Life After National Blue Ribbon

Sheila M. Harrity, Ed.D.
Superintendent-Director
Montachusett Regional Vocational-Technical School District
A Proud Moment

This year, the United States Department of Education has recognized 342 schools with the National Blue Ribbon School Award. These schools are as diverse as the student populations we all know and serve, representing:

- Public
- Private
- Traditional
- Charter, and
- Magnet schools

And the schools recognized here today represent less than one-half of one percent of the schools across the United States.
Transforming a School

- Lowest performing high school in the city
- One of the lowest performing vocational/technical schools in MA
- Cautious faculty
Creating a Culture of Excellence

- Community and businesses came together to build a $90M facility
- Everything new
  - New address
  - New name
  - New mascot
  - New principal

We Needed To

- Seize the transformational moment
- Create a new vision and mission
- Prepare all students to graduate career and college ready
- Implement the new small learning community model
- Improve student outcomes
WORCESTER TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL
2013 National Blue Ribbon School
Worcester, MA
2013-2014
Student Demographics
1400 Students

White 46 %
Hispanic 34 %
African American 13 %
Asian 6 %
Native American 0.6 %

Females 54 %
Males 46 %
Low Income 63 %
Special Needs 16 %
ELL 8 %
WTHS Graduation Rate 2013

- **Overall** 95.0 %
  - 2006 79.3 %
- **African American** 91.2 %
- **Hispanic** 93.1 %
- **White** 96.8 %
- **Low Income** 95.0 %
- **Special Education** 88.1 %
- **ELL** 85.2 %
- **Dropout rate** 1.3 %
  - 2006 6.5 %
2013 Graduation Placement

2 & 4 Year College 82%
Career Job Placement 13%
Military 3%
Other 2%
Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)
Percentage of Students who are Proficient & Above

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Build In Rigorous Academic Courses

- AP Biology
- AP English Language
- AP English Lit. & Comp.
- AP Statistics
- AP Calculus
- AP Computer Science
- AP Environmental Science
- AP Physics
- Advanced Algebra* 3 College Credits
- Spanish 1* 3 College Credits
- Spanish 2* 3 College Credits

*Taught by the Community College as College Courses
Worcester Tech. HS Enrollment

in AP math, science and English

Five Year Increase
+146 or 187%
College Readiness

Articulations
• Over 30 articulation agreements

Dual Enrollment
• Numerous school and district dual enrollment opportunities with 10 local colleges

Remedial College Courses
• Vision Project for Math and English with the Community College
Early College Credits & National Skill Standards

Biotechnology
- STEM Club
- Premier Advisory Board
- College Advisory/Pipeline
- $825K donation UMMS
- Developing Articulations
- 100% 4-yr Placement

IT Students
- Earn up to 18 dual enrollment college credits with Northeastern University
- Cisco national exams in A+, wireless, networking & security
Early College Credits & National Skill Standards

**Electrical**
- LEEDS Certified Construction
- Photovoltaic/Wind
- Smart Grid Beta Testing
- National Grid Engineering Pipeline Program

**Electromechanical**
- VEX Robotics Club
- 2013 VEX Robotics World Champions
Authentic Learning

- Community Veterinary Clinic
- 125 Seat Restaurant, Café/Bakery
- Full Service Salon
- 16 Bay Automotive Department
- Auto Collision Department
- State Approved Pre-School
- Web-based IT Help Desk
- Credit Union
Partnerships
with Area Colleges & Universities

Solar Decathlon China
Datong, China – August 2013

• 1 of 23 teams selected from around the world to compete in the design/build of a zero-energy home.
• Collaborative effort of the U.S. Department of Energy and the China National Energy Administration.
• WTHS students provided the construction skills and labor.
That's impossible. Someone like you just give up. You can't do that. Doubt kills more dreams than failure ever will. You can't try.
WTHS Hosts Annual Motivational Speakers

Liz Murray
*Homeless to Harvard*
March 2009

Dr. Ben Carson
*Gifted Hands*
March 2010

Erin Gruwell
*Freedom Writers*
March 2011
WTHS Hosts Annual Motivational Speakers

Chris Gardner
*The Pursuit of Happyness*
March 2012

The Three Doctors –
Dr. Rameck Hunt, Dr. Sampson Davis,
and Dr. George Jenkins
May 2013

General Colin Powell,
USA (Ret.)
March 2014
General Colin Powell, U.S. Army (Ret.)
New England Town Hall with U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan
“...this school has demonstrated that regardless of whether or not you were born with a silver spoon in your mouth, regardless of what your parents’ income is, you can be extraordinarily successful if adults - as a team, not a school - an entire community rally behind them.”
Our Community Rallied Around Us…
And Our Community Was Rewarded
President Obama to WTHS Graduates:
“I want the nation to learn from Worcester Tech.”
Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.

(Thomas Edison)
Opportunity Presented Itself

Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District
Fitchburg, MA

- 25 Miles North of Worcester Tech
- Independent Regional Vocational-Technical School
- Serving Over 1,400 Students
- Eighteen Cities and Towns, Two Gateway Communities
- 2nd Largest Regional School District in State, Geography
- 3rd Largest Vocational School in the State, Number of Students
Initial Challenges

• Lack of Stable Leadership
  • 5 Superintendents in 4 years (2 Acting, 1 Interim, 2 Full-Time)
• Climate of Mistrust
• Comfortable with Status Quo

We Needed To

• Build a Transformational Culture
• Create a Shared Vision
• Challenge the Status Quo, and Build in Rigor
• Prepare all Students to Graduate Career and College Ready
• Improve Student Outcomes
Replicate What Works
Authentic Learning Experiences & Industry Recognized Credentials

Business Technology

- OSHA 10-hour General Industry Training Certification
- Microsoft Office Specialist
  - Word
  - Excel
  - Access
  - Outlook
  - PowerPoint
- Articulation Agreements with 2 area colleges, totaling 25 college credits

Monty Tech, in partnership with the Massachusetts Division of Banks and Workers’ Credit Union, has established a full-service bank on the school campus.

The bank has hired and trained our students as Bank Tellers, and is providing additional training opportunities for students interested in pursuing careers in finance.

Next Steps: Embed 1st year of Associate’s degree (Business/Marketing) into high school program.
Expand: Make a Good Program Even Better

Authentic Learning Experiences & Cutting Edge Technology

Health Occupations

- Medical Terminology Certificate
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10-hour General Industry Certification
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification, American Heart Association
- First Aid Certificate, American Heart Association
- Certified Nursing Assistant License, American Red Cross
- Certified Clinical Medical Assistant Credential, National Healthcare Association
- EMT Certification
  - 8 College Credits
- Simulation Clinic
  - SimMan
  - SimJr.
  - SimView
Support Innovation

**Information Technology & MCJROTC**
- Comp TIA A+ Exam 801 Series
- Comp TIA A+ Exam 802 Series
- Cisco CCENT Exam Voucher
- C Programming Language
- CIW Web Design Certification
- Testout PC Pro Exam
- Security+
- Lunix
- Embed AP Computer Principles
- Articulation Agreements with 17 colleges, totaling 24 college credits
Embrace Technology &
Create Meaningful Professional Development Programs

In 2015-2016, All teachers, paraprofessionals, and guidance counselors were provided with Chromebooks. Professional development programs were offered for teachers at every level.

In 2016-2017, we rolled out a full 1:1 initiative, providing all 1,145 students with Chromebooks. Professional development efforts continue to target increased use of technology in the classroom.

1. Chromebooks 101
   *Level: Beginner*

2. Google Apps 101
   *Level: Beginner/Intermediate*

3. Designing a Google Classroom
   *Level: Beginner/Intermediate*

4. Chrome Apps & Extensions to Support Struggling Learners—Going Google!
   *Level: Beginner/Intermediate*

5. Google Apps for Administrative Assistants
   *Level: Beginner*
Challenge the Status Quo: Build In Rigor

- AP English Language and Composition
- AP English Literature and Composition
- AP Statistics
- **NEW** AP Chemistry
- **NEW** AP Environmental Science
- **NEW** AP Computer Science Principles
- AP US History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students Enrolled in AP</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># AP Exams</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>July 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Courses Offered</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
And When You Are Ready… Do Something BIG!

FUTURE HOME OF
Monty Tech
Veterinary Science Training Center
• Monty Tech program will serve pets from low-income families, providing well-visits, diagnostic services, immunizations, minor surgeries – all at a reduced rate
• Collaborate with post-secondary partner, Becker College
  • Students will earn a minimum of 6 college credits while still in high school, at no cost to the student
  • Becker College has offered a $100K annual endowment for the doctor of veterinary medicine overseeing the clinic
• Program will be NAVTA accredited
• Monty Tech students and instructors are building the 7,500 sq. ft. facility, saving the district more than $1M in labor costs
Rely On Your Partners…Big and Small

**PHASE I: Design & Construction**

TOTAL PROJECTED COST: $2,250,000

(7,500 sq. ft. - $300 per sq. ft.)

**PHASE II: Equipment, Supplies and Materials**

TOTAL PROJECTED COST: $502,797

---

**Project Made Possible By:**

- Grants, Public & Private
- Individual Donations
- Corporate Sponsorships
- In-Kind Services & Discounts
“We all know the role the technical schools play in responding to the workforce needs of this Commonwealth. This is another example of the tremendous innovation that is taking place here, that the Vet Tech program responded to an emerging need - the growing need for veterinary assistants.”

- Congresswoman Niki Tsongas
2% OF THE POPULATION

GOING FOR YOUR DREAMS
CONFIDENCE
EXPLORING NEW THINGS
CHOOSING HAPPINESS
FULFILLMENT

98% OF THE POPULATION

EMBRACING THE UNKNOWN
EXCITEMENT
LIKING CHANGE
LIVING WITHOUT LIMITS
ABUNDANCE
ACT IN SPITE OF FEAR

YOUR COMFORT ZONE

BEING LIKE EVERYONE ELSE
INSECURE
SURVIVING
FEAR
JUST GETTING BY
A DULL LIFE
PLAY IT SAFE
PROCRASTINATION
REGRET
SETTLING FOR LESS

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF LIFE
Life After National Blue Ribbon
- Responsibility comes with Effective Leadership -

• Call to action: never be content
• Be the kind of leader you would follow
• Support creativity
• Give others room to grow and dream and achieve
• Reach out to help a neighboring school/ district
• Share best practices
• Represent your educational community on boards, committees, foundations, etc.
• Present your story at local, state, and national conferences- share your success
• Never forget to recognize and celebrate achievement
• Seek creative and meaningful ways to evolve and change
• Continue to develop personally and professionally so when the next great opportunity presents itself, you are READY!
“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

- President Barack Obama