



SOUTHBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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PIONEER NEWS

January 2018

MISSION

In the Southbridge Public Schools, ALL students will experience a world-class education, and will graduate as engaged citizens who demonstrate the essential skills required for success in college and career.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Early Release Day—
February 7
- February Break (no school)—
February 19-23
- Professional Development
Day (no school for
students)—March 12
- Good Friday holiday (no
school for students and
staff)—March 30

A NOTE FROM RUSSELL JOHNSTON, INTERIM RECEIVER



Dr. Jeffrey Villar visits ERS students reading during literacy block

Happy New Year! I am delighted to share the news that Dr. Jeffrey Villar has been named by Acting Commissioner of Education Jeff Wulfson as the next Receiver for Southbridge Public Schools. I am so impressed with Dr. Villar's credentials as a lifelong educator, having served as a teacher, school principal, superintendent, and education reform leader. In the fall, we gathered valuable input from the Southbridge school community about the values and characteristics that were most needed in the next Receiver, and Dr. Villar demonstrates commitment to them all: community-building, integrity, resourcefulness, and a shared vision. I am confident that the exhaustive search process has

resulted in an ideal leader for our school community, who will capably and passionately continue our Turnaround work. Dr. Villar will officially begin work on February 12, 2018. You'll hear directly from Dr. Villar in the coming weeks and in the next edition of this newsletter. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Villar to the Southbridge school community!

HIGHLIGHTS

- In January, 40 high school students participated in **hands-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training**. Southbridge students are competing against other local high schools to train as many of their peers in this life-saving skill.

Do you have feedback about this newsletter? An idea for a story in an upcoming issue? Please send comments to communitynews@southbridgepublic.org.

MORE HIGHLIGHTS

- Southbridge’s elementary after school program, **All In!**, is up and running! Fifty-five students from West Street and Charlton Street schools in grades 2-5 participate in free, after-school academic and enrichment activities, Monday through Friday, from 3:00-5:30 PM at West Street School. The program launched in November as a partnership between Southbridge Public Schools and the Southbridge Recreation Department, Our Bright Future Inc., Southbridge Community Connections, YMCA, and YOU Inc. Each community partner organizes activities one day a week, from sports clinics, service learning, STEM workshops, and community-building. Middle and high school students participate in the program as mentors and facilitators of team-building activities throughout the week. Family workshops will also be offered beginning in March. This program has been an incredible example of strong community partnership that we hope to expand next year to serve more Southbridge students.
- **Prom Closet**, a low-cost/swap shop for prom wear, is coming soon! Donations of prom, formal or bridesmaid dresses, shoes, and tuxedos are now being accepted at the high school main office or Jacob Edwards Library. For more information, contact Michelle Aronson, maronson@southbridgepublic.org.
- On January 22, basketball legend **Tom “Satch” Sanders** addressed a group of All In! students at West Street School. Mr. Sanders spoke about his life, career, and challenges that he overcame, and encouraged our students to respect differences in others. Thanks to Kwasi Acheampong of Our Bright Future Inc., for coordinating this visit.
- A **low-cost Internet access plan** is available to families who have at least one student enrolled in a Southbridge school (\$14.99/month). Call Charter Communications at 844-525-1574 for more information on the “Spectrum Internet Assist” program, and indicate, “I am eligible under the community eligibility provision of the National School Lunch Program.”

DID YOU KNOW?

- Sixty new students have enrolled in Southbridge since the Family Welcome Center opened on December 4, 2017. The Family Welcome Center offers families “one stop shopping” to register students and to get information about our school system and community resources.

**Southbridge New Student Enrollments by Sending Location (N=60)
December 4, 2017 - January 23, 2018**

