

Sebastian Sentinel



Principal's Message

Dear Eagle Families,

I want to congratulate both our girls and boys basketball teams on strong seasons and to thank our Eagle families for coming out to cheer them on this year. With a season record of 8-4, our Lady Eagles made it to the second round of playoffs! I am especially impressed with the excellent sportsmanship all of our players showed this season before, during, and after games. As we know, Character Counts in our schools and our student-athletes exemplify this.

Our National Jr. Honor Society inducted 12 new members last month, bringing our total membership to over 50. Many thanks to Ms. Hagenbuch-Reese for sponsoring NJHS at SMS for many years. Congratulations are also in order to Mr. McCoy's Math Counts Club, which recently participated in their first competition ever, earning a "Best New School" Award in the process.

Unfortunately, our STEAM Family Night, Career Day, and Inquiry Hour Exhibition will not be held as planned this spring due to school closures. I want to thank the many businesses and community partners who had agreed to participate in these events. Please take a look at page 3 for a full listing of these amazing organizations!

As we move forward, the district and I will continue to update you. Please check your email frequently. Everything in this issue is correct as of the time of print, but new information may supersede this newsletter which was finalized on March 18th. As we resume classes and coursework online starting Monday, March 30, I will be in touch via email with instructions for your students. If you do not receive emails from Sebastian Middle School, please call our Front Office at (904) 547-3840 to update your email address with us. Although mandatory state testing (FSA and EOC exams) at all grade levels has been cancelled for spring 2020, the material covered in this last nine weeks of our academic year is important for your child to be prepared for his or her next grade level of coursework.

Given that, I eagerly anticipate our students returning to the physical classroom on April 15th. We have added hand sanitizer stations around the school, and the school has been deep cleaned. Many thanks to our Maintenance Manager Jeff Baldwin and everyone on his staff for all of their work over Spring Break to help keep us all healthy.

Finally, the State of Florida will be providing to-go meals (breakfast and lunch) to all students under the age of 18, starting Monday March 23 throughout the time of school closures. Students must be present to receive to go meals at any facility listed on page 2 of this newsletter between the hours of 11:00am and 1:00pm, Monday-Friday.

I am grateful to you as parents and guardians for your support of your students and their continued learning in these uncertain times. Our teachers and staff will be available online to guide you as we move forward, so please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

With much appreciation,
Kirstie Gabaldon, Principal

Sebastian Middle School

2955 Lewis Speedway
St. Augustine, FL 32084
904-547-3840

Kirstie Gabaldon
Principal

Angela Hensley
Assistant Principal

Kevin Hayes
Dean

Matt Hodges
Instructional Literacy Coach

Vision

At Sebastian Middle School, all students will achieve personal success in their learning and become responsible and productive citizens.

Mission

In order to prepare our students to live in and contribute to a changing world, Sebastian will provide a balanced, varied school curriculum designed to meet the academic, cultural and social needs of individuals from the diverse backgrounds of our community.

MARCH 2020

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Issue 2

Sebastian Sentinel

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St. Augustine, FL 32084

Issue 2

*Please watch for our next newsletter in July 2020, and bi-weekly electronic news updates.

Free Meals Provided During School Closures



The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and USDA have approved meal service during this time of unanticipated school closures. This program focuses on areas of eligibility based on economic need. Please note the following:

- Meals will be provided through a walk-up and drive-thru service in the parent drop off loop at the participating locations. At Sebastian, this will be in the bus loop in the back of the school.
- The meals will be provided to children 18 years or younger. Children must be present to receive meals.
- Children may receive meals at the nearest participating site, even if it is not where they attend school. This eliminates the need for families to drive to multiple schools.
- Each day, lunch for that day and breakfast for the next day will be provided at the same time.
- All school sites will operate from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., March 23 – April 14.

The following sites will be participating under this program:

John A. Crookshank Elementary	Gamble Rogers Middle
The Evelyn Hamblen Center	Sebastian Middle
Otis A. Mason Elementary	South Woods Elementary
R.J. Murray Middle	The Webster School
Osceola Elementary	

SMS Greenhouse Opens for Learning!

With electricity and water now in place, our students have begun planting in the greenhouse! The first plants to arrive last month are dwarf Cavendish banana plants, which will be tended in the greenhouse until they are large enough to transplant outside to create a composting area called a "Banana Circle." In addition, students are growing tomatoes, spring onions, cilantro, and jalapenos, all from seed, experimenting with different types of soil, moisture levels, and light levels to find the perfect growing environment. When the plants come to fruition later this spring, students will toss up a tasty pico de gallo with their produce. SMS will hold a "Greenhouse Grand Opening" on Wednesday, April 29 at 8:30am; all parents and the public are invited to attend.

Inquiry Hour = Project-Based Learning

Based on ideas generated in a joint meeting of faculty, parents, and business partners last fall, students have been working diligently this spring on a variety of projects during their weekly "Inquiry Hour." Project ideas were developed on the novels that students are reading this semester; examples include:

6th Grade – *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen

- Designing and building a flashlight (Engineering)
- Composing music as a representation of a weather incident (Humanities)
- Stock Market 101 (Math)

7th Grade – *Peak* by Roland Smith

- Developing an escape room based on the novel's setting (Math)
- Art for Emotional Well-being (Humanities)
- Energy House – researching different ways to power a house and creating a 3-D model (Engineering)
- Plotting and understanding your personal carbon footprint (Math)

8th Grade – *Night* by Elie Wiesel

- Converting an old school bus to a tiny home (Engineering)
- Creating a "Student Survival Handbook" for middle school (Humanities)
- Gardening for anxiety reduction (Math)
- Planning (weaving with plastic bags) to create hats/blankets for shelter and warmth (Humanities)

Project-based learning is a hallmark of the educational experience offered at Sebastian Middle School. An important component of that learning is the opportunity for students to develop public speaking and presentation skills. We hope you will bring the whole family to hear students present their projects during Inquiry Hour Exhibition Night (date TBD).

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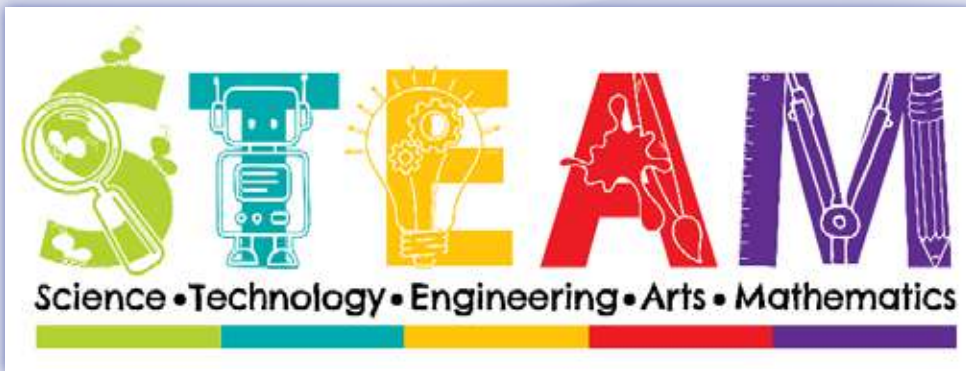


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Thank
you

Many thanks to the following individuals, businesses, and organizations who had agreed to partner with Sebastian Middle School by participating in two special events for hands-on learning for our students and families:

Family Fun Night

- Flagler Hospital
- Global Maritek Systems
- Guana Tolomato Matanzas Research Reserve
- NASA
- North Florida Martial Arts
- Northrop Grumman
- Shamrock Soccer
- St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum
- St. Johns County Engineering Dept.
- St. Johns Riverkeeper
- University of Florida Whitney Lab
- University of St. Augustine

Career Day

- Gen Anderson, St. Augustine Alligator Farm
- Janet Baldwin, Walmart
- Todd Bishop, Bishop Boards
- Officer Dee Brown, St. Augustine Police Department
- Aubrey Cannata, Elbow Tree Counseling
- Tara Dodson, SJC Growth Management Dept., Habitat Conservation
- Jennifer Dourneau, Artist/Dancer
- Amanda Duval, Northrop Grumman
- Brooke Elasik, St. Johns River State College
- Paula Frerichs, Night Lite Pediatrics/Urgent Care

- Doug Gibson, Retired Pilot, UPS & US Navy
- Jillian Gourley, First Coast Technical College
- Bruce Griner, FL Air National Guard
- Jennifer Hampton, St. Johns County Fire Department
- Bridget Healy, Flipper Splash Marketing
- Tim Hinson, Miller Electric Company
- Libby & Billy Johnson, First Coast Realty Inc.
- Charlie Judice, Inventor/Educator
- Joanne Kazmierski, Women in Transportation Seminar
- Lisa Layman, Makeup Artist
- Paul J. Linser, University of Florida Whitney Lab
- Bonnie Lucey, Florida State College at Jacksonville
- Dawn Montemayor, Reiki/Energy Healing
- Jayne Moon, Hair Stylist
- Chuck Meide, St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum
- John Parkey, Global Maritek Systems
- Ashley Pass, Standard Seed & Feed
- Torianda Stuart, Baptist Healthcare
- Danny Tuten, JetCon Inc.
- Lisa Urban, Leonard's Studios
- Lauren Wade, Kids can Code
- Alec Warren, The MOSH
- Ashley Washington, Assistant U.S. Attorney
- Jeanine Wihbey, St. Johns Veterinary Hospital
- Angela Witt, Passero Associates LLC

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Communication Cornerstone in the Community: Boys & Girls Club of St. Augustine

Communication Cornerstone is a hallmark of Sebastian Middle School, offering parents unparalleled access to hear from Principal Kirstie Gabaldon on a variety of topics. On a date to be determined, we will take this event into the community by hosting a meeting for all SMS parents and guardians at the Boys & Girls Club of St. Augustine, 555 W. King Street, from 6:00-7:00pm.

Principal Gabaldon and Instructional Literacy Coach Matt Hodges will lead an interactive discussion on "How to Help Your Child Succeed." A light dinner will be served.



Reading Earns Students a Trip to the Magic Kingdom!

On Friday, March 6, 45 SMS readers boarded a chartered bus for a rewards trip to Disney's Magic Kingdom! Approximately half of those students earned the trip last summer by completing the Summer Reading Challenge: reading and completing the corresponding projects for two Kingdom Keepers books and two SSYRA novels of their choosing. The other 20 students earned the trip by working exceedingly hard in their Intensive Reading or Critical Thinking classes, completing over 500 lessons in Reading Plus since January 1st, and increasing their reading proficiency by one or more grade levels. The students pictured here had a blast together as they explored the theme park and worked together on a Keepers Kingdom Quest to save the Magic Kingdom from the villainous Overtakers.

NASA Educator Spends Two Days at SMS

Tyler Hines, NASA Kennedy Space Center Educator, visited SMS on February 6-7 to share his knowledge of space with our students. On February 6, he spent the day with 7th and 8th grade students in the STEM elective classes, as well as the 8th grade Honors Biology students, teaching them about the role of botany in space. The following day, Mr. Hines met with all of our 6th grade students during their social studies classes to lead them in a lesson on the evolution of technology in exploration throughout history. Thank you Mr. Hines and NASA for your partnership with Sebastian Middle School!

Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week: May 4-8, 2020

For their dedication, creativity, patience, sense of humor, enthusiasm, and love, one week is truly never enough to thank our teachers and staff for all they do for our children! Yet we will try. The PTO invites parents to help by donating the following:

- Gift certificates or items that will be used as prizes in a drawing. Although we cannot afford to buy a special gift for every member of the SMS staff, we can give each a CHANCE to win a fabulous prize! Please bring donations to the Front Office by end of day on Tuesday, May 5.
- Desserts for a luncheon on Wednesday, May 6. Please bring your favorite dessert to the Front Office by 11:00am.
- Breakfast goodies for a Coffee Cart to be delivered door to door on Friday, May 8. Please bring your donations of breakfast items to the Front Office by 7:30am.

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Mission to Mars: Astronaut Training Center

On Friday, January 10, 40 SMS students in our gifted elective classes traveled to Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, FL to learn about the challenges and opportunities for living in space. Students participated in ATX, an astronaut training experience and worked on problems like growing food and creating a power supply for life on Mars. Pictured here, students worked with robots to clean solar panels to generate enough electricity to keep our crew alive!



Notes from the Music Room

Dr. Stephen Robinson, director of the Guitar Program at Stetson University, will conduct a full-day workshop with our music students on a date to be determined. Parents will be invited to join us during your student's music class. Many thanks to the SMS PTO for making this workshop possible!

Summer Music Camps will be held June 1-5 to allow students who have had previous music instruction to further develop their musical skills for the coming school year and have fun! Activities will include concert rehearsal techniques, performance fundamentals, improving technical skills, improvisation, and developing musicianship. The following classes will be available during the camp:

- String Orchestra 8:00-10:00am
- Band 10:00am-12:00pm
- Guitar 12:30-2:30pm

The cost for one class is \$50/week; two or more classes is \$75/week. Scholarships are available. Download a camp application from the SMS website or email Charles.Rogers@stjohns.k12.fl.us for more information.

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Media Center News

Makerspace Challenges

The SMS Media Center promotes project-based learning by offering monthly Makerspace Challenges to students. In January, students completed the Global Warming Challenge, which required students to build upward using red solo cups to create the tallest, free-standing building. In February, students competed in the Origami Heart Challenge, applying appropriate problem-solving to improve an existing manufacturing system to make the most hearts and the most variations of hearts in honor of Valentine's Day. Applying skills to real world problems makes learning meaningful and fun!

Spoken Word Artist "Love Reigns"

Spoken word artist Love Reigns visited SMS on February 26 to inspire our students to write poetry of their own as an expression of artistry and emotion. For the second year in a row, our students were spellbound by the performance of Love Reigns, whose theme this year was the poem *Invictus*, following which students wrote their own poems about being unstoppable and unbeatable. Our grateful thanks to the SMS PTO for making this visit possible!

March Madness: Take a Shot into Reading!

Students, teachers and staff are playing the brackets during the month of March! After perusing the Sweet 16 of Books, readers cast their votes for their favorite authors. Winners are based on circulation and will win either a gift basket or a 4-pack of tickets to the Fountain of Youth. Good luck book lovers!

SSYRA Breakfast of Champions

On Wednesday, February 19, all students who had read at least 7 of the 15 2019-2020 SSYRA books were invited to a special breakfast in the SMS Media Center hosted by Ms. Gabaldon. The 13 students pictured here enjoyed Chick-fil-A minis to celebrate!



Jr. Thespians Present "A Night of One Acts" (Date TBD)

In the coming months, our talented student thespians will present two One-Act Plays: "Just a Stage He's Going Through" and "To Date or Not to Date." Under the direction of Ms. Ralin Trosclair, approximately 25 students have been working hard in this after-school club since January to polish their performances.

In early February, SMS Troupe 88245 left its mark at the State Jr. Thespian Festival in Orlando, FL. Eight students competed in six events, and four events received a medal for achieving a rank of Excellent: Taryn Bishop, Lily Cole, Ashli Dodge, Jack Parkey, and Finley Stokke-Harm. Congratulations Eagle Thespians!

We need spots filled...



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School Calendar

- Mar 31 – Third Quarter Report Cards posted in HAC
- Apr 10 & 13 – Student/Teacher Holidays
- Apr 17 – STEAM Advisory Board Meeting, 8:00am, MPR
- Apr 21 – SAC Meeting, 2:00pm, MPR; Fourth Quarter Interims posted in HAC
- Apr 24 – 8th Grade Dance with Murray Middle School, 7:00-9:00pm, St. Augustine High School Gym
- Apr 29 – Greenhouse Grand Opening, 8:30am
- May 1 – 8th Grade GradVenture Trip to Universal Orlando
- May 4-8 – Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week
- May 12 – SAC Meeting, 2:00pm; PTO Meeting, 3:00pm, MPR
- May 12 – Spring Guitar Concert, 6:00pm, Auditorium
- May 19 – Spring String Orchestra/Band Concert, 6:00pm, Auditorium
- May 22 – 8th Grade Awards Ceremony, 6:00pm, Gymnasium
- May 25 – Memorial Day/Student & Teacher Holiday
- May 27 – Last Day of School for Students
- May 28 – Teacher Planning Day

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8th Grade Important Dates

- **April 24**—8th Grade SMS/MMS Semi-Formal Dance, 7:00-9:00pm, St. Augustine High School Gym
- **May 1**—GradVenture, Universal Studios, Orlando, 2:30pm-2:30am. Cost: \$165. Space is limited. See Ms. Lydigsen for registration forms.
- **May 22**—8th Grade Awards Ceremony, 6:00pm, SMS



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PTO Corner

Thank you to all the parents (and grandparents!) who have contributed their time and money so far this year to make Sebastian Middle School an even better place for our students. A highlight of the spring semester was the annual Spring Fling event held on Thursday March 12.

Putting the FUN back into Fundraising, the PTO organizes the annual Spring Fling event at SMS each year. The teachers earn their T in PTO by staffing a variety of fun booths, from the P.E. sponsored Dunk Tank to the Art Department's Face Painting to Karaoke by DJ Darkside (aka Cafeteria Manager Mike Hardee). All 750+ students enjoyed the opportunity to be outside and have some fun with their teachers and with each other as we headed into Spring Break.