



## MASHPEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Guest Commentary by School Committee Member Nicole Bartlett**  
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Since Mashpee Public School's "track record" was brought up in the Feb 9 Mashpee Enterprise, I wanted to take the time to highlight some of the activities of the 2017-18 school year that when combined, encompass a very impressive record indeed. As a parent, and as a representative on the Mashpee School Committee, I also want to thank the community members and organizations who support our Falcons inside and outside of our classrooms. This is what a connected community looks like.

### **Connections With Our Community**

The Southport Falcons and Falcon Friends are two newly formed groups designed to engage with Mashpee residents and to create partnerships that will benefit both the Mashpee Public Schools (MPS) and our Mashpee community. The Southport Falcons are a group of generous and engaged retirees who are matched with specific volunteer opportunities in MPS based on their specific interest, background and availability. Falcon Friends are leaders within the Mashpee community who, in partnership with school leaders, are developing opportunities for growth, and who will help us communicate the accomplishments and needs of the MPS to the residents of Mashpee. The Falcon Friends meet quarterly. MPS is also building an alumni network on LinkedIn to facilitate additional connections and contributions with the community.

MPS has worked collaboratively with the Mashpee Commons to finalize a one-year pilot to have a Falcon Annex located at Mashpee Commons. Through a valued partnership with the Mashpee Commons, the Mashpee Public Schools will showcase our programs and opportunities, highlight the accomplishments of our students and staff, provide hands-on learning for our student entrepreneurs, and offer school-related/school-created items for sale to Mashpee residents and visitors. A year-round location in the Mashpee Commons will provide us with this off-campus outreach opportunity -- providing easy access for our connected community to learn more about our schools.

This spring, Mashpee Middle-High School (MMHS) will host its third annual Cape Cod Maker Faire. Last year it drew over 1,000 visitors with nearly 100 exhibitors, makers, and inventors. The Mashpee Women's Club generously donated \$12,000 to support career and technical education programs at MMHS; Mashpee Pops donated \$10,000 to support the purchase of Super Bowl rings for our state championship MMHS football team. At the donation ceremony James Vaccaro stated that the accomplishment of winning a state championship for three years in a row helped to "raise the spirit of the town." The Mashpee Men's Club hosted their annual "High Five" Luncheon during which ten MMHS hard-working and accomplished seniors shared their journey through the Mashpee Public Schools, their future plans, and why it's great to be in Mashpee. The Coombs School is very grateful to be in its third year of the "Crewmates and Classmates" program, a partnership with members of the United States Coast Guard which enhances physical fitness and STEM learning for second graders. The Quashnet School students spearheaded an initiative to raise \$14,000 to purchase a service dog for a local veteran and received the "Making a Difference" award from the Heroes in Transition Foundation at its 8th Annual Fall Gala in November.

MMHS received the New England Patriots Game Change Grant to work on Mentors in Violence Prevention and Peer Leaders. A group of MMHS student-leaders are receiving ongoing training to be "game-changers" within our school community and will gain skills to prevent gender violence, sexual

harassment, and bullying. MMHS has also sent student ambassadors to several state-level events including the MIAA Wellness and Leadership Summits, Peer Leaders, Women in STEM Summit, the Gay-Straight Alliance Leadership Summit, and the Cape and Islands Workforce Investment Board Youth Council. Our students have also been annual presenters at the Massachusetts Computer Using Educators (MASSCue) 2-day conference.

### **Connections With Mashpee Culture and History**

Our connected community is also centered around a productive partnership between MPS and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe that includes and values the Tribe's rich heritage and culture. We are breaking new ground together. The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe hosted a Mashpee School Committee meeting in October and MMHS varsity basketball games at their Tribal Government Center in December. Vice Chairwoman Jessie little doe Baird visited with educators from all of our schools to discuss everything from linguistics to cultural norms and, of course, our collective history. A brief historical sketch developed by the tribe was distributed to all educators and is now a part of orientation materials. MMHS also offers the Wôpanâak language for high school credit and has done so through collaboration with the tribe and the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project.

### **Connections Within Our Schools**

Student-to-student partnerships are an important component of our connected community. Older students at MMHS guide and support their younger peers. MMHS students and staff are leading and facilitating activities in our Coombs and Quashnet elementary schools on computer coding, robotics, rocket design, the fine arts, and through hands-on learning events like the Energy Carnival held earlier this month in partnership with the Cape Light Compact. In addition, the Blue Falcon Theater Company includes students from the elementary schools in their Spring musical. Quashnet School students also visit the Coombs School to read to younger students and to have younger students read to them. The #MashpeeHasYourBack campaign started by MMHS student Rachel Barrows and the Gay-Straight Alliance is about ensuring that our diverse school community is inclusive, accepting, and a welcoming safe environment for everyone. We hope this campaign will also positively impact the broader Mashpee Community.

### **Connections With Our Families**

Supporting and communicating with our families is a key component of an inclusive, connected community. Through principal blogs, educator websites, interactive APPs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, emails, phone calls, Power School, and face-to-face conversations, MPS tries to ensure that our families are informed and connected to us. Again this year there are dozens of free before/after-school opportunities available to our elementary students ranging from art and athletics to legos and books to cooking and music. These clubs and activities allow our children to meet new friends and explore new learning. Mashpee families are not burdened with athletic fees or bus fees. Free family events like the Coombs/Quashnet Back-to-School Barbecue, the spaghetti dinner/movie event at Quashnet, the Coombs/Quashnet Staff/Parents Basketball Game, math nights, STEM nights, and music concerts all contribute to building a strong family-school partnership. We are very grateful for the many parents who are able to donate countless hours to enrich learning experiences for our students in the classroom and on field trips. Additionally, many parents serve on a PTO, Boosters, School Council, or Indian Education Parent Committee.

### **Connections to Prepare Students for Life**

**Athletics:** The Patriots may not have won this year, but we still have Superbowl winners in Mashpee!! The Mashpee High School football team won its third consecutive MIAA State Championship at Gillette Stadium in December. We are the first school in the state under the new playoff performance system to

achieve this feat. The Mashpee High School Golf Team won the South Shore League Tobin Division title and placed 3rd in the Cape Cod Division III South Sectional Tournament, and the Mashpee High School Boys Basketball Team won its third consecutive South Shore League Tobin Division Title. Four MMHS senior student-athletes recently signed National Letters of Intent to play at the collegiate level. Opportunities abound in Mashpee for our students to be part of a team.

**Arts:** Our students are provided with outstanding art education opportunities - both traditional and those that incorporate technology. They can participate in free instrumental lessons beginning in fourth grade, can hone their drama skills by participating in the MMHS fall and spring productions, and develop into amazing singers and highly skilled instrumentalists through a music education journey that, for many, spans thirteen years.

**Academics:** I am so proud of the gains we have made academically. School choice funds have been utilized to create a 1:1 digital learning environment that, when combined with high-quality core curriculum and instruction, result in rigorous learning experiences for our students. MCAS scores are on the rise for the third consecutive year and MPS students are exceeding state averages. Our student to faculty ratio is 16:1. Academic excellence is recognized in various ways for students at MMHS including membership in the National Technical Honor Society, the Mu Alpha Theta National Math Honor Society, the National Honor Society, and National Junior Honor Society. The Quashnet School's chapter of the National Elementary Honor Society welcomed 24 new members this year. The MMHS Robotics Team won the Southeastern Regional Competition and advanced (with their robot Sheila) to the VEX Robotics Southern New England Championship that will take place in early March 2018. MMHS has partnered with Mashpee TV to create a new TV studio at the high school, creating valuable hands-on learning opportunities for MMHS students.

**Service:** Giving back to our community and helping others is a consistent thread woven through everyday activities and clubs within MPS. Our students are creative problem-solvers, and enthusiastic and energetic volunteers. Throughout the year, Kiwanis-supported student organizations—the K-Kids at the Quashnet School, the Builders Club at the middle school, and the Key Club at MMHS help ensure that we are building caring leaders in our community. Members of our student councils, honor societies, sports teams, and special clubs all participate in service projects. School-wide, grade-level, and classroom service initiatives take place on a regular basis throughout the school year.

**Residents of Mashpee:** Educating Mashpee's future leaders in today's ever-changing world is an enormous responsibility that our MPS administrators and staff embrace. Ensuring student safety, focusing on the health and wellness of every student, providing each student with the knowledge and skills to meet and exceed academic expectations, and modeling respect and empathy are commitments we make every day to our students and their families. Be assured that our schools are setting an example for how collaboration, inclusion, and the pursuit of excellence can be combined to create the very best outcomes for our children. We could all learn a thing or two from our Mashpee Public Schools.

#WeAreMashpee