

Sebastian Sentinel



Principal's Message

Dear Eagle Families,

It's hard to believe October is already here! We've had a fantastic start to the school year, and we hope your child is both learning and enjoying their time at school. We're dedicated to providing enriching opportunities for our students, both in the classroom and beyond. Clubs are in full swing on Tuesdays and Thursdays, offering a diverse range of activities including Chess, Biodiversity, Robotics, Drama, National Junior Honor Society, and more. It's inspiring to see our students acquiring new skills and developing their talents. I extend my gratitude to our dedicated faculty members for their time and effort in creating these experiences.

We were also thrilled to host our "Fall into School Festival," where over 500 students came together to socialize, play basketball, listen to music, enjoy crafts, and savor some pizza. A huge thank you to our amazing parent volunteers and faculty for making this event possible.

There are many ways for families to get involved—every Sebastian family is part of the PTO, and you can volunteer for events like Fall Fest or volleyball games through the PTO email link on our site. Don't forget, you can also check out a brief informational slideshow about your child's teachers on Schoology. Ask your student to log in through our website to learn more. Additionally, you can meet our new Eagle Faculty members featured in this newsletter.

Red Ribbon Week is approaching, and our student leaders are busy planning engaging activities that promote good character and healthy choices. We're also proud to celebrate Ta'Kaylin Ferguson, who has been chosen as the Sebastian Middle School Character Counts Representative of the Year. Furthermore, we're excited to announce that Ms. Shalyn Sims is the Teacher of the Year for Sebastian Middle School, while Ms. Meghan Friberg has earned the Rookie Teacher of the Year award. We look forward to celebrating these outstanding educators at the annual recognition dinner.

I truly appreciate the involvement and support from our families, business and community partners, and the Eagle Faculty and Staff.

It's an honor and privilege to continue serving as your Principal.

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



*Please watch for our next newsletter in January 2025, and bi-weekly electronic news updates.

Sebastian Middle School

2955 Lewis Speedway
St. Augustine, FL 32084

904-547-3840

Kirstie Gabaldon

Principal

Melinda Bogart

Assistant Principal

Larry Igleheart

Dean

Recia Smith

Instructional Literacy Coach

Frankie Portelos

STEM Coach

Eric Smith

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.

OCTOBER 2024

Volume 8

Issue 4

Sebastian Sentinel

October 2024

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St. Augustine, FL 32084

Issue 4

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/>



Attention 8th Grade Students and Families

More information can be found here: Registration Timeline - Career and Technical Education (CTE) of St. Johns County (stjohns.k12.fl.us).

Application submission deadline for students currently enrolled in a St. Johns County public school: January 24, 2025, by 5:00 p.m.

TimeLine

December 5	SMS Middle School Blitz **For Students ONLY
December 11	High School Showcase Event 3:30-7:00 p.m. (World Golf Village Conventiion Center, 500 S Legacy Trail, St. Augustine, FL 32092)
January 6	Online Application OPNES 8:00 a.m. for newly applying 5th, 8th and 9th grade students.
January 8-23	Academy Nights (see schedule below)
January 15	St. Johns County Center for the Arts AUDITIONS at St. Augustine High School.
January 18	Murray Middle School Arts auditions will be held at Murray Middle School and please bring your printed audition form. **Check school websites for audition sign-up directions.
January 24	Registration Deadline - Online Registration will be closed at 5:00 p.m.
January 31	Last day for lae applications
July 1	All out of zone placement decisions will be finalized

Please call Ms. Fortune if you have any questions regarding the transition to high school at 547-3847 or Leanne.Fortune@stjohns.k12.fl.us.



Congratulations to the wonderful Ta'Kaylin Ferguson who will receive a CHARACTER COUNTS! Award at the annual CHARACTER COUNTS! Community Business Partners Recognition Reception. She has been chosen for this honor because she represents the **Six Pillars of**

Character. These are Citizenship, Respect, Fairness, Caring, Trustworthiness, and Respect. Congratulations to our Eagle FAIRNESS Character Counts September winners.

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Amir Chase
Colin Harris
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Jackson Barone

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Thank You!

New Shoes

A huge THANK YOU to Rack Room Shoes! Rack Room Shoes is proud to partner with Shoes That Fit, a national non-profit organization that provides new shoes to eligible students. We greatly appreciate all Rack Room has done to support our students over the years!



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New Teachers / Staff



Stephanie Reems – Front Office Secretary

Hello SMS Eagles! My name is Ms. Reems, and I am thrilled to join the Sebastian Middle School family as your new School Secretary. Born and raised right here in St. Augustine, I am a proud mother of two wonderful children, one of whom is also a new student at SMS. I have loved every moment of getting to know our amazing students and staff. With a ton of school spirit, I enjoy cheering on our students at every home game, whether it's volleyball, football, or any other sport. Go Eagles!



Danisha Brown – School Counselor (6th grade, 7th grade last names A- L)

I am thrilled to introduce myself—my name is Danisha Brown, and I'm excited to join you as your new School Counselor! With two graduate degrees in School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling, I'm equipped with the skills to help our Eagles soar.

I look forward to getting to know each of you and collaborating with teachers and parents to enhance our students' well-being. Together, let's make this a fantastic year!



Julia Rigon – Language Arts / Theatre

Julia is a first-year teacher who teaches Theatre and 7th grade English Language Arts. She is a recent graduate from the University of North Florida where she obtained her degree in English and a minor in Theatre. Julia plans on directing a Winter play and Spring Musical so keep an eye out for that! She is very excited to be part of SMS and share her passion for the arts. She can't wait for an incredible year!



Layne Doenges - Art

Hello, I'm Mr. Doenges and I am excited to join SMS as one of the new art teachers! I was born and raised in the Florida Panhandle and first came to St. Augustine to attend Flagler College where I dual-majored in Fine Art and Graphic Design. By the time I finished at Flagler, I knew I wanted to teach art. My college advisors told me to get some real-world experience instead of Grad School, and that's what I did – I bring over 10 years of corporate Graphic Design experience to the classroom. I

previously taught Visual Art and Creative Photography for 6 years at another middle school in the county before becoming a part of this incredible team of teachers.

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Erika Randolph – Spanish Teacher

¡Hola a todos! My name is Erika Randolph, and I was born and raised in Colombia. I obtained a Bachelor’s degree in International Business there before moving to the USA, where I homologated my degree. I have experience teaching at the elementary and high school levels. I also hold certifications in the History of the USA and the History of Women in the USA from Long Island University.

I’m happily married and a proud mom of two sons, along with three adorable rescued furry babies. In my free time, I love spending quality time with my family, enjoying beach walks and bike rides. Gracias.



Jon Bedi – Access Teacher

Hi, my name is Jonathan Bedi, and I am very excited to join the Sebastian teaching community. I was born and raised in New Jersey where I also began my teaching career. My Family and I moved to St. Johns County just over three years ago and are loving every bit of it. I am looking forward to amazing school year!



Karen Bohlin – Speech Language Pathologist

Hi, I’m Karen Bohlin. I’m excited to join SMS as the new speech language pathologist. I was born in New York City, but lived in Oregon for so long, I sort of consider myself a West Coaster. I moved to St. Augustine two years ago, to be closer to family, and I love it here! In my free time I like to walk on the beach, and just started walking rescue dogs from a local shelter. If you’re looking for a dog, puppy, cat or kitten, please let me know and I’ll send you in the right direction.



Sarah Tabet – Language Arts

Hi, I’m Sarah Tabet! I just moved to the St. Augustine area this summer, and am excited to join the SMS team. I have a bachelor’s in international affairs and a master’s in law, both from Florida State University. I decided to take a job teaching last year while I finished up my master’s degree, and found a passion for the profession and decided to change my career path. I taught freshman English last year and this is my first year at the middle school level. My students will all tell you how much

I love Dr. Pepper and quirky thrifted t-shirts, they don’t know that I can also bake the best snickerdoodle you’ll ever have. I’m so excited to see where this new experience teaching middle school takes me!

Picture DAY

Retakes!!

November 1st

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STEM and the Sheriff's Office – Frankie Portelos/ STEM Coach

I had the amazing opportunity to follow to spend 2 days with the St. Johns Sherriff's Office. As the Sebastian Middle School STEM Coach, I observed everything with the lens of an engineer. I wanted to come back and turnkey as much information as I could to our students. In May I participated in a ride-along with Deputy Carroll. He picked me up from school and we rode around the county following up on calls, checked on speeding on two main roadways and even engaged in an arrest of a driver who was apparently driving a box truck under the influence. The technology and engineering I witnessed was top notch. From the computer system and radio that gives deputies access to everything they need to the 911 control center, engineering and design was everywhere.

This past September I also had lunch with Sherriff Robert Hardwick and was given a tour around the communication center and simulations. As if I didn't already have the utmost respect of our Sherriff's office, I found myself learning and respecting so much more. There is so much that goes into policing and keeping our great community safe. I would love to see more of our students enter the Law Enforcement Academy and Homeland Security at St. Augustine High School. Speaking of schools, did you know that in addition to having access to many roadway cameras, the communication center can access all school cameras, some gas station cameras and even lock and unlock school doors? Now that is cool engineering.



Media Center

The Media Center MakerSpace will be available starting October 7, 2024. Students use PBIS points to create projects. These projects include, but are not limited to, buttons, Shrinky Dinks, heat transfer shirts, vinyl transfer stickers, 3D printed items, finger knitting, and friendship bracelets. We encourage teachers to reward students PBIS points as this is one of our the Media Center's more popular activities. In September, the Access Unit students were able to preview the MakerSpace by making Shrinky Dink, Sharpie tie-dyed bookmarks hand-drawn buttons.

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Fall Fest

Our Fall Fest was a fantastic success, and the students had an amazing time! From the lively DJ playing their favorite tunes to the photo booth capturing fun memories, the afternoon was filled with laughter and excitement. Outside, students enjoyed creative crafts, engaging games, and had a blast in the Eagles Nest. And, of course, no Fall Fest would be complete without delicious candy and pizza to keep everyone fueled up for the fun!



We are so happy that our students had the opportunity to unwind and celebrate the season together. A huge thank you goes out to the SMS Staff, PTO and all of the incredible volunteers who helped make this event possible. Your time and efforts ensured that our Fall Fest was an afternoon to remember!

Also, we have an opportunity for families to purchase Jaguars tickets, here is the write up for that: Looking for some family fun during the holiday break? Join us for an exciting NFL game as the Jacksonville Jaguars take on the Tennessee Titans on December 29th! This is the perfect opportunity to enjoy some football action while supporting Sebastian Middle School.

A portion of each ticket sold through this promotion will go directly back to the PTO, helping to fund important programs and events for our students. So gather your family and friends, and let's fill the stands with Sebastian pride! Don't miss out on this chance to make some memories and support our school at the same time.

Tickets are available now—get yours before they sell out! <https://fevo-enterprise.com/event/Sebastianmiddleschooljagsouting>.



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Eagle Sports



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