



REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

NIE NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION

October 8, 2025

Full of Joy

Meshulam thriving as first female golf captain in Marblehead High history

By Phil Stacey

» Executive Sports Editor

MARBLEHEAD — What's in a name? In the case of Joy Meshulam, it's the perfect moniker.

Radiating positivity, enthusiasm and a curiosity that befits her love of the sciences, Meshulam is a delight to be around. A member of the National Honor Society at Marblehead High School, she's happy to chat you up about why Charles Darwin is a particular favorite of hers, taking part in role playing video games with her cousin Kevin such as Fortnite and The Witcher 3, and her love of freehand drawing — especially different dog breeds.

If you really want to see an abundance of joy emanate from Meshulam, though, ask her about her golf game ... or her role as Marblehead High's first ever female golf captain.

"It was a goal of mine, and as a very analytical realist, I thought there was a possibility," said the 17-year-old Meshulam. "So when it actually happened, I was like, 'huh' and said 'Thank you very much.' I knew I had to hold myself to a very high standard.

"But the second I got back into my car," Meshulam continued, excitement raising in her voice, "I was like, 'Guess what parents! I did it!' I was



Senior Joy Meshulam is the first female golf captain Marblehead High history. She is a perfect 8-0 in her matches this season for the Magicians.

calling all my friends, texting people, so happy to let them all know."

A three-year member of the varsity team, Meshulam isn't a captain for the Magicians because she's female; she was chosen as a co-captain by her teammates because she's an excellent golfer.

During the first two rounds of team tryouts at Olde Salem Greens she shot a 37, then a career low 34. Since the regular season began she had won all eight of her matches by mid-September, playing out of the No. 5 spot in the lineup, including two of those being 9-0 sweeps. (The



DAVID SOKOL/Staff photo

Joy Meshulam putts on the second hole during a golf match against Gloucester at Tedesco Country Club recently.

Northeastern Conference uses individual match play as opposed to a modified Stableford format).

"She's a terrific young lady, as testament to nine boys voting for her for captaincy," Marblehead golf coach Bob Green stated. "She's earned the respect; the players respect her attitude, her approach and commitment to the game and the support she gives back to her teammates.

"Being the first female captain in MHS golf history is well deserved," he continued. "Her name speaks for itself; she's a joy to have on the team and a terrific golfer."

'Committed to it'

The only child of Kristen and Andy Meshulam came to golf in middle school if for no other reason than she hates running.

"At that time I didn't have a lot of hobbies and wanted to get into a sport before it was too late," she admitted. "There was no running in golf, so I said 'Let's try that.' I've loved it ever since."

The game has loved her back. Blessed with strong hand-eye coordination, patience and a hunger to improve, Meshulam has put the time in to make herself into a standout player. From taking instruction from PGA Golf Professional

Brian O'Hearn at DiLisio's Golf Range in Salem, playing as a member at Olde Salem Greens, and discovering what clubs do (and don't) work for her, she has made herself into a fine player.

She has also implanted Green's credo of 'It's the next shot that matters', she strives to maintain composure whether she hits the shot of her life or, on those rare occasions, it goes astray.

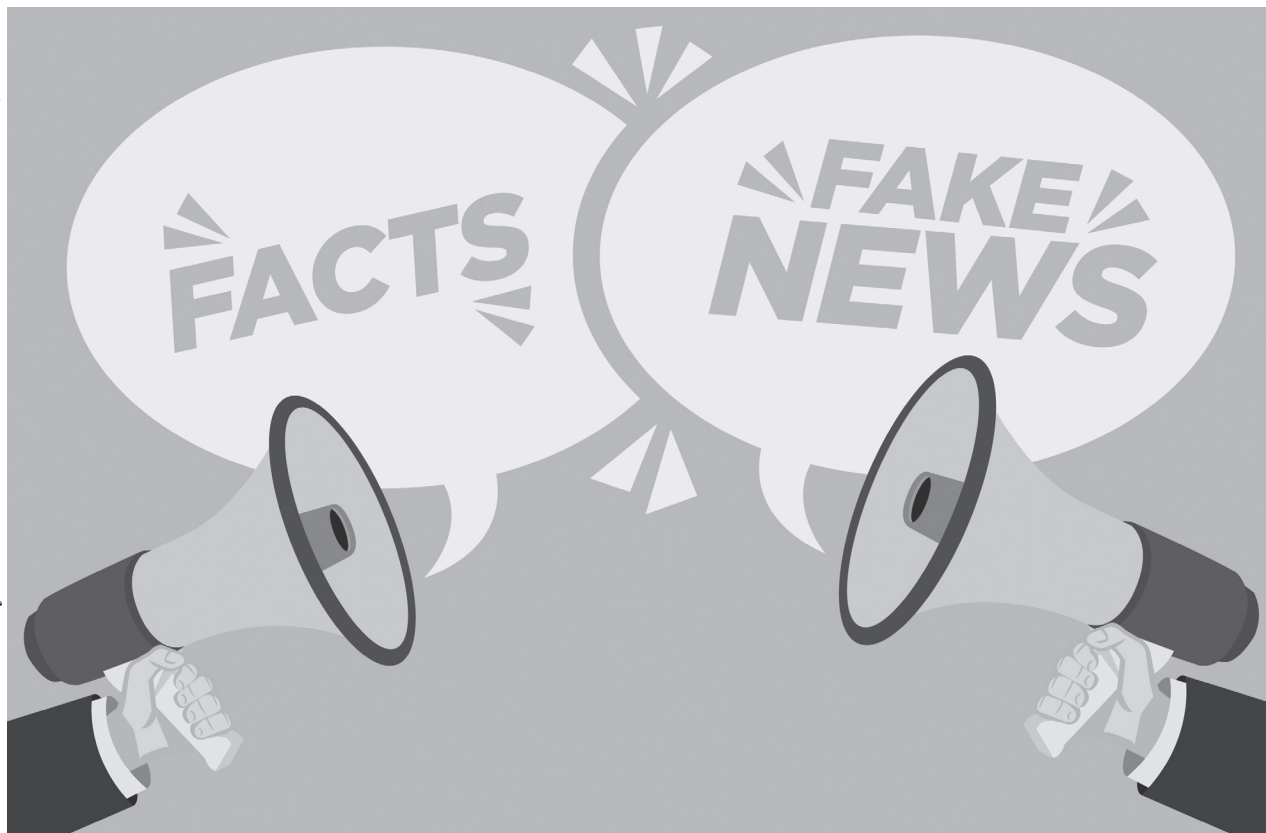
Her Marblehead co-captain, junior Tyler Forbes, has certainly made note of it.

"I played with Joy every day in tryouts this year, and something that stood out to me was the way she held

her emotions," said Forbes. "I don't think she ever lets her emotions play a factor in her game, and that's something that I think feeds off onto our team in a positive way. That week of playing with her every morning in tryouts really helped me on being better at not getting so upset after hitting a bad shot and moving onto the next one."

Playing from the ladies tees (as the MIAA allows female players to do), Meshulam isn't particularly long off the tee but certainly consistent, able to hit it 200 or more yards with

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Looking to combat fake news?

Here are some resources to help you determine if what you've read is true:

» **PolitiFact** is the Pulitzer Prize-winning fact checking operation run by the nonprofit Poynter Institute. The site fact-checks statements by politicians and debunks myriad Facebook hoaxes.

<https://www.politifact.com/>

» **FactCheck.org**, run by Annenberg Public Policy Center, performs much of the same tasks, and also let's you ask questions of the fact checkers. An example question: Did the Supreme Court rule that it is illegal to take the oath of office with anything but the Bible? (The answer is no.)

<https://www.factcheck.org/>

» **Snopes** is the original fact-checking website. Use the site's search bar to get to the bottom of political statements, viral videos and urban myths.

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REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

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Here are the basics of the program:

What is it? The Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times partner with local businesses to provide free digital access to our newspapers to anyone within a school in our coverage area at no cost to the school. This access encourages students to value the vital news coverage being produced by The Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times. They will build awareness and gain critical thinking skills in the process.

Who can participate? This program will benefit teachers, students, and others in the school community.

Where does it take place? You can access our newspaper online. Teachers can incorporate the program into their curriculums, even having reporters, photographers and editors visit your class.

When can we start benefiting? As soon as we have your commitment to participate in Real News in Schools we will go to work to find a local business who wants to sponsor you. Once we have one, we will work with your IT Department to get the program up and running.

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Cushing says he's ready to reunite a divided Beverly

By Caroline Enos

» Staff Writer

BEVERLY — This year's theme at Beverly schools is "From challenge to change together," a mission new Superintendent Peter Cushing said he's ready to take on.

"Priority No. 1 is really reengaging the community and building trust," he said prior to the start of school.

Cushing started in the district on July 1, taking the reins from previous Superintendent Suzanne Charochak upon her retirement.

He was formerly an assistant superintendent in Medford, a high school principal in Webster, assistant principal of Narragansett Middle School in Templeton, vice principal of Narragansett Regional High School, and was a history teacher at Lynn Classical and Arlington high schools.

Cushing also holds a master's in educational administration and a

doctorate in education from Boston College. He lives in Ipswich and grew up in Lynn, which has given him a good understanding of the needs of diverse North Shore communities such as Beverly, he said.

"Beverly is North Shore ruggedness, all right," Cushing said. "I think you can say that about a lot of communities in our area. There's a passionate stick-to-it-ness that I sensed growing up in Lynn, but that I sense is just part of being on the North Shore. It's almost like our rocky coastline that doesn't give up."

"We're not going to give up. We're going to find solutions to this."

There was doubt among some School Committee members that Cushing has the experience to bring Beverly out of the divisive aftermath of the 2024 Beverly Teachers Association strike, since he has never led a district as superintendent before.

While School Committee members Lorinda Visnick and Kimberly



Beverly Superintendent Peter Cushing

"Barack Obama wasn't the president before, and he did a phenomenal job," Cushing said. "I think leadership takes many different forms."

"I fully respect where the School Committee was and their deliberations. And much like the Beverly Public Schools has to make sure that we convince and win over our constituents, I'm going to be doing the

same type of thing to make sure that I'm delivering the best product."

Rebuilding the relationship between teachers, administrators and community members will be the main focus of this school year.

Cushing offered Beverly educators individual 15-minute meetings this summer as he settled into the district. He's heard two philosophies on how to best move past the turmoil of the strike. Either to heal and grow and voted with four other members to bring him on board.

The solution to rebuilding these relationships partly lies in the district's second priority for the school year, he said, which is creating a new strategic plan.

Beverly schools are currently in the last year of a three-year district improvement plan. Cushing said he expects the process of creating a new plan to include focus groups, surveys and other forms of communication with the community.

"Hopefully, this might be able to be done all at the same time as the healing tour and the healing mission that we're going to need to be on," he said.

He has also spoken with the leadership of the BTA and said he was impressed with these conversations, adding, "they have been good thought partners so far in working through some of our challenges."

The district is also tasked with proving to taxpayers the value of a public education in this city, Cushing said.

"(I'm excited about) the possibilities to work through these challenges and start building an amazing school district," he said.

"Not that it isn't amazing right now, but I want us to be considered in the same breath as the best school districts in the state."

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» Captain

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her driver.

"My freshman year those shots were going 70 yards off to the right, so I'm so proud I've straightened out my driver," said Meshulam. "I go up to the tee box now saying to myself, 'This is going straight down the fairway.'"

If she's able to do so on a par 4, she'll either lay up or go for the green using a 7-, 8- ("my lucky number and club") or 9-iron. She also enjoys using both her pitching and sand wedges, and is comfortable with her hybrid irons on shorter holes, such as the fifth hole at the Magicians' home course, Tedesco Country Club.

"Joy takes the game very seriously, and it shows," said Green, a former Swampscott High golfer (1965-67) who began working at Tedesco in 1970 and has been the MHS golf coach for the last eight years. "She's worked at it, is committed to it, and the results speak for themselves."

Nothing left to do but smile smile

With a weighted 4.58 grade point average, Meshulam will have her pick of excellent colleges to choose from. She wants to study evolutionary biology and would love to play golf if that's an option; Dartmouth and Brown are at the top of her list, with Boston University, Boston College, Bowdoin and MIT also in the mix.

She had tried out for positions in other arenas, such as an officer in NHS, that she wasn't voted for, and wasn't sure if the same thing would happen when the golf team voted for its captains. To her very pleasant surprise, it wasn't.

"It meant a lot that they saw me as someone they could look up to and value as a leader and captain that wasn't defined by gender borders," Meshulam said of her male teammates. "It was 'This person can lead us to be successful.' I was very proud and thankful of my team."

To Forbes, her selection was a no-brainer.



DAVID SOKOL/Staff photo

Joy Meshulam, a senior captain for the Marblehead High golf team, listens to head coach Bob Green before the start of a recent match.

"Joy is a great captain to be working with because she's open to ideas when discussing things for the team," he said. "I think we work well together on keeping each others informed about what we send out to our teammates and stuff like that."

"I know Joy has worked hard since her first year playing for Marblehead golf on improving her game," Forbes added, "and I know that the hard work has paid off. She's really been playing well by sweeping her opponent the last few matches."

Green has had a handful of female players in his program in years past, most notably the late Sgt. Rachel McKay, a three-sport star who went on to play collegiately at William Smith a decade ago. He also recalls great talents from North

Shore schools who starred on the links several generations ago, such as Robin Auger in Beverly and Jen Webster for Peabody.

To him, Meshulam deserves the attention she's been giving both for her play and her leadership abilities. "Our kids were overjoyed when she had that 37-34 in tryouts," he said, a broad smile appearing on his face. "Joy gets along great with her teammates, who are as supportive of her as she is of them."

A captain-elect for the Marblehead girls tennis team next spring, Meshulam takes the same mindset that her first name signifies with her each time she steps onto the course wearing Marblehead's Red, White and Black.

"My ultimate goal this season is to have a smile on my face every single time the round has finished," she said, "because I really want to look back on these memories fondly. There's only so many of them, so I just want to smile through it."

Contact Phil Stacey at @PhilStacey_SN



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Schoolchildren start their Fun Dash at the 16th Annual Happy As A Clam race event in Essex.

Elementary schoolchildren race in Happy as a Clam event

By Stephen Hagan

» Staff Writer

ESSEX — For the 16th year, pupils at Essex Elementary School participated in the Happy as a Clam Fun Dash and 5K race.

The Sept. 12 event was designed to foster physical fitness and a sense of school community, by bringing together schoolchildren, families and staff members, all while promoting wellness, school spirit and outdoor activities.

The Friends of Essex Elementary School hosted the event and more than 100 students took part, with staff and parents lining the course to cheer on the participants. The event featured mascot Shucky the Clam and a variety of food trucks. Bay State Race Services assisted with course organization and timing.

Each student received a commemorative T-shirt and prizes were awarded to the female and male first-place finishers of the 5K and the overall winning team.

Winners were:

- Michael Watson and Kimberly Fitzgerald, who each



Essex Elementary schoolchildren give event mascot Shucky the Clam a hug during this year's Happy As A Clam Fun Dash and 5K.

received a \$100 gift card.

- Team Notch North, which included Michael Watson, Alex Trotsky and Dan Chruniak. They were awarded a \$200 gift card.

- Fifth-graders in Emily Dwyer's class, who earned the Clam Cup for most participation by a class in the Fun Dash.

Principal Kimberly Provost said much of the school community was involved in planning for the event.

"Thank you to the Friends of Essex Elementary School for organizing such a fantastic event and to everyone who came out to run, dash or cheer," Provost said. "We're already looking forward to next year."

Event sponsors included Buckley Tree Care, Beauport Ambulance Service Inc., Trionic Group, Jungle, Red Barn Architecture, Coating Systems Inc., Ashley Fuel Inc., Body Builders Inc., Lahey Health, Pediatric Health Care Associates, Boston Children's Primary Alliance, Downriver Ice Cream, Ramsey Marine & Dock, Essex County OB/GYN, C.K. Pearl, The James Pub & Provisions, Barn Dog, YMCA of the North Shore, and Crocker's Boat Yard.

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Taylor makes her mark at Manchester Essex

By Stephen Hagan

» Staff Writer

MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA — While she may be new to Manchester Essex Regional Middle School, the school's interim principal brings a wealth of experience in education to the job.

Elizabeth "Betty" Taylor's resume highlights her leadership experience in education in recent positions in Beverly and Andover, where she served as principal and interim principal.



Elizabeth Taylor

Taylor said the Manchester Essex Regional School District administration and staff have welcomed her, and the students have been courteous and curious.

"I always enjoy the start of the beginning of the school year and I am happy to begin this school year working with Manchester Essex," she said. "My biggest goal is to support the school community with all their efforts to improve teaching and learning. I want the school to have as few bumps as possible and to encourage students and staff to succeed in their goals for this school year."

So far, Taylor said she has heard mostly positive things from the school community.

"Families are happy with the school," she said. "Our teachers are collaborative and creative. I am just getting to know the students but when I go into the classrooms, I see students who are actively participating in the activities."

Taylor is known for her collaborative and student-centered approach, Superintendent Pamela Beaudoin said.

"We were very lucky to find Elizabeth Taylor, who is our interim middle school principal," Beaudoin said. "(She is) doing a fantastic job out of the gate. She's a really wonderful addition — very seasoned, lots of experience. We're really trying to pick her brain and learn a lot from her."

Taylor retired after eight years as principal of Beverly High School in 2023, serving as the school's assistant principal for 10 years before that. She

"I want the school to have as few bumps as possible and to encourage students and staff to succeed in their goals for this school year."

— Elizabeth "Betty" Taylor, interim principal at Manchester Essex Regional Middle School

brings more than 40 years of experience in education, including service as interim principal for Andover High and Andover West Middle Schools, and as an English and theater arts teacher for more than 28 years.

Taylor has been impressed watching staff patiently helping students navigate the new routines and procedures at Manchester Essex Middle School.

"It is clear to me that the school administration appreciates the hard work of the staff and is working to provide support, resources and training to help students succeed," she said.

Taylor holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Regis College, a Master in Theatre Education from Emerson College, and a Master in Education from Salem State University.

During her career, she served as a teacher, summer school director and director of teacher-mentor programming.

Taylor said her experiences in Beverly and Andover have helped her appreciate how important is to build a school community that offers support for everyone.

Each school has its own distinct personality, she said.

"What I know so far about Manchester Essex Middle School is that the staff believes that teamwork and collaboration is important and that the middle school and high school in one building creates a sense of continuity for students."

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New PVMHS building puts bigger CTE possibilities in sight

By Caroline Enos

» Staff Writer

PEABODY — The CTE program at Peabody Veterans Memorial High School helped turn Jillian McCormick from student to teacher. Once the city's new high school opens around 2030, more programs will be added to open up more career paths to Peabody students.

McCormick joined the school's Early Education program as a sophomore. By the time she graduated in 2017, she had done a work study at Magical Beginnings child care center, created lesson plans for the Little Tanners Preschool on site at the high school, and had been certified to run infant, toddler and preschool classrooms upon graduation.

That experience helped prepare her for her current role, a first-grade teacher at the Brown Elementary School in Peabody where she teaches 20 students, six of whom have autism, through the district's Connections program.

"The minute I graduated I was certified, I got a pay bump at my job, and I stayed at that job for years," McCormick said. "It really set me up for success. That program set the foundation for what I'm doing today."

PVMHS offers six CTE (career and technical education) programs currently: cosmetology, culinary arts, early childhood education, electronics and engineering, medical assisting and criminal justice.

The school also has an Innovation Pathway program in business and finance that allows students to take two technical courses and two advanced placement courses while also completing a capstone or job exploration period. The school covers the costs of AP tests for students in this program with the aim of creating equitable access to career-driven education.

The Innovation Pathway isn't a full CTE program, but



Teacher Jennifer Kornusky highlights some of the features of "Charleigh Tanner," a medical simulation mannequin, to guests during a school tour of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program by the Peabody Veterans Memorial High School in 2022. Speakers shared experiences in the Medical Assisting program, which received a grant for renovations and equipment upgrades that summer.

it is a step in the door to adding one around business in the future, Superintendent Josh Vadala said.

This year, Innovation Pathway students will open a new school store where they will sell Tanner merchandise created with a new digital printer delivered to PVMHS over the summer and other technology at the school.

Each of these seven programs have shaped students like McCormick into professionals, CTE Director Shannon Spinosa said. Just under 100% of PVMHS graduates who were in a CTE program in the last four years have found a job related to that field or are going to college for that area of study.

"CTE offers a plan A or a plan B for students," Spinosa said. "They can go directly into the career world, or they can springboard with a wealth of knowledge into post secondary education."

In the last several years, the Medical Assisting program has seen a redesign of its classroom space and addition of new

professional-grade devices students use to learn with, as has the Electronics and Engineering, which created partnerships with fiber optics companies and also received new gear to train students in that growing field.

"Most kids don't want to get a business degree," said Class of 2020 graduate Justin Walsh, who now works in the electronics field because of the CTE program. "To get into something like this, where everyone's jobs are needed still in order to keep everything running, especially with technology, it's the best for them."

Cosmetology students will have access to updated equipment this year. The Culinary program also has a new test kitchen and an updated restaurant space.

It was at PVMHS that Class of 2024 graduate Carmela Bisesti developed her passion for culinary arts. Now a freshman at Johnson & Wales University majoring in baking and pastry arts, Bisesti said it was Peabody's CTE program that made her

"want to learn more" about this field.

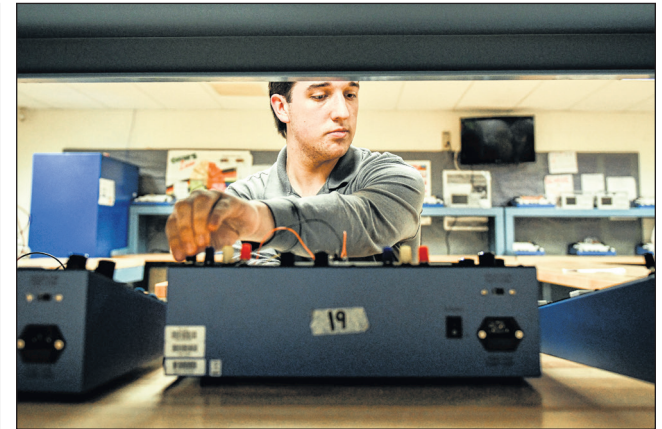
"It's a stepping stone as to what your career could be if you went to college for your passion," Bisesti said.

Vadala said the district will thoughtfully create new CTE spaces in the new high school building that will fit the evolving needs of each program.

The new building will go up on the current PVMHS property off Lowell Street, though officials aren't sure exactly where. The project is currently in the feasibility stage with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

The district is hoping to make the Business and Finance Innovation Pathway a full CTE program before the new school goes online, Vadala said.

As the new school will allow PVMHS to increase its number of CTE seats, the district also aims to add electrical and plumbing programs, which were previously offered until Essex Tech opened a decade ago. Not only did Essex Tech combine



JAIME CAMPOS/Photos

Peabody High senior Dante Colacchio works on one of the digital boards during a 2024 event to recognize the success of the school's fiber-optic training facility, which is one of only a few in the nation.

North Shore Technical High School with Essex Agricultural High School, but also these types of vocational programs at PVMHS.

"You look at the workforce development, and there's not enough plumbers, there's not enough electricians," Vadala said. "We'd love to be able to offer these for our students, because we have a number of students that end up on the waiting list and can't get into Essex Tech."

Peabody is also looking at creating an Aviation Maintenance program, which is only offered at a few other high schools in the state.

The city's proximity to Beverly Regional Airport, Boston's Logan Airport and even Manchester-Boston Regional Airport in New Hampshire pose it as a perfect spot to help develop this specialized work force, Vadala said.

An airplane hangar would be built at PVMHS as part of the new school building project to support this program, which also requires approvals from the Federal Aviation Administration. If created, the program would likely partner with Beverly Airport.

It would also pair nicely with the school's Air Force JROTC program, Vadala said.

"(This program) is certainly not a definite, but it is something that we're really exploring..." Vadala said. "It's an industry that's very much in demand and our students could really have a leg up on other students in the region because they'd have this specialized training."

The city expects to hire a project manager and architect in the next year for the project to build a new high school, though it's too early to attach a price tag or timeline.

An exploratory program of CTE courses for Higgins Middle School students saw its highest number of enrollees this year. A little over half of the freshman class who started at PVMHS this fall have enrolled in the official exploratory program for high schoolers, Spinosa said.

"Students that come through CTE programs have a focus, have an idea that they're able to connect their learning to relevance," Spinosa said.

"They're able to graduate from our programs and be successful in their future, whether it's career or college, because they have the ability to set a goal, to plan, to see the relevance of what their education is providing them."

Contact Caroline Enos at CEnos@northofboston.com

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