

Sebastian Sentinel



Principal's Message

Dear Eagle Families,

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

Jeff Baldwin, who has been our Maintenance manager here at Sebastian for 11 years, will be leaving us this month. Mr. Baldwin has been an outstanding member of our team and will be sorely missed. He will be assuming a new role as a Youth Resource Deputy and we wish him the best of luck as he pursues his new career. I am pleased to announce Mr. Brad Ponce, a seasoned St Johns County Schools Maintenance Manager, will be joining our team. Welcome to Sebastian Mr. Ponce!

This issue of The Sebastian Sentinel features several articles featuring our incredible Arts programs. Did you know Sebastian offers the only Middle School Orchestra program in the county? Or that our Art teachers can often be found at conferences teaching other Art teachers throughout the state? I hope you will find this edition inspiring as we showcase the creativity found here at our school. The Arts are an integral part of developing character traits such as empathy and creating a growth mindset as students can see their skills developing daily.

As always, I am grateful to you as parents and guardians for supporting your student in their endeavors - be they scholastic, artistic, or athletic.

With much appreciation,

K.T. Gabaldon

If you aren't on our mailing list, please check out Ms. Gabaldon's weekly updates by clicking on the Principal's Message on the Sebastian Website.



Sebastian Middle School

2955 Lewis Speedway
St. Augustine, FL 32084

904-547-3840

Kirstie Gabaldon

Principal

Jennifer Gamble

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 2021

Volume 5

Issue 2

Sebastian Sentinel

March 2021

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St. Augustine, FL 32084

Issue 2

*Please watch for our next newsletter in July 2021, and bi-weekly electronic news updates.

Sebastian Middle School Website

The SMS website has up to date information that is important to stay informed about all activities at Sebastian. It can be found at:

www-sms.stjohns.k12.fl.us/



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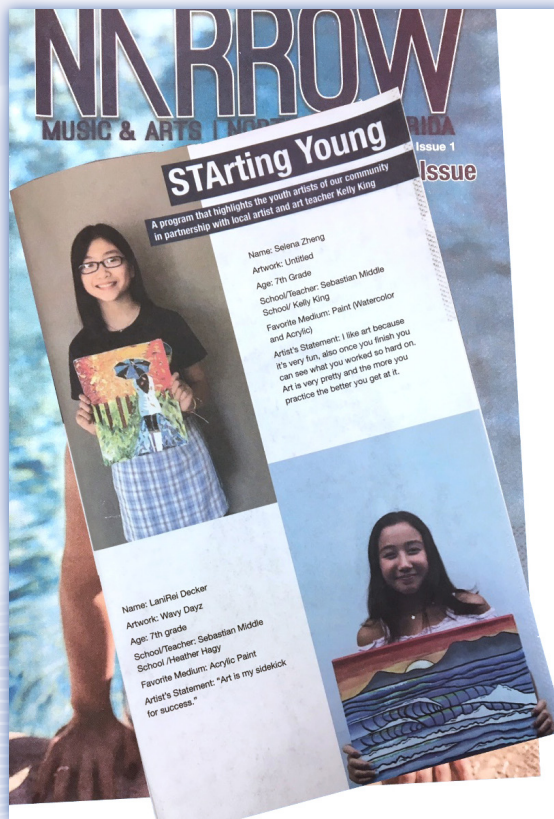


Calendar



Payments

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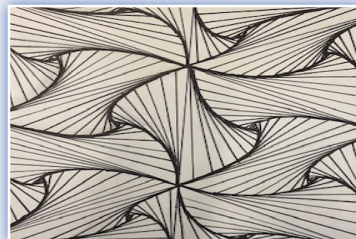
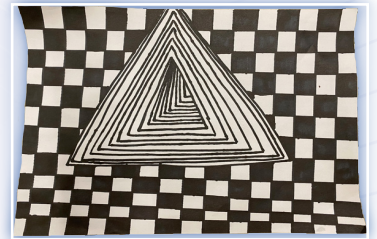


What's Happening in Art!!

Congratulations are due to 2 of our Sebastian artists who were highlighted in the February issue of Narrow Magazine. Applications were collected from performing and visual arts teachers for outstanding young performers/artists. Ms. Selena Zheng and Ms. LaniRei Decker were chosen to represent Sebastian in the STArt Young section of the magazine.

The Narrow Magazine highlights Music and Arts in Northeast Florida and Gainesville. Ms. Sway DiFeo is the Managing Editor of Narrow Magazine and founder of STArt Now (a nonprofit organization established to support local artists and musicians of Saint Augustine). Ms. Kelly King and Ms. Heather Hagy have both been featured artists in the Narrow. Having the support of Ms. DiFeo and the STArt Now Foundation is the type of Community support that helps our Eagles soar! Congratulations Selena and LaniRei!

Students were taught about Op Art – which includes Optical Illusions, Contrast and Vanishing Points. Then using some guided prompts, conducted their own research and problem solved to draw and design their own Op ART. These are student examples from Ms. King's and Ms. Hagy's classroom.



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NASA Visit Via ZOOM

Students in Mrs. DeAcutis's 2nd and 4th period 6th grade Intensive Reading class are working with Tyler Hines from NASA to create an Out-of-this-World Vacation experience. The students participated in a Zoom call and learned about the various rockets, missions, and theories for space travel and tourism in the present day and in the future (near future). This project is working in conjunction with an informational reading story called "Out-of- this-World Vacation". Students are doing some research and using a bit of their imaginations to create their own Vacation. The students will present their final presentation to Mr. Hines at a later date.



Reading Plus Competition - STEAMPunk Scavenger Hunt

Critical Thinking, Unique Skills and Intensive Reading classes are participating in a reading competition to improve their reading comprehension skills. During March and April, students will be working on their combo Reading Plus quest. Throughout the competition, students will be awarded spontaneous prizes. The top two classes with the highest percentage of Reading Plus combos at the end of the six week competition will win a class party. At the end of the competition, the top 30 students with Reading Plus Combos will participate in an all day STEAMPunk Scavenger Hunt. The school



has teamed up with 13 Keys Scavenger Hunt, a local business to create a STEAM themed adventure quest for students. Students will receive t-shirts with the theme, have a Chic-Fil-A lunch and participate in the scavenger hunt earning keys as they solve the puzzle. The scavenger hunt will take place in late April.

Calendar

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Friday | April 2, 2021 Holiday - Student/Teacher Holiday |
| Thursday | April 8th Third Quarter Ends |
| Friday | April 9th Teacher Planning Day - Student Holiday |
| Monday | April 19th Middle School District Exams - period 6th and 7th exams |
| Tuesday | April 20th Period 4th and 5th exams |
| Wednesday | April 21st 3rd period exam |
| Thursday | April 22nd 1st and 2nd exams |
| May 3 - 28th | FSA Testing - ELA & Math (Gr. 6-8), Science (Gr. 8). EOCs, Civics, Algebra, Geometry and Biology |
| Monday | May 31st Memorial Day Student/Teacher Holiday |
| Thursday | June 10, 2021 Last Day for Students |
| Friday | June 11, 2021 Last Day for Teachers - Teacher Planning Day |



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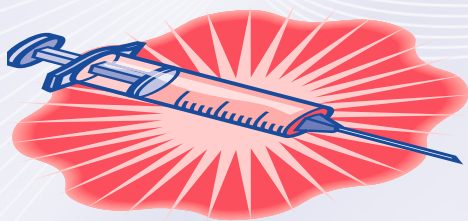


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TDAP Immunizations Needed for Rising 7th Graders by August 16

Don't wait until the last minute! The Tdap immunization shot is required for all 7th graders and must be recorded on a Florida 680 form. As soon as your student receives this shot, the form can be dropped off at the SMS Front Office, faxed to 904-547-3845, or emailed to Becky Colvin. If the school does not receive a record of this immunization by August 16, 2021, your student will not be allowed to attend school. If you do not have a family physician, services are available at the St. Johns County Health Department. Please call (904) 209-3250 for hours and location. If you have additional questions, please contact the SJCSD Director for Health Services at (904) 547-7628. Thank you.



Volunteer Test Proctors Needed!

Volunteers are needed as an extra set of eyes during all state-mandated assessments. No experience is necessary! Please email Ms. Conrad at patricia.conrad@stjohns.k12.fl.us. Proctors are subject to all health screening protocols and will be required to complete a virtual training in advance of testing days. Proctors can email courtney.taylor@stjohns.k12.fl.us to sign up.

Music News

This month the students in all the music classes have been working on small group performance projects. Students have separated into small groups that consist anywhere between two to eight students. The students were given guidelines on how to do research and find a piece for their group. Music that was chosen was to be at their level of playing and was to be prepared for a class performance at the end of March. Each group chose a team leader who would guide the players as they rehearse for their performance. Students have worked together in all aspects of the project, including music selection, practicing, critiquing, and making appropriate changes. This can be challenging, as many of the pieces chosen are multi-part compositions which take a lot of effort on the student's part to prepare. My job has been to rotate between groups and give input where needed. I have had a blast watching these students put this together. They are very serious about this project and it is amazing to see their pieces develop. I am looking forward to hearing their small group performances at the end of the month.

The decision to hold Summer Music Camps has not been decided yet, but watch your weekly Principal's messages for information. Typically, the camps are for students who have had previous music instruction to further develop their musical skills for the coming school year and have fun! Activities usually include concert rehearsal techniques, performance fundamentals, improving technical skills, improvisation, and developing musicianship.

Classes typically available during the camp include:

- String Orchestra
- Band
- Guitar

As soon as we have word on if the camp will commence, it will be announced on the website and in the Principal's weekly newsletter.

Homeless Community Project Reflection Assignment

In February Ms. Taylors' students in the gifted elective class created a project that was inspired by an organization in Austin, Texas called Mobile Loaves & Fishes. That organization created a community to help alleviate chronic homelessness called Community First Village.

After identifying homelessness as an issue in our own community, we analyzed some recent legislation put in to place to curb panhandling, as well as, researched community resources available to those who are currently homeless or on the brink of being homeless. Many students were able to recognize access to affordable housing as being a barrier to getting out of homelessness, as St. Johns County is the fastest growing county in our state. That's where we began looking for ways to keep these individuals as a part of our community and found the Community First Village.

The students were tasked with designing their own 40-acre community with housing for 150. They used free online software to design interiors of the tiny homes and then created scaled models of their communities out of cardboard. A Zoom call with Mobile Loaves & Fishes President/Founder and a few of their in-house architects was completed on February 22nd. Our students were excited to share their work and let them know how inspiring it was to learn about the Community First Village.



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PTO Corner

Thank you to all the parents who have contributed their time and money this year to help make Sebastian Middle School an even better place for our students. We have several board openings for the coming year. If you are interested in getting involved with the PTO, please contact us at ptosebastian@gmail.com. We welcome parents, grandparents and community members to join our team!

Please be on the look-out for these great events and fundraisers we have coming up this spring.

Fundraising Auction

Our spring fundraiser this year is an online auction! We are asking parents, staff and community partners to donate items to be auctioned off. This could be a service, a gift basket, gift cards or some kind of experience. Please go to <https://www.charityauctionstoday.com/auctions/SMS-PTO-19155> to register your auction item. The auction will begin on March 22 so please watch your emails and our Facebook page for more information!

School Supply Kits 2021-2022 School Year

Eliminate the shopping, hassle and stress of preparing for back to school next fall. Pre order your School Supply Kits through the PTO. For 4 years, we have partnered with 1st Day School Supplies to provide your students with all of their required school supplies, delivered right to their homeroom for the first day of school. For every school kit we sell, the Sebastian Middle School PTO receives \$5. You are also able to purchase kits to donate to students who might not otherwise have their own school supplies. This is a great service!

Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week: May 3-7, 2021

For their dedication, creativity, patience, sense of humor, enthusiasm and love, one week is truly not enough to thank our teachers and staff for all they have done for our students this year! Yet we will try. We invite 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 Friday, April 30th.
- Breakfast goodies for a Coffee Cart to be delivered door to door. Watch your emails to find out how you can donate food items.
- Monetary donations which can be made at <https://sebastian-middle-school-ptostore.cheddarup.com>.

8th Grade Yard Signs

To commemorate our 8th grade students promotion to high school, all 8th grade students will be receiving a congratulatory yard sign to put in their yard. Stayed tuned for more information!



Jr Thespians

Troupe 88245 is currently still competing in Jr Thespian competition. In October they submitted 8 events to the Regional competition. Four of these events were then submitted to State competition in February. The results will not be in until Spring Break but they are sure that the 5 students represented us very well!



Students in Picture:
Jack Parkey, Elizabeth Jesse-Futrell,
Eloise Arnold, Taryn Bishop,
Finley Stokke-Harms

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Inquiry Hour = Project Based Learning During the Pandemic

From now until the end of the year, students will be participating in a modified Inquiry Hour in their regular classes. Inquiry Hour was created at Sebastian Middle School to offer authentic project-based learning experiences to all students. Every SMS teacher will be running an inquiry-based project within their classes and student presentations will be scored using a common rubric that was developed by SMS students and teachers. A virtual exhibition will be held to showcase our students' hard work toward the end of the year. We look forward to returning to our normal Inquiry Hour program during the 2021-2022 school year.

A few samples of projects that students are working on include:

Ms. Watson's Class

Her advanced honors students are wrapping up the unit on the structure and function of cells. They are creating attractions for their new town, Watsonville. These attractions will run similar to how a cell works within our body. Since the cell unit is a large unit, they have broken their project into two pieces. First, they will be building the structure/function of the cell. After they learn how their cells stay balanced, students will be explaining & comparing how their attraction/cell keeps balanced and what would happen if some portion of their attraction didn't do their job. What would happen?

The Catapult Challenge - Ms. Sarah Burkhardt & Mr. Rob O'Neil

Working in teams, students will brainstorm ideas and concepts to build a catapult that will complete three tests to determine the winning design. Students will use supplies such as magazines, popsicle sticks, masking tape, scissors, plastic cups, soda or soup cans, rubber bands, plastic spoons. Once students have built their catapults, it is time to launch! There will be three stations and students will record results as they go. They will be measuring Accuracy - by launching cotton balls/marshmallows towards a bowl (the target). They also will be measuring the Power of their catapult by measuring the distance of the flung marshmallow and lastly, they will measure the Strength of their catapult. They will attempt to knock over a tower of small plastic cups with the impact of their shot. Each Catapult is graded on how well it does in all three stations and a winning team will be declared.

Math Connection

A great part of the catapult challenge is the ease of adding math to the activity. For the Algebra students: they will learn how the quadratic functions for time, distance, and maximum height work while using their catapults in the Testing Station. For the Geometry students: they will learn about how shapes (circle, squares, rectangles...etc.) help in the design and building of the catapults.

Mr. Raimann Tasked His Students The Following:

Aerospace STEAM Classes – Aircraft Design Challenge - As an engineer, you are going to be designing, building and testing model airplanes. The purpose of your work is to experiment with different engineering ideas. You will need to find the best way to use and combine different materials to meet certain goals. The goal is to design three airplanes: one to fly the fastest, one to fly the farthest and one to fly the longest. There are several scientific ideas related to forces and motion that you could think about when designing. After your testing, you will then present your designs to a company that is interested in designing new planes for their fleet.

6TH Grade Science - Minecraft Cell City - Students working in groups of 3-5 were given the task to build a city. Each building will represent a different cell part: nucleus; cytoplasm; mitochondria; membrane; chloroplasts; cell wall; vacuole. The students added an identifying sign next to each building stating the name of that building and the name of the cell part the building represents. They will then create a multimedia presentation taking the audience through a tour of their cell city.

The students will present their work to the class and explain their model. Each team member will evaluate every other team members' collaboration.



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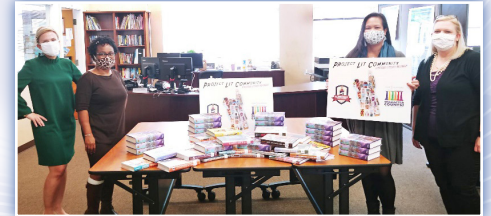
The St. Johns County Middle School Battle of the Books was held virtually this year. The competing members were Gregory Rorex (team captain), Graci Flaherty, Brooklyn Anthony, Taylor Pelchat, Hannah Vickery, Glamorous Spicer, and Sophia Barnard. Alternates were Emily Tobuck and Andy Birchall. Our supporting members were Bianca Allie, Anna Lusk, and Kai Hulbert. 10 middle schools and K8 academies competed through Zoom hosted by the district's Instructional Resources and Media Services. This year, Patriot Oaks was able to score 44 out of 45 points, becoming this year's champion. SMS scored 38 points, beating out Gamble Rogers. The team did an amazing job from missing 4 questions during the first round to only missing 1 question during the last round. Battle of the Books is an annual competition of knowledge of the 15 Sunshine State Young Readers Award books. You can find this year's list on https://www.floridamediaed.org/uploads/6/1/4/2/61420659/6-8_2020-21_ssyra_annotated_list_update.pdf. The list for the 2021-2022 school year will be announced on April 30, 2021. Every year, the Sebastian Media Center gives incentives for reading these books from brag tags to gift bags to a final celebration for those who have read all 15 books.



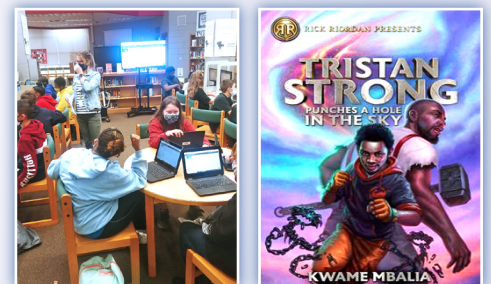
Literacy Week was the last of January. The Media Center hosted several events from guessing a mystery reader, to dress up days that included wearing a hat to "Hats off to Authors" and a Cosplay Day in which students dressed as their favorite literary character, virtual meet and greet of the SSYRA authors, and a rousing game of Match the Teacher to their favorite book. We also had a book themed door decorating contest. Ms. Kirby-Allie's homeroom won 1st Place and Ms. King won Best in Show. Ms. deCastro won a gift basket for the being the staff member to guess the most teachers to their favorite book.



Sebastian Middle School was one of 3 middle schools to receive a grant through The Players and Character County St. Johns to receive a collection of books from the Project Lit initiative. Project Lit is a nationwide movement to get books that are diverse, culturally relevant, and high interest into the hands of students. Every year books are chosen to be a part of this collection. We received 26 books that include the titles: Free Lunch, Efen Divided, Like Vanessa, and Genesis Begins Again. We also received a class set of Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky that Unique Skills will be reading to base their inquiry hour project.



Unique Skills has teamed up with the Media Center for an Inquiry Hour project based on a novel study on *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky* by Kwame Mbalia. Students researched the African American folk legends in the story then will create a board game based on the obstacles in the story. Student game options can include board games to digital options such as Minecraft.



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