

# EDUCATION

## ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

The tradition of excellence in the classroom, performing and visual arts, and athletics continued in the 2019-2020 school year. Motivated students, great teachers, dedicated administrators, involved parents, and a supportive community made this possible.

From September through March 12, 2020, students attended classes in Arlington Public Schools (APS) eleven preschool-grade 12 schools. On Friday, March 13, all Arlington school buildings closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Extracurricular activities, including athletics and performing arts events, were canceled. Students did not return to in-person instruction before dismissing for the summer. However, students through virtual platforms continued to engage in learning with their teachers during the last three months of the school year. To ensure equitable access to virtual classrooms, the district distributed computers to all students requiring a device. Hotspots were also distributed as needed.

Remote learning began on Monday, March 16 with enrichment activities for all grades shared through the APS website and outreach by teachers to their students. APS's initial remote learning plan for April 6-May 4 provided options for students to explore, create, and stay engaged in learning and prioritized maintaining teacher and student connections. Following Governor Baker's announcement that Massachusetts' school closure would extend through the end of the 2019-20 school year, the second remote learning plan for May 4- June 19 focused on essential concepts and skills for students to be prepared for the next grade or course. Remote learning plans were made with equity and inclusion at the forefront. Special Education and English Language Learning services were provided in both remote learning plans.

Despite the changes in the learning modality during the last three months of the school year, the district continued the focus of building on past successes and moving forward on the vision of the Arlington Public Schools (APS) as detailed in the four over-arching district goals.

- The Arlington Public Schools will ensure that every graduate is prepared to enter and complete a post-secondary degree program, pursue a career, and be an active citizen in an ever-changing world by offering a rigorous, comprehensive, standards-based and data-driven K-12 system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that integrates social, emotional and wellness support.
- The Arlington Public Schools will recruit, hire, retain, and build the capacity of a



diverse staff to be excellent teachers and administrators by providing high quality professional development aligned to needs, instructional support, coaching, and an evaluation framework that fosters continuous improvement.

- The Arlington Public Schools will offer a cost-effective education that maximizes the impact of taxpayer dollars and utilizes best practices, academic research, and rigorous self-evaluation to provide students and staff the resources, materials and infrastructure required for optimum teaching and learning in a safe and healthy environment.
- The Arlington Public Schools will be run smoothly, efficiently, and professionally. The district will operate transparently and engage in effective collaboration and responsive communication with all stakeholders. It will provide timely, accurate data to support financial decision-making, envisioning of the district's future, and long-range planning in partnership with other Town officials. Through these actions it will create broad support for a high-quality education system that is the community's most valuable asset.

APS teachers and administrators in collaboration with members of the community and School Committee developed a vision of what skills, knowledge, and dispositions Arlington students should attain and develop during their years in Arlington Public Schools.

### **Vision of Student as Learner**

The APS vision for students as learners and global citizens outlines what the district wants all students to know and be able to do by the time that they graduate from Arlington High School (AHS). This requires that all students experience a coherent curriculum that is aligned with the Massachusetts State

Curriculum Frameworks that support the development of critical thinking, social-emotional, and relationship skills. Students are supported in their development

by highly qualified teachers, who engage in continuous professional learning. This vision informs the strategic initiatives, instructional decisions, and budget requests in the multi-year plan.

These characteristics will be demonstrated by student's ability to:

- work independently and collaboratively
- observe, analyze and synthesize information from a variety of sources to enhance existing understandings and construct new knowledge
- demonstrate perseverance by using repeated reasoning and inquiry
- participate in rigorous, focused discourse
- develop and defend arguments based on evidence and respectfully consider different perspectives
- create and critique original work

### **Vision of Student as a Global Citizen**

Students will strive to be empathic, responsible, active members of a local and global community who are aware of the role that bias and prejudice play in society, as demonstrated by their ability to:

- speak with and listen to others in a manner that is respectful of multiple perspectives
- cultivate and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups
- develop self-awareness and self-understanding
- think critically and reflect upon choices and their impact on others
- participate as a consumer of and contributor to the cultural and civic life of local and global communities.

The results of our efforts include:

- Clear expectations for what every child should know and be able to do (standards-based education) continued to be refined and integrated into daily life in the classroom with curriculum aligned to the Massachusetts State Standards. District-wide common assessments continued to be refined and updated in all disciplines at all levels, including mathematics, English, and writing to help teachers pace their instruction and inform them about students who had mastered the skills and content and those who needed further instruction. At all levels, teachers and administrators focused on incorporating the Vision of Student as Learner and Global Citizen skills into every classroom with an

emphasis on teamwork, working in a multicultural global society, perseverance, communication skills, creative problem-solving, and the ability to evaluate and synthesize information. Students and teachers became more adept at using online tools and resources due to the pandemic.

- Construction of a new high school began in 2020 with expected completion in 2024. The high school was placed on accreditation warning in 2013 by NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) citing inadequate classrooms, science labs, and technology infrastructure. The new school will address growing enrollment increases and a deteriorating building that no longer meets educational needs.
- In the spring of 2019, grades 3-8 and grade 10 took the computer-based Next Generation MCAS for ELA and Math. Grades 5 and 8 took the computer-based Next Generation MCAS in Science and Technology/Engineering, while 10th grade students took the Legacy MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering. The Next Generation MCAS focuses on a student's critical thinking abilities, application of knowledge, and the ability to make connections between reading and writing. The assessment also gives a clearer indication of career and college readiness. The percentage of Arlington students in each grade who are meeting or exceeding grade-level expectations is considerably higher than the state average in each assessed content area. The district received "Substantial Progress" toward targets for most accountability measures in 2019.
- During the 2019-2020 school year, the staff, teachers, and administrators of Arlington Public Schools participated in professional development focused on topics that enable the district to effectively work towards increasing the capacity of all staff to deliver an effective learning experience for all students. One district objective for the year was, "Students will engage in curricula that are designed in response to the district's vision of "student as learner", remain in alignment with state standards, and coherent within each discipline." Major curriculum initiatives included a continuation of aligning classroom resources and units of study with the common core curriculum and state standards. To support this work, teachers participated in professional development opportunities offered during early release time and department meetings.

- In support of district goal 1.2, “Students will develop their social and emotional (SEL) skills through age-appropriate SEL instruction that includes an awareness of cultural bias, and by learning in classrooms where responsible decision making, empathy, and the importance of positive relationships are the norm.”, all district teachers, teaching assistants and administrators received eight hours of professional development. Coupled with the district’s focus on Cultural Competency, 60 elementary teachers and 30 middle school teachers participated in a summer training in “Responsive Classroom.”, which is an evidence-based approach to teaching that focuses on engaging academics, positive community, effective community, effective management, and developmental awareness. The underlying foundation for Responsive Classroom assists with building the five SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, social awareness, and relationship skills.
- To further support curriculum work and to ensure that classroom instruction continued to respond to the individual needs of students, professional development opportunities were provided to focus on the use of data to support teaching and learning, addressing goal objective 3.1, “Research and implement a data platform to support the district in collecting, aggregating, analyzing and sharing student data in order to assist teachers in targeting instruction and improving student learning and wellness.” The Data Bank, which houses student assessment data, was updated to provide filters to disaggregate formal and informal assessment results by gender and race. Teachers and administrators participated in a series of workshops that focused on teaching the Data Wise Improvement Cycle.
- Arlington Public Schools understands the importance of having safe and supportive schools so that every child feels known and appreciated in school, while also supported in learning age-appropriate social-emotional skills in an atmosphere of equity. This work is shared by all administrators, faculty, and staff. This priority is supported by specific programs that the district has adopted, as well as through a variety of professional development offerings and school and district-level Safe and Supportive Schools teams. Curricula and programs such as Tools of the Mind, Responsive Classroom and Open Circle help build predictable, safe, and energizing classrooms. Over 300 faculty and administrators have been certified in Youth Mental Health First Aid, and a cohort of teachers has completed a graduate certificate program in Trauma and Learning. Teachers have attended professional development on cultural competency offered district-wide.
- Arlington High School (AHS) continues to provide high levels of academic quality and a positive environment in spite of persistent challenges in facilities. AHS continues to grow in a number of areas including the use of technology, school climate, student leadership, and learning beyond the school walls. AHS continues to excel on assessments of academic quality reflecting both high achievement and improvements in academic equity. AHS received Gold Medal distinction in the U.S. News & World Report Best High School Rankings and ranks in the top 2% of schools nationally. AHS is recognized as a top school in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, or STEM. Students at AHS also continue high levels of performance in the National Merit Scholarship Competition over the years.
- Arlington High School has continued to expand its offerings and build capacity to allow students to learn beyond the traditional classroom, varying how, when, where, and what they learn to serve their interests and needs. These efforts include uses of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), interdisciplinary certificates, internships, online courses, and an emphasis on a maker culture. MOOCs are courses offered online and open to the public. Students learn with the provided materials (lectures, readings, videos) and are assessed by online quizzes and peer feedback. AHS has developed a highly successful blended model in which students or staff may propose a course. Students take the course along with a staff member who helps create context, community, appropriate feedback, and supplements and approves the assessment. This approach proved successful during the school closure resulting from COVID 19. During the closure period over 300 students participated in these online courses for credit.
- Over the past three years, AHS has partnered with Think:Kids, a program in the Department of Psychiatry at the Massachusetts General Hospital, to pilot an approach to school discipline known as Collaborative

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Problem Solving (CPS). CPS builds relationships and teaches skills through a process of helping adults and students learn how to resolve problems collaboratively, which has resulted in a 45% reduction in out-of-school suspensions.

## Athletics:

In fall 2019, 459 students participated in the nine programs, with post-season success for four of the programs, including girls soccer, boys soccer, field hockey, and golf. During the winter season, 393 students participated in the nine programs offered. Three teams won Middlesex League championships - boy ice hockey, girls ice hockey, and wrestling, Wrestling won the Metro Division 2 Sectional Championship for the first time in school history. Boys Hockey won the Division 1A Super 8 State Championship for the second time in the last four years. AHS is the first public school team in the history of the State to win two Super 8 Championships. For the spring season, 399 students registered to participate, but unfortunately due to Covid-19, the spring season was canceled.

- The Technology Plan was further implemented this year by increasing the schools' Bandwidth from two 2-Gig to two 3-Gig redundant circuits located at AHS and Ottoson, as well as increasing technology hardware, including LCD projectors, in all schools. As part of the School Chromebook Refresh Program, 1,000 Chromebooks and 40 carts were purchased and distributed to schools. Continued Voice Over Internet Protocol implementation (VOIP) brought an additional 14 buildings online for a total of 18 buildings in the town, including schools. Upgrades to Munis and PowerSchool were implemented, which included creating a visual map of school buffer zones through the integration of PowerSchool and the Integrated People system. The Technology Department with school personnel distributed 1100 Chromebooks and iPads to students to support Remote Learning during school closure. They installed the Town/School Fiber Infrastructure in the Parmenter School in preparation for the Preschool relocation from AHS for a September 2020 opening. The Department set up and installed Virtual Private Network Software for School Administrators to enable them to work during the Governor's "Stay at Home" order. To support remote teaching, the IT Department provided an array of professional development modules for the use of online software and platforms.

- Arlington Education Foundation (AEF), MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and Community Health Network all supported important initiatives regarding social-emotional skill building, positive mental health, and equity in the schools. The Arlington Education Foundation (AEF) continued investing a total of \$200,000 in behavioral health so every student has the best environment in which to learn. The grant continued in 2019-2020 to support Youth Mental Health First Aid training for teachers, staff, and administrators in all schools. Over 300 staff members have been trained. In addition, several schools received on-site coaching from The May Institute. The grant also funded individual projects at several schools.
- A grant from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education supported the district-wide Safe and Supportive Schools (SASS) team that focused on building internal capacity by supporting SASS leadership work, as well as attendance at a May Institute and the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Conference.
- CHNA 17 awarded the district additional funding through the Mental Health and Racial Equity grant to address issues regarding access to mental health care among Arlington's African-American/Black students. A cohort of school counselors, social workers, and a nurse took the EDCO IDEAs course on Anti-Racist School Practices to support the success of all Students. In addition, several members of AHS' Black Student Union attended a leadership conference with grant funds.
- Through an AEF grant, Dr. Dena Simmons conducted a curriculum equity audit of current district curricula.
- AEF supported a Gibbs Learning Community as the teachers developed a project-block curriculum based on exploring social justice ideas of Identity and activism.
- AEF funded innovative fitness activities in PE classes at Hardy and Dallin schools.
- AEF provided funding to support a number of school initiatives, include the AHS Wellness Day, Orff Instrumentarium at Stratton School, professional development for Teaching for Artistic Behavior throughout the APS Visual Arts program, Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) Biotech Equipment for AHS biology classes, non-fiction books from all continents for Ottoson students to "Read Around the



World”, and, the Continuing Scholar Awards for APS teachers to pursue their individual enrichment studies.

The schools continued to work in partnership with the police, town, and community to ensure consistent and coordinated responses to inappropriate student behaviors. The Diversion Program started in 2006, which focuses on restitution and rehabilitation for first time, non-violent behavior, has proven to be an effective model. The APS partnered again this year with AYCC, community and nonprofit organizations to provide more options for counseling services. Meeting the social and emotional needs of children is as high a priority as meeting the academic needs of APS students. The Parent Forum series continued again this year, free to all parents and community members. This year the topics ranged from: “Encouraging Honest Conversation with your Elementary-Age Children about LGBTQIA+”, “Redefining Mealtime”, “Screenagers” (the impact of digital time on children), “Changing the Culture Around Mental Health”, “How to Raise Ethical/ Thoughtful Children in The Age of Me Too”, “Smoking Cessation”, “Partying=intoxication a harmful message for teens”, “Unstuck: An OCD Kids Movie”, “Guiding Good Choices”, “Smoking and Vaping: Preventing Teen Trends,” “Homesick and Happy,” “I’m Done; What Do I Do Now?”.

The Arlington Public Schools have a team of talented professionals working together towards our shared vision: All students will achieve at their full social, emotional, creative, and academic potential, and will be prepared for higher-level academics, workforce success, active citizenship, and life-long learning.

For additional information, please see the Superintendent’s newsletters: <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/administration/newsletters/>

For additional school and department highlights, please see the FY20 Report to Town Meeting: <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/administration/budget/fy21/fy21budgettownmeeting06-15-20.pdf>



AHS site work and Class of 2020 Graduation Caravan through town, June 2020.



Construction of the new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Mathematics) classroom wing, December 2020

## High School Building Project Update

The new Arlington High School remains on schedule and on budget despite the ongoing pandemic. Site work for the new school began in April 2020, while Phase 1 construction began in November 2020 when the first steel beams were raised. The Performing Arts and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Mathematics) wings are expected to be open to students in February 2022 and the school fully constructed in 2024 (followed by one year of additional site work).

Arlington began addressing the facility needs of the high school when it was invited by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) into the School Building Grant Program in 2016. Arlington residents voted to fund the project in June 2019. Project partners include HMFH Architects, Owner’s Project Manager Skanska USA and Consigli Construction.

Detailed design and value engineering were ongoing throughout the 2019-2020 school year. In December 2020, Consigli Construction and the Town of Arlington signed a Guaranteed Maximum Price agreement to set the construction budget as \$234,287,347, roughly \$1 million less than the construction cost approved by the voters in 2019. In addition, the AHS Building Committee was able to add back several highly desired items to the project including the Minuteman Bikeway ramp and lighting at the new athletic fields. Furthermore, several HVAC enhancements are now included in the project, such as bipolar ionization and a more robust air filtration system. With associated soft costs added to construction cost, this brings the total project cost to \$289.8M. The MSBA is expected to contribute \$86 million.

As part of the AHS Building Project, the former Parmenter School was renovated in order to temporarily accommodate Menotomy Preschool. Menotomy Preschool, housed at the high school, is now relocated at the Parmenter School during construction of the new high school. The preschool will return to the new high school after it is completed. The majority of the work required to outfit the Parmenter School was the addition of an elevator to ensure full accessibility. Renovations took place from March to August 2020 and the preschool is enjoying their temporary home.

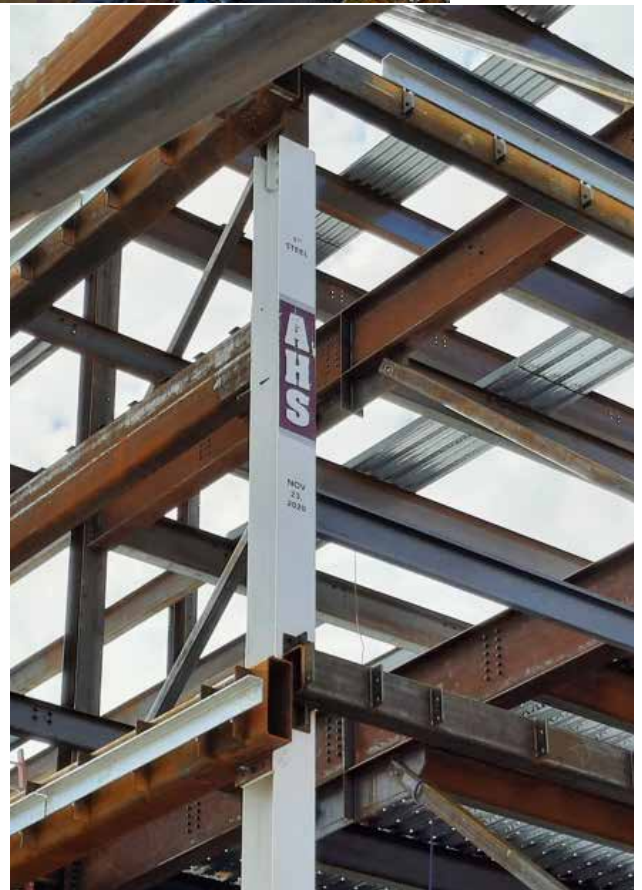
For more information on the AHS Building Project, including design renderings, construction progress



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*Clockwise from top: View of AHS site under construction (Dec. 2020), First steel column that was raised (Dec. 2020), interior of the classroom wing (Jan. 2021), and an eastern view of the AHS construction site (Feb. 2021).*



## ANNUAL REPORT TO THE TOWNS ARLINGTON

### **Minuteman High School Dr. Edward A. Bouquillon, Superintendent-Director 2020-21 School Year**

#### **Despite Pandemic, School Continues to Grow**

Even with the challenges the pandemic has imposed on schools nationwide, Minuteman High School continues to experience growth in enrollment, programming, and in its physical footprint with the ongoing construction of athletic fields as part of the final phase of the school building project. The increased enrollment demand from families living in Minuteman's member towns is higher than projections made as the school was being designed. New and soon-to-be-implemented programming in animal science, multimedia engineering, advanced manufacturing, and robotics, are meeting the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and narrowing the skills gap. Additionally, Minuteman's commitment to athletics is stronger than ever – marked with the Minuteman School Committee's unanimous approval to begin construction of three synthetic fields on the Lexington campus.

Using a hybrid learning model for 2020-21 school year, Minuteman has operated with one grade of students in the building per week to receive hands-on, career technical education (CTE) instruction, with academics and other content taught remotely. The administration is working with teachers and parents to actively plan to increase in-person learning capacity to two grades per week in March 2021.

#### **Adapting to Growing Enrollment Demand**

As word spreads that Minuteman High School gives students a revolutionary, competitive advantage and a high-quality career technical education a new state-of-the-art building – with a large majority of students entering college or career shortly after graduation – the enrollment demand is increasing. Currently, 89% of Minuteman's ninth grade students (or 159 students) live in the district's nine member towns, including Arlington.

Minuteman experienced growing member-town enrollment for the Class of 2024, this year's ninth-grade class. There were 390 total applications received for students enrolling in the Class of 2024 – with 252 of those applications from students living in Minuteman's member towns – for 179 total open slots. By comparison, in 2019 and 2018, Minuteman received 272 and 168

total applications, respectively.

As of early February 2021, Minuteman received 334 total applications for the Class of 2025, for a total of approximately 200 total freshman slots.

Arlington is the largest town in Minuteman's district with 172 students attending for the 2020-21 school year, representing 27% of the school's 638 students.

#### **Athletic Fields Project**

Construction has begun on three new athletic fields on the Minuteman campus with an anticipated completion date of October 2021. The three synthetic turf fields will support football, boys' and girls' soccer, cross country, baseball, softball, and boys' lacrosse, with a potential for future girls' lacrosse and girls' field hockey, as well as expanded track and field programs. The district is in the final stages of seeking approval from our member towns to insure all three fields are lighted, providing additional hours of use and enjoyment by Minuteman, our member towns and other sports groups.

Minuteman has had a long-standing commitment to accessible athletics programming with a "no cut, no fee" policy. Sports are a crucial component of the high school experience for many students. Athletes learn sportsmanship, teamwork, and the value of physical fitness. Having state of the art athletic fields for our students and our member towns gives us all something to look forward to in 2021 and many years to come.

#### **Adapting to Change**

Minuteman is nimble at adapting to change, as demonstrated with providing programming that narrows the skills gap and meets the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our students and teachers were quick to shift learning and teaching models during the ongoing pandemic, highlighting their perseverance and dedication to high-quality career technical education.

As Minuteman looks to the future, it is continuing to be responsive to the economy of today and tomorrow. In December 2020, Minuteman was awarded \$300,000 from Governor Charlie Baker's Skills Capital Grant to expand programming for both high school and adult evening students in robotics logistics engineering. With a massive rise in automated warehousing creating responsive supply chains, the demand for a highly trained and skilled workforce is increasing dramatically.



## Class of 2020 Achievements:

About 85% percent of Minuteman High School's Class of 2020 graduates have entered college, career, advanced training, or the military – a lower percentage than usual due to the pandemic. More than 70 colleges and universities accepted Minuteman graduates, including Champlain College, Lesley University, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, University of Massachusetts, University of Southern Maine, Keene State College, Stonehill College, Savannah College of Art and Design, and more. Most students who sought certifications in their respective fields received them prior to graduation, which includes various certifications from Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in hazardous materials removal, biotechnology, plant science, and health care.

There were 25 Arlington graduates in the Class of 2020. Here is what they have told us they are doing:

- **Justine Barnes, a Design and Visual Communications major.** She is attending Bunker Hill Community College.
- **Silvia Barrett, a Culinary Arts major.** She is attending Middlesex Community College.
- **Sean Boisvert, an Electrical Wiring major.** He is attending Nichols College to study business.
- **Erik Byfield, a Culinary Arts major.** He is attending the University of Southern Maine to study mechanical engineering.
- **Dante Capone, a Culinary Arts major.** He is attending the Culinary Institute for America in New York.
- **Liam DaSilva, a Metal Fabrication and Welding major.** He enlisted in the United States Military.
- **Alec Derby-Geiermann, a Culinary Arts major.** He is attending Southern New Hampshire University.
- **Mark Galvin, a Plumbing and Heating major.** He is employed with a plumbing company.
- **Alexis Gazza, a Plumbing and Heating major.** She is employed with a plumbing company.
- **Edward Hassler, a Culinary Arts major.** He is attending Westfield State University to study criminal justice.
- **Daniel Healey, a Culinary Arts major.**
- **Rachel Jackson, an Early Education and Teaching major.** She is attending Middlesex Community College to study elementary education.
- **Hitesh Kafle, a Programming and Web Development major.** He is attending Mt. Wachusett Community College to study exercise and sports management.
- **Joshua Kerble, a Carpentry major.** He is attending Florida Gulf Coast University to study business management.
- **Nadishna Khadka, a Biotechnology major.** She is attending University of Massachusetts Boston.
- **Charles Lovett, a Horticulture major.** He is working at Newton Cemetery.
- **Daniel Mericantante, a Plumbing and Heating major.** He is working for a plumbing company.
- **Timothy Mericantante, a Plumbing and Heating major.**
- **Kyle Moniz, a Carpentry major.** He is working for a building restoration company.
- **Michael O'Rourke, an Electrical Wiring major.** He is working for an auto service station.
- **Darwin Perez, a Plumbing and Heating major.** He is working for a plumbing and heating company.
- **Austin Perry, an Electrical Wiring major.**
- **Mani Prashar, a Carpentry major.** He is attending Bunker Hill Community College to study computer programming.
- **Otto Rademacher, an Environmental Science major.** He is attending the University of New England to study marine affairs.
- **Joshua Vaglica, a Plumbing and Heating major.** He is attending Anna Maria College to study business management.