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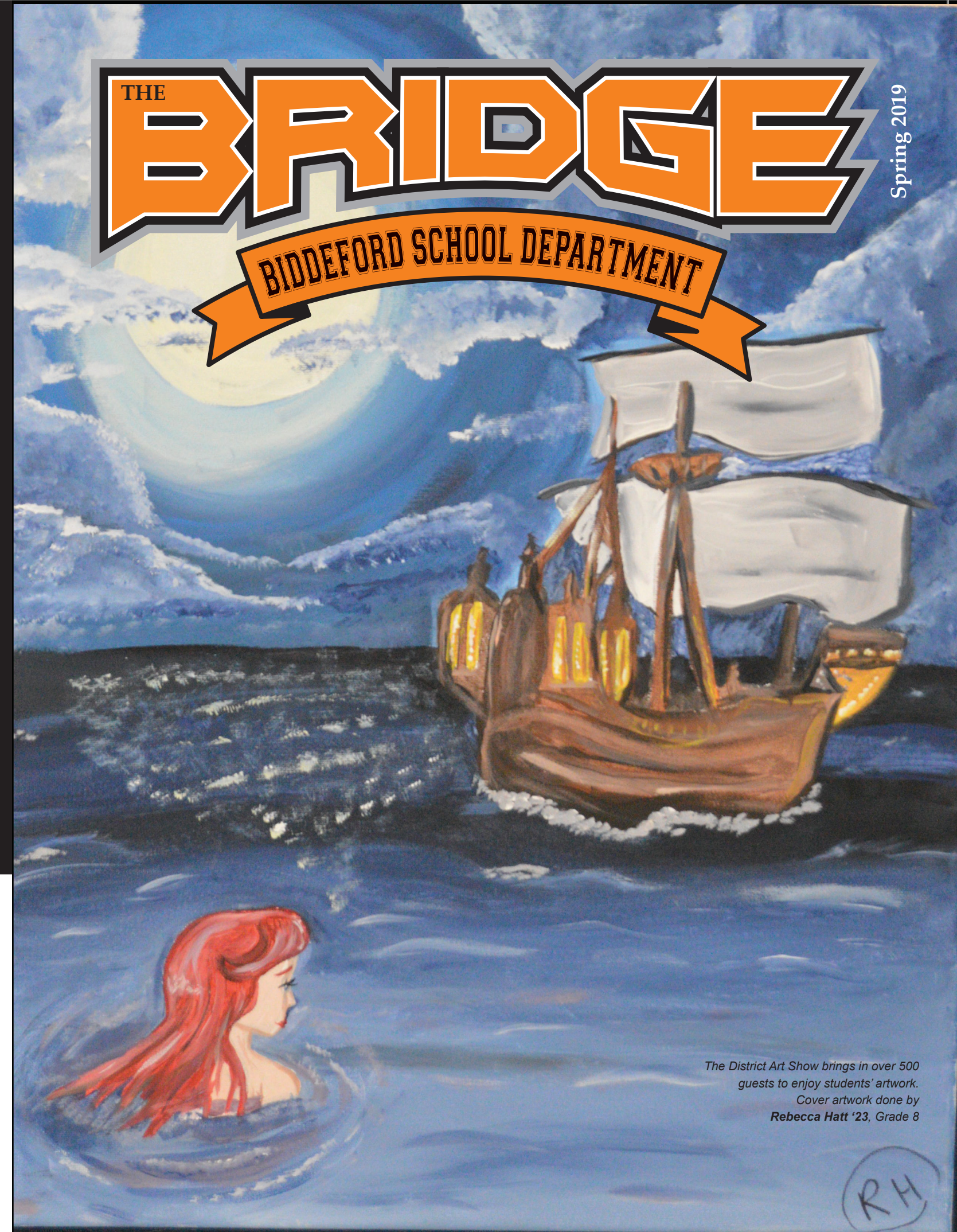
Office of the Superintendent
18 Maplewood Avenue
Biddeford, ME 04005



THE BRIDGE

Spring 2019

BIDDEFORD SCHOOL DEPARTMENT



The District Art Show brings in over 500
guests to enjoy students' artwork.
Cover artwork done by
Rebecca Hatt '23, Grade 8

RH

Superintendent's Message

The snow has finally thawed and spring is most certainly in the air. Our schools are abuzz with a unique energy that one only sees this time of year: our athletes are on the fields, recesses are boisterous and joyful, and warmer and longer days are tantalizingly close.

I am pleased to present the spring edition of *The Bridge* with the community. This biannual publication is an opportunity for us to share some of the truly wonderful things that are happening in our schools. And just as our students depend on our talented and dynamic faculty, we depend on you for the many ways that you support our mission. We can't say thank you often enough!

This edition contains our regular features, ranging from a must-read faculty profile on BMS Physical Education Teacher Marie Potvin to a recent visit from Senator Angus King, who helped us celebrate 50 years of service by our Center of Technology. We also want to keep you abreast of upcoming events, thank our many sponsors, volunteers, and donors, and highlight a few of our programs and plans for the coming school year.

I am truly blessed to serve in this diverse and thriving community. It is a great time to be in Biddeford--the excitement for an ever brighter future fuel our faculty and staff each and every day. After a well-deserved reprieve from the rigors of school, our faculty and staff will convene once again in August for "the best year ever!"

Yours in Service,



Jeremy Ray

P.S. I encourage the taxpayers to come to the polls on June 11th to vote on this year's school budget. We are proud of our prudent fiscal management and ability to expand programming through minimal tax increases. We hope to have your support.



Hall of Honor Class of 2018



The Athletic Department established the "Biddeford Athletic Hall of Honor" as a way to pay tribute and honor outstanding student athletes, coaches, or contributors for their achievements and/or contributions to Biddeford Athletics. The Hall of Honor Class of 2018 Inductees include (l-r): Son accepting for Roger Beaulieu '68, Jon Benson '05, Dan Gagne '57, Denise (Huot) Gelinias '85, Cathy (Narsiff) Caron '82 (missing from photo), Ronald Ouellette '71, Son accepting for Roger "Red" Sevigny '62, and Steve Tardif '95.



PRIDE Awards

Biddeford High School held its annual Tiger PRIDE Ceremony in which students were honored for upholding the values of Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Dependability and Empathy. 80 students were nominated by their teachers with one student being chosen as the top recipient for upholding each value. Of the students nominated, BHS Senior **Alyssa Landry '19** was chosen as the top Tiger PRIDE recipient for best exemplifying excellence in all five categories (pictured with teacher Tom McGovern).

The individual value award recipients were: **Ashjan Abdulsalam '21** (Perseverance); **Cameron Roy '20** (Respect); **Kali Nichols '22** (Integrity); **Colin Tippet '21** (Dependability); and **Cody Albert '21** (Empathy).

Spring Ceremonies

Biddeford Regional Center of Technology Scholarship Awards Night

May 28th at 5:30pm (Reception); 6pm (Ceremony)
Biddeford Middle School Auditorium

Alternative Pathways Center Graduation

June 4th at 4pm
Biddeford Middle School Auditorium

Biddeford High School Graduation

June 7th at 6pm
Waterhouse Field - Open to all
BHS Tiger Gym - Tickets required (if inclement weather)

Biddeford Middle School Promotion

June 12th at 6pm
Biddeford Middle School Auditorium



Read to ME and JumpStart Program

Building literacy skills for a brighter future

For as long as there have been elementary schools, there has been conventional wisdom about the students who attend: what happens at home for the five years before they enter school and during the summer between grades is critical. And the data bear this out: fully 2/3 of students entering our Kindergarten program are below the benchmark.

“But,” interjected Biddeford Primary School Principal Margaret Pitts, “then they transition to first grade and in many ways they start from scratch: a different building, different faculty, maybe some different rules and routine. For many kids, it can be ‘one step forward, two steps back.’ We want to do better for our kids, and that’s why we created *JumpStart*.”

“The impact of these learning deficits grow exponentially over time if not addressed,” Director of Instruction Mandy Cyr recently told the School Committee.

“Learning how to ‘do school’ takes time,” Early Childhood Coordinator Lindsey Nadeau told *The Bridge*. “We spend a good part of the fall with our youngsters on school etiquette, navigating the hallway, playground, and cafeteria, and on the assessment of basic numeracy and literacy.”

When students aren’t prepared for school or experience a “summer slide” in the transition from Kindergarten to first grade, the challenges to help students achieve at benchmark compound.

“While we can’t be in kids’ homes at age three making sure children are enjoying books with their parents each night, or practicing counting, we *can* think about school differently,” Assistant Superintendent Chris In-dorf said. “Why does it have to end in June? For students who struggle, why can’t we do more to smooth their transition and support their deficits?”

Administrators worked this winter to create the *JumpStart* program, which moves the start of Kindergarten screening to the Spring, and creates a month-long academic summer program to support rising kindergarteners and first graders who need additional support.

“For many parents and students, having a standalone Pre-K and kindergarten center is a great comfort,” Nadeau said. “They get to know the school, the faculty, the playground, the routine.”

JumpStart is a targeted, academic summer program which assists our youngest students in addressing early literacy and math deficits, social/emotional needs, and the challenges associated with the building-to-building transition. We are hopeful parents will reach out if they believe their child is in need of additional support through the summer months.

- Kerri LeSieur, JumpStart Director

The first iteration of *JumpStart* will launch this summer from July 22 to August 15. *JumpStart* Director Kerri LeSieur describes the program as a “targeted, academic summer program which assists our youngest students in addressing early literacy and math deficits, social/emotional and trauma needs, and the challenges associated with the building-to-building transition. *JumpStart* will take place in the building the child will be attending in the fall and will eliminate any barriers to learning, including providing transportation, breakfast and lunch.

“We are hopeful parents will reach out if they believe their child is in need of additional support through the summer months.”

Parents with questions about the program should email jumpstart@biddefordschools.me.

Literacy Education

Biddeford Schools recently invited the community to participate in the *Read to ME* Challenge, spearheaded by the Department of Education, to promote a bonding experience by simply reading aloud to a child for 15 minutes or more. The purpose was to promote a love for reading, build vocabulary, and help students make connections. Nearly 100 legislators, city councilors, administrators, business leaders, parents and students visited our schools to read to students. BPS Principal Margaret Pitts even continued the challenge by reading on Facebook Live every night at 7:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, with students requesting special titles.

Top Photo: Legislator Ryan Fecteau '10 reads to students at Biddeford Primary School.

Left Photos: Biddeford High School student athletes raise funds to donate a book to every student and also read to them at John F. Kennedy Kindergarten Center.



BRCOT Celebrates 50 Years

Senator Angus King recognizes their contributions

School isn't just the "3 R's," it's also engineering. And electrical engineering. And medical science. And early childhood education. And business studies. And various other programs, all of which thrive at Biddeford's own Center of Technology.

The Center, which currently serves 305 students from six communities including Biddeford, Saco, Old Orchard Beach, Dayton, Arundel, and the Kennebunks recently celebrated its 50th anniversary, and Senator Angus King came to mark the occasion. It is one of two Centers in all of York County.

On February 8th, Senator King joined staff and students at Biddeford High School to honor the Center's "Golden Jubilee." The Center, opened in 1969, has provided Biddeford-area students the opportunity to develop practical skills and knowledge to find a career and enter the workforce.

"We've worked really hard to make one of the area's best-kept secrets one of the District's most relevant and progressive programs," Superintendent Jeremy Ray told *The Bridge*. "In the last seven years, the Center has culled under-enrolled programs, offered courses that provide students the opportunity to gain college credits, undergone renovation in the academic wing, and added programs ranging from career development to plumbing and heating."

"Strong community partnerships make these programs possible," added BRCOT Director Paulette Bonneau. "Area businesses lend us their time, talent, treasure, and expertise in helping to keep our programs up-to-date and relevant. All programs are aligned with national industry standards, and students who complete them have a distinct advantage in the workplace or in post-secondary education."

Following the celebration, Senator King met with LearningWorks staff and students to hear about LearningWorks' programs and their positive impact on Biddeford children and families.

LearningWorks provides free community-based education programs for children, adults, and families throughout southern Maine. "You folks are doing amazing things to provide something for everyone--our young people are the State's most important asset, and the breadth of programming the Biddeford School Department offers is critical," King said.

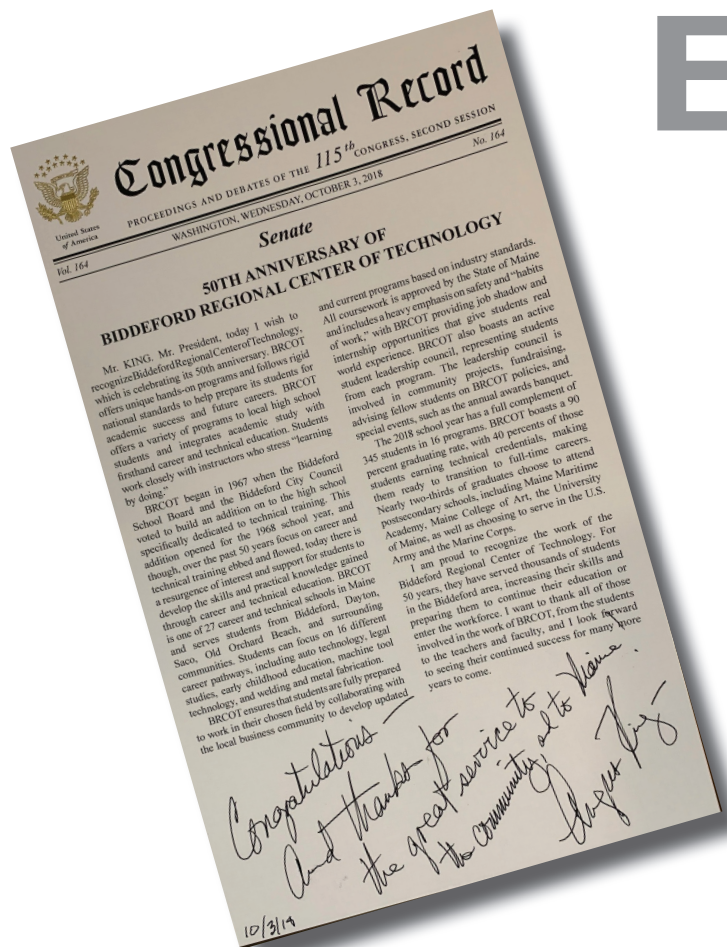
The Biddeford School Committee has passed a budget that includes \$400,000 for additional renovations for the Center this year. The Programs are fresh, but much of the building is tired. We must invest in the physical plant so that it can safely and effectively house our many hands-on programs.

- Jeremy Ray, Superintendent

Senator King has made workforce development and career and technical education top legislative priorities in Washington. He has discussed ways to bolster Maine's economy through technical training at Eastern Maine Community College, Portland Arts and Technology High School (PATHS), and at the Cianbro Institute. He also devoted the April 2018 edition of his podcast, *Inside Maine*, to workforce development, speaking with Peter Vigue, chairman of the Cianbro Companies about the Cianbro Institute, and Ed Cervone, Executive Director of Educate Maine, about their work to provide technical education opportunities and encourage more people from non-traditional backgrounds to pursue careers in IT.

The Biddeford Regional Center of Technology is one of 27 Career and Technical schools in Maine. Students can focus on sixteen different career pathways, including auto technology, legal studies, early childhood education, machine tool technology, and welding and metal fabrication.

Vocational Education



For the 2019-2020 school year, the BRCOT is expanding programs to include Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Medical Management Technology.

The EMS program provides students with skills necessary to respond to emergency calls, provide efficient and immediate care to critically ill or injured persons and transport patients to a medical facility. Successful completion will include a certification as a Maine EMT-B.

Medical Management Technology provides students with knowledge and business skills relevant to medical practices. Terminology, coding and insurance concepts, records management, billing and accounting concepts, and medical law and ethics, customer service and current medical events are a few of the covered topics.

As we look into career development for the future, BRCOT will also be exploring a culinary arts program.

Meet Marie Potvin '77

Golden Apple Award, March 2019

University in 1982. After working for a non-profit organization in Massachusetts as a community youth recreational director, Marie then went on to become an athletic trainer at Methuen High School and worked as an educator in the Methuen Public Schools. She later worked at Timberlane Regional Junior High School before returning home to teach, coach and work as an athletic trainer.

Marie came from a large and compassionate family, and when she considered what career she wanted--and where she wanted it--her heart bled black and orange. "Mine was a loving and supportive household," Marie told *The Bridge*. "My parents believed in giving back and lived a life of service. I've tried to live in a way that is a testament to how my parents raised us and guided us."

Beyond the classroom and her busy family life, Marie found time to coach. Among her many achievements in guiding Biddeford athletics programs was the return to varsity level by the girls' soccer team and starting the girls' ice hockey program "from the ice up." Marie told *The Bridge* that she was especially proud of the ice hockey program. "It's nice to see the success they've had competing at a very high level, including championships," she said.

In the classroom, Marie has been recognized over the years for her unparalleled dedication to kids, including with a nomination for the Golden Apple Award through the radio station 99.9 *The Wolf*. This award recognizes educators dedicated to the intellectual and emotional growth of Maine's children and young adults. Other awards Marie has received over the years include a Maine Association for Middle Level Education Outstanding Educator Award and Maine Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance health teacher of the year award.

"As a former physical education teacher, I have always had a special place in my heart for Marie and what she brings to her students each and every day," Superintendent Jeremy Ray recently told the Biddeford School Committee in public session. "She will be sorely missed, and I wish I could convince her to say," he told *The Bridge* in a follow-up interview.

"Teaching is a special craft and a special gift you can give to others," Marie said. "The knowledge you have and the ability you develop to inspire and connect with students hopefully ignites a passion in them, or connects them with a healthy future in something for which they're passionate."

Golden Apple Award Nomination

Mrs. Potvin has very high standards and holds students accountable for their academics as well as their behavior. She accommodates for all the students she works with. Whether it is a student who needs extra challenging work or a student who needs work modified, she is ready and willing to do what it takes to make that student successful and have that student feel good about their efforts.

Mrs. Potvin goes above and beyond what is expected of her in her job. She has chaperoned the eighth grade class trip to Washington, D.C. for 28 straight years--14 of which she was the organizer. She helps the students fund-raise, teaching them accountability, and makes sure that any student who wants to go is able to attend. Mrs. Potvin cares so much about our school. She can often be seen cleaning up a spill in the hallway, picking up trash that she sees on the front lawn of the school or just being visible in the hallways saying good morning or goodbye to students and staff.

Mrs. Potvin has shown--and continues to show--dedication to improving the intellectual and emotional growth of the students at Biddeford Middle School. I hope you will see her as the wonderful teacher that she is and award her with the Golden Apple Award.

Submitted by
Lee Ann Dutremble,
Colleague and Parent



Faculty Profile



The year was 1987. Ronald Reagan was president. The Patriots followed a Super Bowl loss with an even more disappointing 8-7 season. The Iran-Contra hearings were under way. Punky Brewster was one of television's top shows, and U2's *With or Without You* was the year's number 1 song.

It was also the year **Marie Potvin '77** starting teaching at Biddeford Junior High School.

A native of Biddeford who previously attended BHS and St. Andre's School, Marie graduated from Northeastern

Top Photo (L-R): Hunter Frechette '23, Jordan DeLorenzo '24, Marie Potvin '77, Mariah Desrochers '23 and Malachi Young '23.

Left Photo: Marie Potvin '77 (center) and her Mom, Rita LeBlond, are greeted by all the students.

Meet Jessica (Bedard) Johnson '00

From serving her country to serving her *alma mater*

A trumpet player. An army veteran. A graduate of the University of Southern Maine. A wife and mom of four. A skilled seamstress. An Alumni Band member. Like the pillows she sews, **Jessica (Bedard) Johnson '00** has many layers, including being a driving force to revive the Biddeford Marching Band.

"I am a whole person because of music," Johnson told *The Bridge*. "There were some days it was the only reason I went to school because I knew they depended on me as the lead trumpet player. I believe there are many students who--like me--need that outlet, and it kept me grounded in some of the worst periods of my life. While reading and math educate one side of the brain, music education expands the entire brain to learn. It is the only subject that engages reading, math, tracking, listening, and gross, fine and concentration skills all at once."

After graduation, Jessica joined the military. During her enlistment, she was a truck driver, squad leader and occasionally played trumpet in the military band. As she reflected on her experience, she added, "Drill and ceremony in the military is exactly the same thing as it was in the marching band. I always seemed to have an advantage in drill because I knew how to play an instrument and march at the same time. This engages every part of the body so not only could I march but I could run with ease because when you play an instrument, you learn how to breathe."

Following her honorable discharge from the military, Jessica grew her family to include four children and returned to her love of music through performances with the Alumni Band. When she spoke to the editors of *The Bridge*, she spoke fondly of the friendships she has made speaking the universal language of sound with her "extended family."

Like her, Jessica's son needed a creative outlet. She lamented that marching band was not an option and

decided to take action by sending a letter to the Mayor and Superintendent.

"Throughout my time here in Biddeford, I have felt it was very important to make sure that the marching band was restored for our students," Ray told *The Bridge*. "Jessica's letter came at the perfect time. We had to ensure Waterhouse Field was renovated and once we completed that project, it seemed only natural to bring back this once great program to our school and community. We had already approved a Winter Indoor Percussion program as well."

I am a whole person because of music...While reading and math educate one side of the brain, music education expands the entire brain to learn. It is the only subject that engages reading, math, tracking, listening, and gross, fine and concentration skills all at once.

- Jessica (Bedard) Johnson '00

A flurry of planning meetings quickly began--assessing equipment and budget needs, fundraising capacity and potential events, and gauging student interest. Within months, a budget was developed, a fundraising campaign began, and over 50 students signed up. One of those fundraisers was making commemorative pillows out of the old uniforms. During the interview, Jessica laughed, "I never thought sewing could help build a marching band. But, I have been making these pillows and tailoring uniforms for the winter percussion group so we all have skills to help this effort."

"I am looking forward to seeing my son play the trumpet as he marches onto Waterhouse Field this fall. I hope parents, friends and the community join us in making this a reality because our students deserve it."

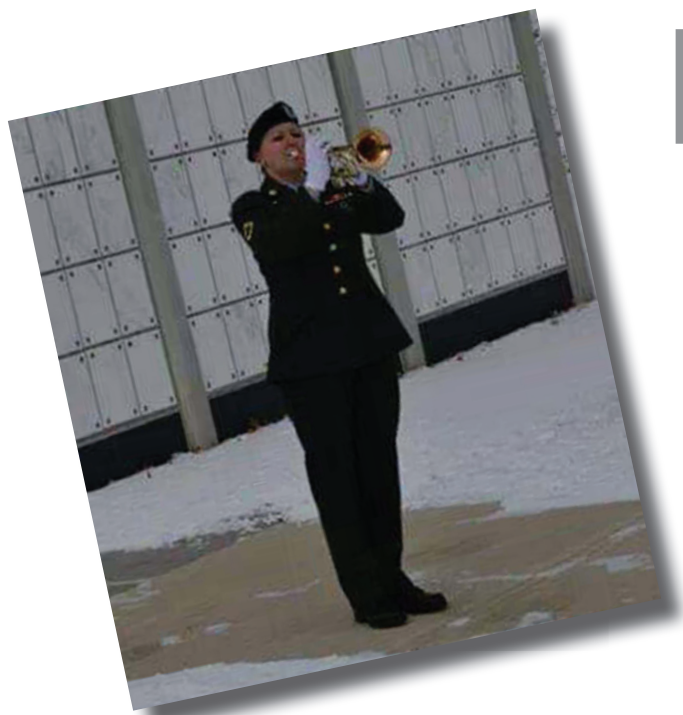


Alumni Profile

In an effort to restore a Marching Band to Biddeford, parent volunteer **Jessica (Bedard) Johnson '00** is putting her sewing skills to use by making commemorative pillows out of the old uniforms. The fundraiser has already brought in over \$1,000 and the pillows are now on back-order. A limited quantity will be made and can be ordered at bit.ly/MarchingBandPillows

Top Photo: Jessica showcasing pillows she is making at her home with her daughters, Lily and Julia.

Left Photo: Jessica playing the taps for Wreaths Across America at the Sanford Vet Cemetery.





Thank You BEF Donors



Dana and Sarah-Jane are a reflection on the Biddeford Education Foundation's goal to maximize opportunities for our students in Biddeford, and we are fortunate to have these pillars in our community.

Dana, a 1967 Alum of Biddeford High School, is the owner of Maine Heritage Iron Works and through that work has been extremely supportive of the Biddeford Regional Center of Technology.

Sarah-Jane, a 1959 Alum of Biddeford High School, is well-known by many in Biddeford as she spent 61 years in Biddeford Schools – 13 as a student and 48 as an educator – a teacher, curriculum director, assistant superintendent and finally superintendent. Talk about a long-time contributor to learning.

- Superintendent Jeremy Ray

facebook.com/Biddefordschooldepartment

The Biddeford Education Foundation (BEF) appreciates the individual and business donors who advance its mission. Last Fall, the third annual *Pillars of Pride* event honored two generous community partners and longtime contributors to learning, **Dana Peck '67** and **Sarah-Jane Poli '59**. The dinner and silent auction raised over \$12,000 for the Foundation, which provides resources outside the normal school budget to enhance programs, encourage academic excellence, and maximize opportunities for students Pre-K through 12.

Recently, the BEF's Board of Directors voted to approve eight teacher mini-grants, totaling \$4,528 and support funding for the Marching Band, Backpack and *JumpStart* Programs, and students in need.

For more information or to make a gift, contact Karen Chasse at 207-391-6885 or via email at kchasse@biddefordschools.me

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- John McCurry
- Jacquelyn Murphy
- Jeremy Ray, *Superintendent*

Mini-Grant Ad Hoc Member

- Jenn Scavuzzo

Support the Foundation

Cruise for a Cause ~ August 23, 2019
6-9pm at 18 Custom House Wharf
Tickets: \$40 each, includes dinner (call 391-6885)

Pillars of Pride Dinner & Silent Auction ~ October 10, 2019
5:30-8pm at Duffy's, Old Orchard Beach
Honoring Ron Cote & Robert Hodge
Tickets: \$50 each, includes dinner (call 391-6885)

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Trillium



WATERHOUSE FIELD

For more information, visit biddefordschools.me/waterhouse-field



Thank You Waterhouse Donors

Last September, the community celebrated together during the opening of the newly-renovated Waterhouse Field. It was a huge win for Biddeford students as they enjoyed their first season on a turf field. Donors, fans and community members were greeted with beautiful pavers given in support of the project, many to remember their loved ones or alumni. The second round of pavers will be installed this spring.

We continue to accept donations for Phase III of the renovation project, including updates to the restrooms and locker rooms, paving, etc. Pavers and bleacher rows are also available and will be ordered on an annual basis each spring. For more information, visit biddefordschools.me/waterhouse-field.

Gifts of \$75,000 and above
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Gifts \$5,000 and below or in-kind
are 2018 donations only, not full
campaign.*

Top Photo: Congratulations to the BHS Cheering Team on their Class A State Championship this past Fall.