

Sebastian Sentinel



Principal's Message

Dear Families,

As we close out this school year it is time to reflect and look forward. We have welcomed new faculty members, new students and continued to focus on learning and growth opportunities. We had music concerts, school plays, clubs, and Gradventure. PTO organized Spring Fling and the Eighth Grade Dance. We instituted quarterly festivals, and it has been wonderful to see the joy and excitement these events have brought our students.

We will run our free rising 6th grade STEAM camp this summer and introduce our new students to STEAM principles, the school and each other. This is always an engaging week that sets our students up for success. We love the opportunity to meet our new students on this smaller scale as it allows us to engage with them on a more personal level.

This summer, our teachers are excited to take advantage of professional development opportunities to deepen their pedagogy. We will continue to expand our knowledge base with high yield strategies and learning. This is an important part of our continuing focus on developing students who are thoughtful, creative, and engaged. We continue to refine our Single School Culture. Our goal is to develop consistent expectations and teach students routines that are at the heart of good learning habits. We will continue to focus on the importance of kindness and respect towards others and ourselves. We will be reviewing these multiple times over the first week at school, and I encourage you to read the document online and discuss it with your children.

I wish you all a wonderful summer with your families and hope it brings time for relaxation.

Yours in partnership,
Kirstie 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

Alexandra Pillay
Assistant Principal

Kevin Hayes
Dean

Recia Smith
Instructional Literacy Coach

Frankie Portelos
STEM Coach

Ellen Morfit
Testing Coordinator

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.

MAY 2023

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St. Augustine, FL 32084

Issue 3

*Please watch for our next newsletter in October 2023, 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:

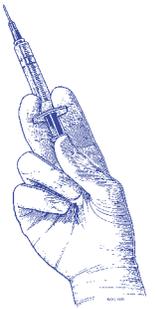
<https://www-sms.stjohns.k12.fl.us/>



The last day of school for students is Thursday, May 25th. It is an early release day. All students will be dismissed at 12:50pm. Enjoy the Summer!!

T-Dap Rising 7th Graders - Do Not Wait Until the Last Minute!

Rising 7th graders are required by Florida law to obtain a Tdap vaccination before entering 7th grade. An updated DH 680 form to include Tdap, must be obtained for submission to the school before your student can start on the first day of school in St. Johns County School District on Thursday, August 10th, 2023. If you have a religious exemption filed through the DH, please notify the school and/or provide us a copy of the exemption. The Tdap vaccination can be scheduled at no cost through the St. Johns County Department of Health. You can also schedule for this immunization at your pediatrician's office.



Incoming 9th Grade SAHS Summer Reading Info

Summer Reading Assignment 2023 for **incoming 9th Graders**: Students entering English 1 Honors are expected to read a minimum of one book of their choice. Students should choose an age-appropriate book they have not read previously. At the beginning of the school year, students will be asked to write about the book(s) they read over the summer. Students should work on their note-taking skills to prepare for discussions and assessments. Please click here for Assignment. Also click here for the Incoming 9th Grade AICE General Paper Summer Assignment.

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Patrick T. Canan

PTO Corner

We are wrapping up a fun and successful year with our students, faculty and staff. We could not have done this without the support of all of you! Thank you for the time, talent, and treasure you have given to all of our events this year- everyone doing a little made a big difference!

We are so grateful to our business partners! They gave so generously- please support them and thank them for making a difference in the lives of our students.

PTO



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Thank you again, for the privilege of serving our Sebastian family!

Your SMS PTO Board

Jen Farrow, Kim Lischio, Katie Bechtold, Jennifer Lusk, Kate Batzel, and Anne Boddy



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Guidance / Mr. Tagliarini's Top 3 Memories of the School Year

#3. Clausen wins Teacher of the Year! Walks past 6' tall Beaver Toyota Character

One day I was walking down the hallway and I happened to walk directly into the SJCSD prize crew which came to present Ms. Clausen with the **Teacher of the Year** award. Ms. Clausen did not know she was receiving the reward but we all did. The entire prize crew was comprised of about 12 adults from the district with a 6 foot person dressed up as a Beaver. This crew equipped with balloons and prizes walked right down the main hall and right past Ms. Clausen as she kindly smiled and headed off to eat her lunch. I was fortunate enough to stop Ms. Clausen and quietly turn her around as I quietly let her know, "they are here for you"...Her face lit up with surprise and joy as we walked back into her classroom and there this entire crew of employees yelled "**Congratulations!!! You won!**". It was amazing to see the joy in her face for being recognized for something she clearly loves to do... that was a great day for us both.



#2 Planners Earn Points

If you don't know by now that planners at our school are important...they are. They help you to go around the building, get you into library and earn points to buy things - such as Eagle's nest access, mystery bags and special privileges in classes. To kick off the planners this year I went into 6th grade lunch and just started scanning the planners with my phone which is how the points are given. As soon as the 6th graders saw me giving out points for how wonderful and brave they had been on those first few days of school (which are never easy)...the fever started! I was suddenly surrounded by the students and was scanning as fast as I could...I felt like a celebrity as planners were being flashed in my face

left and right. I must have scanned over 100 planners in record time. It was so much fun to see the happiness and excitement in the kids' faces after their first few days where faces were awash in nervousness and uncertainty. THAT was a great day.

#1. "No one coming out...send the buses"

This year I was a big proponent of bringing back festivals and celebrations for students who demonstrate positive character/behavior in our school. Mrs. Gabaldon and our whole Admin team were behind this idea of putting on festivals every quarter to celebrate the job the kids are doing. I was responsible for hyping up the event with Dean Hayes and presenting the idea to students in all 3 grade levels. In addition, it was my job to add funny morning announcements to let students know about upcoming activities that would occur and count down days to the fest. I felt a personal responsibility to make the event as good as I could as it was my voice and face presenting this information. Although in the back of my mind I knew I had a secret weapon that would ensure these events would be very good - **the amazing PTO President Jen Farrow**. Every announcement or time I would hype the festival I knew Mrs. Farrow would make it great. So I presented these events as **can't miss events that only good behavior and grades would pay for**.

The day of the first event no one was really quite sure how many students would buy into this idea of staying after school for school based activities...but I knew...I knew it would be great. At 1:45 they made the announcement for students who were not participating to go to their buses. I stayed in the main hallway and waited to see the rush... there was silence. The walkies started to ring out with staff calling for various bus numbers and yet...silence. Finally Dean Hayes called out on the walkies "**no one is coming out...send the buses!!**".

continued

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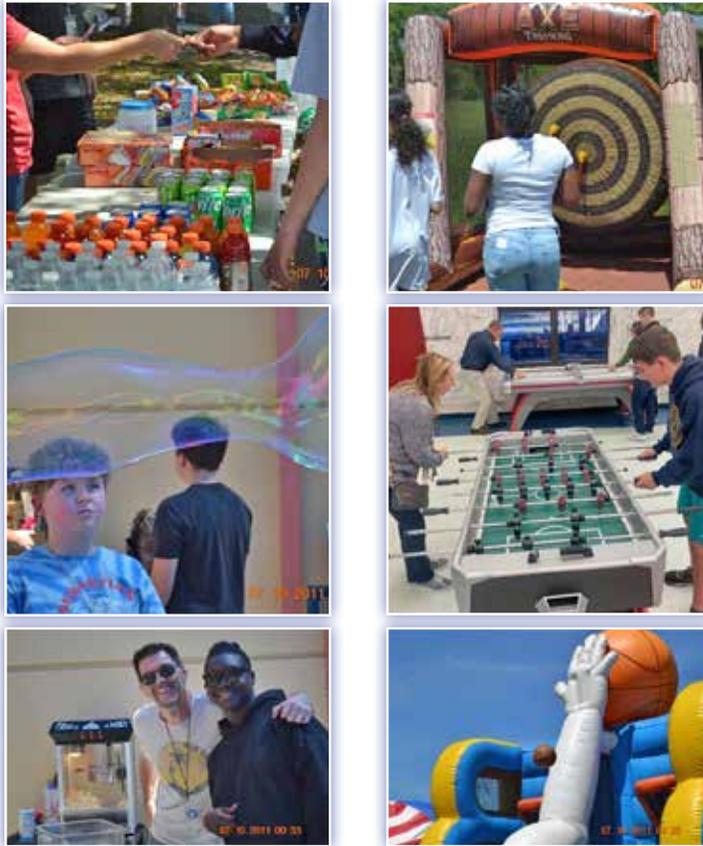
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It will forever be one of my favorite education memories where I was in that hall and knew that over 400-500 students had earned the right to attend the events and were staying. When they released the students for the festival, kids went everywhere rushing to be with friends, grab pizza and have an amazing middle school experience. The festivals are a highlight of my time here at Sebastian, as I get a chance to see kids being kids - having fun with each other without the pressure of school and not having their cell phones. (Cell phones are put away for these events.) Kids are playing, talking to each other laughing, running and having fun like they should...without the pressures of social media or having to pose for photos. It was a great day at SMS and the following Winter Fest and Spring Fling were as spectacular and even bigger...but I will always have a special memory of standing in the main hall to the **sound of dismissal silence**.

Everyone have a great summer! We will see you next year! Mr. Tagliarini/
Guidance Counselor

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Art Corner

Our art program is amazing at Sebastian Middle School. For the All-County Middle School art show Ms. Hagy and Mr. Hudgins showcased 14 beautiful works of art. We are very proud of all the students who contributed. 7th grader student Lillian Johnson placed 2nd for her mixed media/printmaking piece featuring water color and ink showcased very high craftsmanship and a lot of variance in color. Excellent job! All of the work was featured downtown in the St. Augustine Art Council Gallery.



Drama

SPRING PLAY

Over 200 people saw SMS's production of *The Murder Mystery at the Murder Mystery* April 20-21 and delighted in its unique blend of comedy and mystery along with its surprise ending. Students had rehearsed for 3 months prior and helped design and build everything onstage (sets, costumes, props) in addition to performing.



JRT Induction Ceremony

On April 27th nine students were inducted as members of the Junior Thespian Society - a branch of the International Thespian Society which recognizes excellence in theatre. Through their work in theatre classes, productions, and auditions students earned the ability to become official Thespians and are now part of a national organization that counts among its alumni Tom Hanks, Kelly Clarkson and Wayne Brady.



Perry D. Unwalla, Supporting Students, Staff and the Community of Sebastian Middle School.

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 State Farm

National Junior Honor Society

National Junior Honor Society worked with EarlyAct, the middle school chapter of the St. Augustine Rotary Club, to collect can tabs for The Ronald McDonald House. The can tabs are collected and brought to the The Ronald McDonald House to generate revenue to subsidize housing for families who have a child receiving medical care at a nearby hospital. From September to April, homerooms competed to bring in the most can tabs. Ms. Woolsey's homeroom won the Can Tab Wars by bringing in almost 25 pounds of can tabs. They win a homeroom period in the Eagle's Nest.

EarlyAct participated in a community service project on April 15th in conjunction with the Rotary Club and the St. Johns Housing Partnership. Teachers, Ms. Barnard and Mr. Crites, and Sebastian students, Charlie Farrow and George Dencer, and St. Augustine High School freshman, Molly Farrow, helped to paint the exterior and clean the landscape of the home of Vietnam Veteran, Mr. Lorenzo Neely. Mr. Neely, a disable veteran, served in Vietnam from 1967-1968 and was honored with a Purple Heart and other accolades for his service. The students and teachers were privileged to be a part of helping Mr. Neely with his home improvements.



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Sebastian Middle School

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Media Center – SSYRA Battle of the Books March 30th 2023

The SMS team did a great job but did not bring home the “W” today. Swiss Point won with a perfect score. We placed 5th out of 11 middle schools and what especially great was that we beat Murray and Landrum! A big Congratulations to all the team members!



We've Been Gardening!

Ladies from the Master Garden Club provided instruction to the Access Points classes on the proper technique to harvest vegetables and herbs from the garden. Throughout the year, we have planted kale, cauliflower, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, an herb garden, and even a lemon tree. For more pictures of our bountiful harvest, see the slide show on the home page of our website.