

Sebastian Sentinel



Principal's Message

Dear Eagle Families,

As we head into a new year, we are excited for the opportunities that are arising in and out of our classrooms. We kick off with Literacy Week January 23 -27 and will have related activities such as mystery readers and connecting with STEM activities from NASA. Speaking of STEM our greenhouse is growing by leaps and bounds – literally! Students have been planting vegetables and will be watching and analyzing growth. Auditions for the Spring Play will be soon, and of course, we look forward to celebrating our Eight Graders with Gradventure and a Dance.

We are also very proud of Ms. Clausen who has been selected as a Finalist for St Johns County Teacher of the Year! We are thrilled Ms. Clausen is being recognized for her outstanding work with students. She is also, along with Ms. Clark, one of our two teacher mentors who assist new teachers here at Sebastian. Great job Ms. Clausen and Go Eagles!

Soon, it will be time to select classes for next school year. As you discuss the options with your child remember balance is important. There are myriad options available in academics for our students to push themselves in areas of strength. If you have any questions about courses, please contact your student's guidance counselor. They have a wealth of information and experience to help guide decisions. Mr. Tagliarini is the counselor for 6th grade and 7th Grade A-L, Ms. Fortune is the counselor for 7th grade M-Z and 8th Grade. They can be reached at Darren.tagliarini@stjohns.k12.fl.us and Leanne.fortune@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Please be sure to read the weekly emails from the school as they will continue to provide important information regarding registering for classes here and at the high schools for our rising 9th graders.

All that remains is for me to wish you, and those you love, a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Kirstie Gabaldon, Principal.

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.

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Sebastian Sentinel

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Issue 1

*Please watch for our next newsletter in March 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/>



Year Book Information

If you have any pictures that you would like to contribute to the yearbook, please see directions.

How to upload pics:

1. Go to: <https://buytheyearbook.pictavo.com/PictavoSchool/FindSchool>
2. Create an account
3. Place photos into the folder that corresponds with the activity/club/sport/candid etc.

Yearbook Ads (8th Grade only)

Do you have an eighth grader that you'd like to commemorate and celebrate in this year's yearbook? We have great news! We're offering personalized advertisements via Pictavo with options for full page, half page, quarter page, and eighth page size ads. All advertisements will be designed via the online pictavo program by you, so you can use the pictures you like and write as much or as little as you want. Go online to <https://buytheyearbook.pictavo.com/PictavoSchool/FindSchool> and input the information for Sebastian! Space is limited... first come / first served so log on today.

Winterfest

On Thursday December 15th over 500 students participated in Winterfest - our second after school incentive event of the year.

Students danced, made crafts, played games, purchased gifts for family and friends with their PBIS points and ate a lot of pizza and snacks! It was an amazing afternoon for students who had earned the free admission by being responsible, following class rules and being the best possible SMS student each day. Thank you to our amazing PTO for putting this amazing event together to support our teachers and staff.

8th Grade Students

Attention 8th Grade Students!! Applying to a Program of Choice – Please see Directions/Information here. <https://www-sms.stjohns.k12.fl.us/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/HAC-Instructions-POC-Application-23-24.pdf> Eligible students may apply through the students Home Access Center (HAC) account between January 5, 2023 and January 31, 2023 at 5:00pm.

Please Note:

Students applying to AICE/IB programs must also submit teacher recommendations and qualify based on their academic performance.

Also Note:

Students applying to the St. Johns County Center for the Arts at St. Augustine High School must also audition at SAHS on Saturday, January 21, 2023. Audition information can be found at www.sjcca.org.

*Note bus transportation is only provided to Zoned schools and St. Johns Technical High. If attending a high school other than your zoned school or SJTHS, transportation must be provided by the family.



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STEM at Sebastian

Once a year the Jacksonville Icemen host an early game geared towards schools and students. Sebastian Middle School was lucky enough to have almost 100 students attend this year's event held on November 8, 2022. Field trips have been difficult this year due to a shortage in bus drivers, but the Jacksonville Icemen pulled through and were able to pay for two private coach buses for Sebastian's students.

The focus of the event was STEM in sports. Often times, when students think about sports, whether playing or watching, they are not thinking about the engineering and design that goes into practically every aspect of a game. From the puck or ball, to the equipment and field, STEM is everywhere.

Prior to attending the event, the students in Sebastian's STEM classes engaged in Everfi.com's modules relating to science, technology, engineering and math in hockey. As the STEM coach of the school, I know our goal was met when a student made the statement at the end of the game, "Wow Mr Portelos, I didn't realize that STEM is literally everywhere."

Sebastian Middle School is a STEM certified school and looks forward to engaging their students in additional real world applications. The school's Lego robotics team has been inspired by the Icemen and have designed a hockey stick holding robot to help complete their missions for this year's competition.



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New Teachers



Kyle Clark –

I am from Florida and Maryland as my family bounced around between the two often while I was growing up. We ended up staying in Florida around the Fruit Cove/ St. Augustine areas where I attended St. Johns River State University with a focus on physics and then Flagler University with a major in Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I recently graduated this past December and am grateful to be in the workforce so quickly!

I love working with technology and the opportunities that teaching gives me to both showcase that interest, and also continue to learn alongside my students. I do plan to return to Deaf ed eventually, but for now I am very satisfied with the warm welcome Sebastian Middle School has given me. I look forward to giving back to the school and showing off what STEAM can look like with rocket launches, greenhouse groceries, and so much more!



Mitch Gurick –

I graduated from Flagler College as an education major. I have been teaching in St. John's County for almost 20 years, teaching 5th grade the majority of the time. I have always enjoyed teaching science, I like learning about how things work. When I am not teaching I'm probably out fishing. St. Augustine is a great place to teach and fish! My wife and I like to travel to places that allow us to get out in nature and see waterfalls, scenic views, and wildlife. I enjoy sharing my experiences with my students to help them understand the natural world and take an interest in their surroundings.

PTO

We are starting off 2023 with gratitude for all of our Eagle Families, and what we have accomplished so far! Here's some of what we've been up to:

- Two quarterly celebrations with our students
- Providing items for class PBIS stores, as well as a holiday shop where students were able to use their PBIS points to shop for family gifts
- Funding every faculty and staff grant request- to cover items needed in several of our programs, as well as clubs

There are lots of exciting events planned for this semester! Check our section of the weekly email from Ms. Gabaldon for links to sign up as a volunteer, or reach out to PTOSebastian@gmail.com if you'd like to help! Here's an idea of what's ahead!

- Friday, February 10th, 10:00-12:30- the "Souper Bowl" for faculty and staff (we'll need volunteers and soup!)

THANK YOU!

- To all of the parents and family members who have so generously donated their time helping with events
- To all who contributed towards the faculty and staff holiday celebration
- To our SMS faculty, staff, and administration, who support our PTO and care for our children every day
- And, a very special thank you to our Business Partners. We could not do ANY of this without you! Support these local businesses as they have so generously made sure our students have what they need!
- Action Title Services, Coastal Foot and Ankle, David Beck Agency, EOS Worldwide, Farmhand Kchn, Smiles by Glenos and Hadgis, Gordon Dental, Marble Slab Creamery, National Property Inspections, Old City Public Relations, Tiffany Carrion- Realtor at Great Expectations Realty, Uptown Swinery

We have several board positions available for the 2023-2024 school year! Email us if you'd like to become more involved- it is so rewarding, and the time commitment is not overwhelming.

Have a great second semester!

Your SMS PTO Board

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

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Theatre

On Saturday, December 3 SMS sent 17 students to the District 1 Florida Junior Thespian Festival at Landrum Middle School where they spent the day competing with monologues, scenes, songs, costume designs, playwriting, and an original one act play. The day also included workshops with local theatre professionals and performances from Broadway/Disney husband and wife team Lindsay and Jared Bradshaw.

During closing ceremonies, Makinzie TenEyck received Top Honors for Playwriting and Morgan Hashagen received Top Honors for Costume Design. SMS's original one act, featuring 15 performers and 2 technicians received a Superior rating as well as Makinzie, Morgan and Lillian Storey (Costume Design).

Nine Students will be representing SMS at the Florida Junior Thespian State Festival in Orlando on Jan 14 for another amazing day of competition, workshops and performances with the best in middle school theatre from around the state! To see more about our Theatre department click here: <https://www-sms.stjohns.k12.fl.us/theatre/>.



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Art Corner

Local families, INK & Beaver Toyota together raised funds for a program called "Printing Joy in Our Community". Ms. Hagy was selected as one of the teachers to receive \$2K for a printmaking project. Congratulations Ms. Hagy and thanks to our community, INK and Beaver Toyota!

Students designed and created block prints for cards in this lesson. My students love using specialized tools, and the processes that are required in printmaking. Being able to recreate an image they made is satisfying and rewarding.

We are paired with a local agency to reach out to 500 Meals on Wheels recipients in our community.

Gift bags were given to each person, and SMS students provided a handmade card, with a handwritten note for each one.

This was an opportunity for kids to reach outside their world and bring joy to another person.



Citizenship Characters Breakfast

The Citizenship Characters Breakfast was held on November 28th when the students came back from Thanksgiving break. Students were selected by their teachers and got to have a fun breakfast playing games and eating muffins with the Dean Hayes, Asst Principals Gamble and Ms. Pillay and our Principal Ms. Gabaldon.



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Media Center

Literacy Week is January 23-27, 2023. We have several activities planned, including a door decorating contest and daily mystery reader. Go to the SMS homepage to see the other activities. Students who participate can get PBIS points and also be entered for a chance to meet author, Taryn Souders, on February 16th. She is the author of two Sunshine State Young Readers Award books, *Coop Knows the Scoop* and *How to (Almost) Ruin Your Summer*. Taryn came last year and talked with students about her writing process and also had lunch with them. You can go here to view her books and purchase one for her signature on Feb 16th.





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