognize that sometimes

students may need assistance to achieve their potential. Students who require additional support for academic success will be referred to the Academic Services Director. The student, along with their family, will work with the director to develop a plan for academic support. The plan may include referring the family and student for testing, referring the family and student to a tutor, or developing an appropriate school or 504 Plan. We can serve students with IEPs in the Special Education categories of Specific Learning Disability and Other Health Impaired.

School Counselor • At TSA, we recognize the relationship between academic success and emotional well-being. The School Counselor's (SC) office is available to all students during the school day as a safe place for all TSA students to engage in open, honest, and confidential conversations.

Our full-time School Counselor is a trained social worker available to all students to help guide them through their middle school and high school careers. Her office is open to all students, whether they would like to drop by to simply "decompress", to engage in open honest conversations, or if they need more involved interventions. Our School Counselor often works with families, and can also help families find outside resources that they may require.

The School Counselor supports our students and families with the following needs:

- Psychiatrist/Psychologist referrals
- Student Support Team referrals
- Individual Sessions (weekly, monthly or as needed) to help support students with stress and anxiety, peer relations, time management, identity development, transition to high school
- Group Counseling
- Creation and implementation of Social/Emotional/Behavior plans

In instances of substance abuse or dependency, students can use the self-referral procedure as outlined in the Drug and Alcohol policy to access the support they need, or they may be referred by another student, staff, or parent.

Staff practice strict confidentiality. This means that trust and safety are absolutely essential to our conversations with students. In any instance where we believe students are at risk of harm we will act to ensure their safety.

If we cannot guarantee student safety, we reserve the right to seek additional help. Examples where we may be concerned about student safety might include: child abuse, sexual assault, domestic or dating violence, suicidal thoughts or actions, threats of violence against self or others, or driving under the influence. For suspicions of child abuse or suicidal thoughts or actions, TSA is required by law to contact the appropriate authority.

Kid Talk • Every week, TSA faculty and staff meet with the sole purpose of discussing the wellbeing of students. Throughout the year, advisors share updates on individual students (celebrations and concerns). In preparation for parent/teacher/student conferences, advisors present profiles of each of their advisees to the rest of staff, highlighting each student's strengths, opportunities, personality, and learning style. Together, the staff learns of each student's accomplishments and growth, and discuss strategies for supporting and teaching each student. Where appropriate, a plan may be developed for further supporting a student's academic or emotional goals. Additionally, time is set aside at each of these meetings to address any students who are in crisis – academic or personal – and to develop a plan for their support.



MIDDLE SCHOOL Student Support Program Flowchart

The Student Support Program at the TSA Middle School involves all of our staff and faculty. We all work in different ways to support our students socially, emotionally and academically. The following flowchart outlines the different kinds of support that a student or parent may need while at the Middle School and who to contact in order to find the needed support. We recommend that specific class concerns be initially brought to the student's teacher; while broader social, emotional or academic concerns be brought to the student's advisor. From there it is likely that various other TSA Support personnel and administrative staff may become involved to offer guidance.

Step 1: Teacher

If the issue is with a **specific class**, address the issue with that teacher. If the issue is not with an individual class, or if the teacher is not able to satisfactorily address the issue, contact the student's advisor.

Step 2: Advisor

The student, parent, or teacher(s) should address the issue with the student's advisor. If the advisor is not able to assist in the resolution of the issue, or if additional social/emotional or academic support is needed, they should contact the appropriate student support personnel (see below).

Step 3: Admin.

Director of Middle School
Andrew Lane
alane@sharonacademy.net
802-763-2500 Ext. 301

Additional Support Personnel

Special Educator Margaret Gish mgish@sharonacademy.net 802-753-2500	Academic Student Support Kyle Paquette kpaquette@sharonacademy.net 802-763-2500	School Counselor Lydia Wood lwood@sharonacademy.net 802-763-2500 Ext. 216	MS Administrative Support Janice Stumpf jstumpf@sharonacademy.net 802-763-2500 Ext. 300
Educational Support, 504, IEP Plans Academic Testing Tutoring Support	Small Group / Individual Support In/Out of classroom support	Individual/Group Counseling: Social/Emotional Support Plans Counseling Referrals	Community Services General School Safety General School Paperwork

Step 4: Head of School

Mary Newman

If the issue is not able to be resolved satisfactorily through the above steps, the Head of School, or his designee, will be the final arbiter of any remaining concerns.

Notes

Student and Family Reference Guide

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Sept 2021

The Sharon Academy

2021-2022 School Event Calendar

July 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

July
4
Independence day
5
1/2 Day
no school
6
HS Interim
7
conference day
8
vacation

August 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

August
26-27, 30
Teacher In-Service
31
7th, 8th, 9th Grade Orientation

September 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

September
1 - 2
HS and MS Orientation
3
No School - Teacher In-Service
6
No School - Labor Day
7
School Resumes, Start of HS Module 1
9
MS Parent Information Night, 6:30 pm
23
HS Parent Information Night, 6:30 - 8:00
28
Picture Day

October 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

October
1
No School - HS Grading Day/MS Inservice
4
Start of HS Module 2
11
No School - Teacher Inservice (Indigenous Peoples' Day)
13
PSAT DAY
15
Troy Wunderle Visits MS
16
Prospective Family Information Event, 3:30 - 5:30
29
1/2 Day for HS and MS (1pm dismissal)
TBD
SAT Day at TSA

Days: 1

November 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

November
1
Start of HS Module 3
19
No School MS - Middle School Conference Day
8-20
HS Interim
22-26
Thanksgiving Recess
29
School Resumes
29
HS Module 3 resumes

Days: 19

December 2021	December	Days: 18
Su M Tu W Th F Sa		
	1 2 3 4	
5 6 7 8 9 10 11	No School/HS Inservice	
12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Holiday Recess	
19 20 21 22 23 24 25		
26 27 28 29 30 31		Days: 13
January 2022	January	
Su M Tu W Th F Sa		
	1	
2 3 4 5 6 7 8	School resumes	
9 10 11 12 13 14 15	Start of HS Module 4	
16 17 18 19 20 21 22	Ski Program begins	
23 24 25 26 27 28 29	No School HS Only - High School Conference Day	
30 31	No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day	
	Chain Reaction Opening Event	
	Chain Reaction Workshops	
		Days: 20
February 2022	February	
Su M Tu W Th F Sa		
	1 2 3 4 5	
6 7 8 9 10 11 12	Chain Reaction Closing Event	
13 14 15 16 17 18 19	HS and MS 1/2 Day - Teacher Inservice	
20 21 22 23 24 25 26	Start of HS Module 5	
27 28	Ski Program ends	
	February Recess	
		Days: 14
March 2022	March	
Su M Tu W Th F Sa		
	1 2 3 4 5	
6 7 8 9 10 11 12	No School - Town Meeting Day	
13 14 15 16 17 18 19	School Resumes	
20 21 22 23 24 25 26	Free Family Arts Day, 12:00 - 4:00	
27 28 29 30 31	HS 1/2 Day, 1pm Dismissal, MS Full Day	
	MS Circus Interim	
	Start of HS Module 6	
	VIRTUAL Prospective Family Information Event, 4:00 - 5:30	
	No School for MS ONLY	Days: 22
April 2022	April	
Su M Tu W Th F Sa		
	1 2	
3 4 5 6 7 8 9		
10 11 12 13 14 15 16	HS and MS 1/2 Day - HS Grading Day/ Teacher Inservice	
17 18 19 20 21 22 23	Middle School Conference Day/No School for MS only	
24 25 26 27 28 29 30	Spring Recess	
	Start of HS Module 7	
	High School Conference Day/No School for HS only	
	TSA Gala	Days: 16
May 2022	May	
Su M Tu W Th F Sa		



1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

16	HS and MS 1/2 Day - HS Grading Day/Teacher Inservice
17	Start of HS Module 8
21	HS Prom, 7-11
30	No School - Memorial Day
31	MS Hubert Trip
TBD	HS Field Trip
	Days: 21

June 2022						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

June						
1 - 3	MS Hubert Trip					
9	MS Science Fair					
14	End of HS Module 8					
15	HS Proficiency Recovery Day					
16	Last Day of School - HS Field Day/ MS Graduation					
17	No School					
18	HS Graduation					
21-23	Teacher In-Service					
					Days:	12
July						
4	Independence Day					
					TOTAL	176

July 2022						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August 2022						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August						

The Sharon Academy Middle School Daily Schedule

TIME	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
8:15 - 9:10	MATH	MATH	MATH	MATH	MATH
9:15 - 10:10	BLOCK	BLOCK	COMMUNITY MEETING OR ADVISORY	BLOCK	BLOCK
10:15 - 10:30	Announcements, snack and recess				
10:35 - 11:30	BLOCK	BLOCK	10:30 - 11:00 READING BLOCK	BLOCK	BLOCK
11:35 - 12:30	BLOCK	BLOCK	11:05 - 12:00 PHOENIX BLOCK	BLOCK	BLOCK
12:30 - 1:15	LUNCH!	LUNCH!	12:05 - 1:00 CLUB LUNCH 1:00 Go home!	LUNCH! LUNCH!	
1:20 - 2:15	ART	ESP	ART	ESP	ART ESP ART ESP
	StudyAll	Espanol	StudyAll	Espanol	StudyAll Espanol StudyAll Espanol
2:20 - 3:15	ART	ESP	ART	ESP	ART ESP ART ESP
	StudyAll	Espanol	StudyAll	Espanol	StudyAll Espanol StudyAll Espanol



2021-2022 Middle School Staff/Faculty Directory

All Staff/Faculty emails:

first initial and last name @sharonacademy.net (example: alane@sharonacademy.net)

Phone: 802-763-2500

Staff/Faculty	Position	Phone Ext.
Abel, Fallon	Social Studies Teacher	302
Fabrikant, Kate	Director of Human Resources	234
Fabrikant, Blake	Director of Athletics	206
Gillespie, Tracy	Math Teacher	
Gish, Margaret	Special Educator/Math Teacher	
Groppe III, Carl	Director of Technology	209
Gross, Ben	Math Teacher, After School Homework Club	
Hurwitz, Paul	Director of Facilities	802-282-1881
Innes, Marcy	Language Arts & Art Teacher	305
Jagoda, Linda	Math Teacher	
Lane, Andrew (MS)	Director of Middle School	301
Mallary, Anne	Bookkeeper	207
Masterman, Cynthia	Administrative Assistant	200
Newman, Mary	Head of School	205
Paquette, Kyle	Math Teacher, Academic Support	304
Sirotkin, Barbara	MS Spanish Teacher	
Smith, Clare	Science Teacher	306
Stumpf, Janice (MS)	Middle School Office Manager	300
Wood, Lydia	HS/MS School Counselor	201
Wurm, Christa	Equity & Wellness Coordinator	214
Wylie, Amber	Director of Enrollment	203

Glossary of TSA Terms

Terms defined in this document include:

- Advisor
- Advisory
- All School Meeting / Anuncios
- Annual Fund
- Beginning of the Year Potluck
- BlackBaud
- Cafe Night / Thursday Night Cafe
- Chain Reaction / MLK Day
- Circus
- Community Service
- Integrated Curriculum
- Newsletter
- Ski Wednesdays
- Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support
- State Announced Average Tuition
- TSA Book Fund
- Tuition Gap
- Volunteering
- Yurts

Family participation is one of the most important foundational components of the TSA experience. Parents are invited to many events and activities throughout the year to socialize or work with other TSA families. Opportunities for family participation are noted below in the glossary as Family Community Building.

In the glossary that follows, we have also noted areas where there are Volunteer Opportunities. To learn more about how you can support TSA through becoming involved as a volunteer, contact Andrew Lane at alane@sharonacademy.net.

Advisor: The TSA faculty member leading an Advisory group of students. The Advisor is a parent's first point of contact for concerns about the student's academic progress and general well-being.

Advisory - Middle School: In the middle school, advisors are assigned when a student enrolls. The advisor will follow the student through both years of middle school. The advisor monitors a student's academic progress, helps a student set goals, and provides social/emotional support. The advisor is the communication link between the school, student and family.

All School Meeting / Anuncios: In the middle school, announcements are a daily

gathering of students and adults, where announcements, concerns and appreciations are shared. In the high school, Announcements are our weekly, student-led, community meeting. The entire high school – all teachers, students, and staff – gather in Moore Hall once a week to share success stories, upcoming events, opportunities, concerns, and appreciations.

Annual Fund: The annual fund is our annual fundraising drive which runs for the academic year. Parent participation in the annual fund is crucial to the continued success and existence of TSA. Without the Annual Fund, TSA cannot cover the cost of educating our students. We ask all parents to give what they are able to help Bridge-the-Gap between the "state announced average tuition" and the true cost of educating our students. See *Tuition Gap*.

*Family Community Building
Volunteer Opportunity*

Beginning of the Year Potluck: It is our long-standing tradition to kick off each year with a Potluck for the entire TSA community – teachers, staff, students, parents, and siblings. It is an event designed to welcome new members to the TSA community, to introduce the staff to our families, and to give our wider community the opportunity to gather, all while sharing wonderful food.

*Family Community Building
Volunteer Opportunity*

BlackBaud: TSA's grade portal, BlackBaud, allows parents and students to access their grades and progress information through a secure online portal. Through BlackBaud, students and families can keep up-to-date on student progress, attendance, and assignment completion. At the end of each Marking Period, students' progress reports and teacher comments are posted on BlackBaud rather than through sending a paper report card, saving valuable resources. BlackBaud is a great tool for identifying trends, being aware of students' progress, and helping our students succeed. Please remember that the exchange of information through BlackBaud is meant to facilitate conversations and discussions, not to replace them.

Cafe Night / Thursday Night Café: A casual "Open Mic" night held at the HS in Moore Hall, for students to share their talents (skits, singing, bands, poetry recitations, etc). The event is often held on Thursday nights, can be referred to as "Café Night" or "TNC". TNC is a wonderful opportunity to connect with other TSA families, and to share the sometimes unexpected talents of our students.

Family Community Building

Chain Reaction / MLK Day: In recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King's contributions to our

society, TSA holds an annual "Chain Reaction Day." The events and lectures for the day are inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King's legacy, and challenge us as a school community to examine our beliefs and our assumptions. Guest speakers are invited each year to talk about topics such as bullying, economic disparities within society, and racial tolerance.

Volunteer Opportunity

Circus: For a two-week period every March, the entire middle school dedicates itself to the common purpose of producing and performing a circus. With the guidance of Troy Wonderle (Big Top Tour Artistic Director of Circus Smirkus, founder of Wunderle's Big Top Adventures LLC, and former Director of Clowning for the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus), students choose a theme, write skits, and learn circus skills which they then perform in front of an audience of several hundred people. Before the circus performance, students hold a student-created carnival with games and prizes for smaller children. The Circus is a night of fabulous fun for families.

Volunteer Opportunity

Family Community Building

Community Service: Each middle school student is required to complete 20 hours of Community Service each year. The Community Service program is designed to encourage a life-long commitment to voluntary service. In addition, Community Service can help students to develop contacts and experience in a discipline which holds particular meaning for them, and can help them differentiate themselves on their college applications. See the definition for *Volunteering* below.

Integrated Curriculum: The middle school operates on a two-year, rolling, integrated curriculum which explores a different central question each trimester. The curriculum is integrated in two ways. Using an interdisciplinary approach, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies and Art collectively explore the central questions. In addition to integration between the disciplines, the curriculum is integrated within each discipline. The science curriculum draws from various branches of science such as Earth Science, Physical Science and Biology, rather than treating each branch as a separate frame of reference. Social Studies examines U.S. and world events throughout history rather than taking a linear and compartmentalized approach. Language Arts draws on the content material from Science and Social Studies.

Newsletter: A weekly e-newsletter for families, full of timely information about upcoming events, academic deadlines, student opportunities, and community service opportunities. The newsletter is emailed to all students and families. We suggest that each adult in the family receive the TSA newsletter to keep up-to-date on school happenings. If you are not already receiving the newsletter, please email newsletter@sharonacademy.net to sign up. The newsletter is also available each week on our website.

Ski Wednesdays: A program which allows students to travel to Suicide 6 ski mountain for seven Wednesday afternoons in the winter to ski at a subsidized rate. To accommodate the Ski Wednesdays program, TSA classes let out at 12:30 on those Wednesdays. All students are encouraged to participate, even if they are beginning skiers/boarders.

Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support: TSA recognizes the connection between emotional well-being and academic success. We strive to support both at TSA. Our full-time School Counselor is a trained social worker available to all students to help guide them through their middle school and high school careers. Her office is open to all students, whether they would like to drop by to simply "decompress" or to have more involved interventions. Our School Counselor communicates with families when needed, and can also help families find the support outside of the school that they may require.

State Announced Average Tuition: Each year, the state of Vermont calculates its Announced Average Tuition based on the tuitions of "union" schools in VT. This Announced Average Tuition figure is the maximum amount that a town is legally required to pay to an independent school such as The Sharon Academy. Please see "Tuition Gap" below.

Tuition Gap: The TSA tuition is set by the state based upon an announced average of all union public schools in Vermont subtracting out special education costs, transportation, and several other items. In the 2021 2022 school year, the state announced tuition is \$16,842. This is the tuition which TSA receives from our sending towns as well as the tuition that is paid by families from non-sending towns.

Even though TSA is very frugal and we have a bare bones budget, it costs more to educate each TSA student than the state mandated "announced average tuition" covers. This is our Tuition Gap. To "Bridge the Gap," TSA parents, grandparents, and friends join together in support of TSA's Annual Fund as well as volunteering to help save resources.

Volunteering: Volunteering has been a tradition at TSA since our beginning. It is part of what strengthens our community by bringing families together to work towards a common goal, and also part of how we remain frugal. We encourage families to volunteer however they can. Volunteering at TSA is also a powerful way for adults to model Community Service values. Contact Andrew Lane on (802) 763.2500 or Alane@sharonacademy.net for more information.

Yurts: Soon after the TSA High School was built, the school had expanded enough to warrant the addition of new classrooms. In typical TSA-style, the TSA community of parents, friends and students gathered to help construct the Yurts, which are now used for spanish and some math classes. Classes are conducted "in-the-round," and the yurts are heated through the winter.

Appendix A



THE KEY ATTRIBUTES EMPLOYERS SEEK ON STUDENTS' RESUMES

CONTACT: Kevin Gray, ext. 139, Andrea Koncz, ext. 121, 610.868.1421

E-MAIL: kgray@naceweb.org, akoncz@naceweb.org

DATE: November 30, 2017

SUBJECT: The Key Attributes Employers Seek on Students' Resumes

BETHLEHEM, PA — College students who are conducting their job search and want to impress employers with their resumes should emphasize their abilities to solve problems and work as part of a team, according to a new survey report from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

When NACE asked employers participating in its *Job Outlook 2018* survey which attributes—beyond a strong GPA—they most value, employers indicated that problem-solving skills and an ability to work in a team are the most desired attributes and are of equal importance. (See Figure 1.) This is the second consecutive year that the largest percentage of employers will search for these attributes on students' resumes.

Following problem-solving skills and teamwork abilities, written communication skills, leadership, and a strong work ethic are also highly valued attributes that employers want to see evidence of on resumes.

Employers also provided insight into the influence of attributes when deciding between two otherwise equally qualified candidates. This year, NACE added four attributes—all related to work experience—to the original list that had been used in the past.

While past surveys consistently found the student's major to be the deciding factor between two otherwise equally qualified candidates, this year the most influential factors are whether the candidate completed an internship with the hiring organization and whether the candidate has internship experience within the hiring organization's industry. (See Figure 2.)

Additionally, general work experience and no work experience are found to be more of a deciding factor than a candidate's high GPA (3.0 or above), involvement in extracurricular activities, school attended, and volunteer work. The only other attribute that held its ground with the addition of the new attributes is leadership. It continues to follow immediately after the student's major in terms of influence.

Figure 1: Attributes Employers Seek on a Candidates Resume

ATTRIBUTE	% OF RESPONDENTS
Problem-solving skills	82.9%
Ability to work in a team	82.9%
Communication skills (written)	80.3%
Leadership	72.6%
Strong work ethic	68.4%
Analytical/quantitative skills	67.5%
Communication skills (verbal)	67.5%
Initiative	67.5%
Detail-oriented	64.1%
Flexibility/adaptability	60.7%
Technical skills	59.8%
Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)	54.7%
Computer skills	48.7%
Organizational ability	48.7%
Strategic planning skills	39.3%
Creativity	29.1%
Friendly/outgoing personality	27.4%
Tactfulness	22.2%
Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker	19.7%
Fluency in a foreign language	4.3%

Source: *Job Outlook 2018*, National Association of Colleges and Employers

Figure 2: Influence of Attributes

ATTRIBUTE	2018 AVERAGE INFLUENCE RATING*	2017 AVERAGE INFLUENCE RATING*	2016 AVERAGE INFLUENCE RATING*
Has completed an internship with your organization	4.6	N/A	N/A
Has internship experience in your industry	4.4	N/A	N/A
Major	3.8	4.0	4.0
Has held a leadership position	3.7	3.9	3.9
Has general work experience	3.7	N/A	N/A
Has no work experience	3.4	N/A	N/A
High GPA (3.0 or above)	3.4	3.6	3.5
Has been involved in extracurricular activities (clubs, sports, student government, etc.)	3.3	3.6	3.6
School attended	2.8	2.9	2.9
Has done volunteer work	2.7	2.6	2.8
Is fluent in a foreign language	2.2	2.1	2.2
Has studied abroad	2.2	2.0	2.0

Source: *Job Outlook 2018*, National Association of Colleges and Employers. *5-point scale where 1=No influence at all; 2=Not much influence; 3=Slightly of an influence; 4=Very much influence; 5=Extreme influence.

About the Job Outlook 2018 survey: Data for the *Job Outlook 2018* survey were collected from NACE's employer members from August 9, 2017, through October 2, 2017. A total of 201 surveys were returned—a 20.5 percent response rate. Of those responding, 14.4 percent of respondents were from the West, 25.9 percent were from the Northeast, 23.9 percent were from the Southeast, and 35.8 percent were from the Midwest. The *Job Outlook 2018* report is available for purchase at www.naceweb.org/store/2017/job-outlook-2018/.

About NACE: Since 1956, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has been the leading source of information about the employment of college graduates. For more information, visit www.naceweb.org. NACE maintains a virtual press room for the media at www.naceweb.org/about-us/press/.

<http://www.naceweb.org/about-us/press/2017/the-key-attributes-employers-seek-on-students-resumes/>

TSA Essential Transferable Skills Standards

- 1) I can Acquire Information Critically
- 2) I can Think Critically and Reason to Construct Arguments
- 3) I can Problem Solve and Design
- 4) I can Communicate Effectively
- 5) I can Take Responsibility for Learning and Growth
- 6) I can Commit to Community and Responsible Citizenship
- 7) I can Explore Social, Emotional, and Physical Well-being

1. Acquire Information Critically	2. Think Critically and Reason to Construct Arguments
<u>IA.</u> Analyze Text <u>IB.</u> Analyze Sources <u>IC.</u> Research <small>TSA 1D. Listen</small> <u>IE.</u> Frame Questions	<u>2A.</u> Causality -- Cause and Effect <u>2B.</u> Patterns -- Generalization and Specificity <u>2C.</u> Evidence-based Claim <small>TSA 2D. Empirical Argument</small> <u>2E.</u> Logical Development
3. Demonstrate Creativity in Problem Solving and Design	4. Communicate Effectively
<u>3A.</u> Analyze a Problem, Process, and Results <u>3B.</u> Make Use of Prior Knowledge <u>3D.</u> Use Appropriate Tools or Materials <u>3E.</u> Use and Develop Models <u>3F.</u> Investigate Approaches and Discover Solutions (was: Find Best Solutions) <small>TSA 3G. Analyze Results (deprecated)</small>	<u>4A.</u> Organized Communication <u>4B.</u> Evidence and Supporting Detail in Communication <u>4C.</u> Development of Communication <u>4D.</u> Mechanics <u>4E.</u> Oral Communication and Presentation <u>4F.</u> Interpersonal Communication <u>4G.</u> Artistic Expression
5. Self-Direction: Take Responsibility for Learning and Growth	6. Engagement: Commit to Community and Responsible Citizenship
<u>5A.</u> Identify and assess new opportunities to learn. <u>5B.</u> Set goals and make informed decisions. <u>5C.</u> Take initiative and responsibility for learning. <u>5D.</u> Persist and Revise <u>5E.</u> Collaborate Effectively <u>5F.</u> Reflect	<u>6A.</u> Community Service <u>6B.</u> Ethics <u>6C.</u> Diversity <u>6D.</u> Digital Citizenship <u>6E.</u> Global Perspective <u>6F.</u> Broadened Horizons <u>6G.</u> Develop a College or Career Plan
7. Sustaining: Explore Social, Emotional and Physical Well-Being	
	<small>7A.</small> Develop, practice, or explore skills to promote one's own Social and/or Emotional Well-Being <small>7B.</small> Develop, practice, or explore skills to promote one's own Physical Well-Being

We at TSA appreciate and often refer to Harwood Unified Union School's rubrics



