

# Sebastian Sentinel



## Principal's Message

Dear Eagle Families,

Each year, we spend the month of March registering students: Eighth graders to various high schools; Fifth graders from various elementary schools; and of course, our very own current 6th and 7th graders. It is exciting to hold discussions with families and students as they look to the opportunity to explore some of our many elective classes. Our Eighth graders have explored the worlds of Arts and Engineering for the past three years and are able to make decisions about which academy aligns with their passion and strength. Middle school is a time to explore different subjects, and, as always, I am grateful to you as parents and guardians for supporting your student in their endeavors – be they scholastic, artistic, or athletic.

This issue of The Sebastian Sentinel features several articles showcasing the many engaging things happening around our school, especially in Art and engineering! The teamwork students use in these projects are an integral part of developing character traits such as empathy, learning to listen to each other, and learning to move forward.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel Spring Fling prior to our break due to the weather, but it has been rescheduled for April 14th. We have been unable to hold this event for a couple of years, so we are looking forward to bringing this wonderful PTO-ran fundraiser back onto our campus!

K.T. 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*

**Kevin Hayes**

*Dean*

**Recia Smith**

*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 2022

Volume 6

Issue 2

**Sebastian Sentinel**

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2955 Lewis Speedway

St. Augustine, FL 32084

Issue 2

\*Please watch for our next newsletter in May 2022, 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/](http://www-sms.stjohns.k12.fl.us/)



## New Teachers



*Todd Day / Math*

My name is Todd Day and I'm the new Math Teacher in 6th and 8th grade. I'm originally from Portland, Maine and have been an educator at Lincoln Middle School for 26 years. I have also lived in Pittsburgh, Pa. I attended Florida State, USM and St. Joseph College. I come from a family of educators which include two incredible Daughters who are also in the field. I love the St. Augustine area and look forward to working with the Sebastian Middle School students and the community.



*Corin Mason / Language Arts*

Originally from San Antonio, TX, I graduated from the University of Texas at San Antonio with a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies in May of 2014. My husband is currently serving in the US Navy, which is what brought us to St. Johns County, and my family and I have enjoyed the adventure of living in 5 states over the last 18 years. Prior to arriving in St. Johns County, I taught 7th and 8th grade Language Arts in Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa for 3 years and in Fairfax County Public Schools in Fairfax County, Virginia for 2 years. I love teaching middle grades Language Arts because it provides me with the opportunity to help students develop their skills as critical thinkers, readers, writers.



*Kaitlyn Hickman / ESE Para*

My husband and I recently moved to Jacksonville from a small Florida town after getting married in late 2021. We have thoroughly enjoyed the move thus far and look forward to adventuring in the surrounding areas! Most people know me as my maiden name, "Hickman," though I hope to legally change to my husband's name ("Rowan") soon.

During the short time that I have been at Sebastian, relationships I've made with the ESE teachers and students have proven to be a blessing.

I am so happy to be working towards making a difference in students' lives, and I'm eager to continue growing my experience with teaching/aiding special needs students!

These kids already hold a huge place in my heart, and I'm excited to continue working with my department as the year comes to a close.

*continued on page 3*

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*Jon Bedi / ESE Para*

My wife, three kids, three pets and I moved to Florida this past summer from New Jersey. We have been vacationing down here for the past seven years and finally decided not to take the ride back up north. Although we will miss the snow, we much prefer sunshine and the beach! Up until now, all my educational experiences have taken place in a high school environment. I am very excited to have the opportunity to work and grow in

Sebastian Middle School!



*Shivani Tomasovitch / Access Paraprofessional*

I was born and raised in India. When I was in high school, I decided I wanted to work with kids, so I earned my bachelor's in Psychology, and attended a one year teaching course for special needs students. I love being with kids. All the years I worked in the school system, I loved every minute of it and every student has left an impression on me. I have learned so much from them.

I came to the USA in 2008. Made my way from New York to South Carolina. While I taught in South Carolina, I met my husband who is from Florida. He and I got married, and I've lived in Florida since 2015. We were blessed with a beautiful daughter in 2017.

## School Nurse – IMPORTANT

Due to the recent "Parents' Bill of Rights", F. S. 1014.06 – Parental Consent for Health Care Services, parents must give written consent in order for their child to access health care while at school. This consent will allow the school nurse to provide care and treatment to your child for injuries and illnesses, and when necessary, emergency health services performed until Emergency Medical Services arrive on campus. Should you decline consent for these services, you will be notified any time your student has such a need, and you will be responsible for arrangement of care outside of the school setting. This consent will remain in effect until your child transfers to another school district, graduates, or you indicate in writing that you wish to rescind this consent for school health services.

Please visit this survey (<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=V9CzsxL8P0-S9HK-boRDUCWtRwFHFx9II3z-PwoFASxURTdZUTRLVjIWOU9CS0ZPRTNCWFVXTzIYVS4u>) to give permission for your child to receive school health services. For more information, please call the Health Services Department at (904) 547-7693.

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**GO EAGLES!**



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## St Augustine High School Registration Information for Incoming 9th Graders

**Freshman Orientation:** Ninth grade orientation information for the 2021-2022 school year will be posted to the SAHS website by the end of the 2020-2022 school year. Please check the SAHS website <http://www-sahs.stjohns.k12.fl.us/> for updates.

**Community Service Hours:** In order to be eligible for the top level of the *Bright Futures Scholarships*, students must log a minimum of 100 community service hours by the time they graduate from high school. All Bright Futures community service hours must be performed at non-profit organizations. Any hours performed after July 1st during the summer after 8th grade, can be added to your high school transcript. *Community Service Hours are not required to graduate from high school* but **ARE** required for Bright Futures eligibility and can be helpful when applying for other college scholarships.

**Summer Assignments:** All AICE and Honors level English classes will have a summer reading assignment. All summer assignments will be posted to the SAHS website <http://www-sahs.stjohns.k12.fl.us/> by the end of the current school year. Students should be aware of their summer assignments and **complete them BEFORE the first day of school.**

## Media Center News

As part of Literacy Week, the Media Center hosted author, Taryn Souders, to meet and have lunch with Sebastian students. Ms. Souders is the author of *Coop Knows the Scoop*, one of this year's Sunshine State Young Readers Award novels. She also wrote *How to (Almost) Ruin Your Summer* (an SSYRA book in 2017), *Dead Possums are Fair Game*, and *Whole-y Cow! Fractions are Fun*. She spoke to the students about how she started as a writer and her process for writing, specifically a murder mystery, since the novel is based on a murder mystery. Students were able to ask the author questions regarding her work. During the lunch, she played a several rounds of Murder Bingo. Several lucky students won an autographed copy of her novel, *Coop Knows the Scoop*. Ms. Souders is currently working on another young adult mystery novel. Thank you PTO for funding the grant for Ms. Souders visit.

On March 4th, Sebastian battled all of the middle schools in St. Johns County during a virtual Battle of the Books competition. Battle of the Books is an annual competition that tests student knowledge of the 15 Sunshine State Young Readers Award. Students competed for 1 and a half hours but, sadly, Sebastian did not bring home the win. Swiss Point won after the final challenge with Liberty Pines Academy. The Sebastian team comprised of Taylor Pelchat (team captain), Sophia Barnard, Riley Pangle, Riley Glidewell, Lindsey Morris, and alternates: Kevin Moe and Lucas Cruz.



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## Science Corner

Students have been heading outside to learn about parts of Florida's native flora and fauna, as well as invasive species. Students ask questions and make observations about species found around our school campus, and then attempt to identify them using field guides or technological resources.

There has been a high emphasis on edible plants to ensure student engagement and interest. So far, we have found



and consumed pennywort (*Hydrocotyle sp.*), romerillo (*Bidens alba*) flowers, and are waiting for southern dewberries (*Rubus trivialis*) to fruit.

Students have also been collecting plant specimens to be placed in an herbarium for the school. Students have been instructed on the proper technique used for pressing plants to preserve them, and the steps required to ensure a well-constructed herbarium.

When outside exploration is unavailable due to weather concerns, we have been observing water samples and dissected flowers under the school's microscopes. During these observations, students have found nematodes, tardigrades, and other microscopic organisms.



Mara Varju won the "United States Environmental Protection Agency Award" for outstanding research in the field of Environmental Engineering with her project "What color is best for powering Solar Panels?"

## Language Arts

In our eighth grade English classes students have been enjoying the graphic novel version of Tolkien's classic *The Hobbit*. Students have been having a good time particularly with Gollum's riddles, as we've solved each day by day in class. They even had the chance recently to make their own riddles, which their classmates will try to guess the answers of! Seeing students flex their writing skills and try to stump their fellow eighth graders has been a treat.



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## Steam Update



### 6th Grade - CAD Unit - Tiny House Projects

Students learned to create both 2D and 3D CAD designs using FloorPlanner.com. Teams worked through criteria and constraints to provide a design solution for their "clients". Students then scaled the designs to create cardboard models.

#### Student quotes:

- "A real-life skill I have learned during this project is problem solving and cooperation." - Julia McKenna
- "My favorite part about the tiny home project was working with my team and figuring out problems if we mess up. I also really like decorating." - Scarlett Anderson
- "I loved cutting the cardboard and using the tools while designing and measuring the lengths" - Vincent Godoy

### 7th Grade - Hydraulic and Pneumatic Claws

After learning a bit about the concepts of hydraulics and pneumatics, students put their knowledge in action to make cranes and claws. The goal was to be able to pick up an empty cup or soda can. This project required students to research existing design to formulate a plan of their own.

#### Student Quotes:

- "You think your project is good 'til Mrs. Johns comes around. A real world skill I learned was problem solving" - Gus
- "My favorite part of the project is that it was fun to challenge ourselves as a group and build a working crane" - Camren
- "My favorite part was watching it work after all the hard work" - Myia



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## Art Department

On Tuesday, February 22nd, Erin Kendrick came to do workshops with all SMS Art Students. She is an award winning Artist and Art Educator from Jacksonville. Her work has been shown at the Cummer Museum, the Nelson Mandela Museum in Africa, and she is currently the artist in residence at the Flagler College Crisp-Ellert Museum. Her work focuses on

the experience of Black Girlhood, and she led students through making a work of art about how we say hello. This project will be displayed as a collaborative piece in her show at the Crisp Ellert in November. Also there is a video on the home page of the Sebastian Website.



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# Sebastian Sentinel

## Sebastian Middle School

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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 committee chair openings for the coming year. If you are interested in getting involved with the PTO, please contact us at [ptosebastian@gmail.com](mailto:ptosebastian@gmail.com). We welcome parents, grandparents and community members to join our team!

### *School Supply Kits 2022-2023 School Year*

Eliminate the shopping, hassle and stress of preparing for back to school next fall. 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 summer, kits will be delivered directly to your home! This is a great service! Be on the lookout for information!

### *Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week: May 2-6, 2022*

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:

- Breakfast goodies for a Coffee Cart to be delivered door to door. Watch your emails to find out how you can donate food items for that day.
- Monetary donations which can be made at <https://sebastian-middle-school-ptto-store.cheddarup.com>.



8

Our School Advisory Committee is still looking for feedback. Please take a minute to complete our online survey. Click Here: <https://surveys.stjohns.k12.fl.us/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=74MH3n55>

## Volunteer Test Proctors Needed!

Volunteers are needed as an extra set of eyes during all District and course assessments coming up in April and May. No experience is necessary! Please email Ms. Hof at [Linda.Hof@stjohns.k12.fl.us](mailto:Linda.Hof@stjohns.k12.fl.us) if you are interested in helping us out. The testing schedule can be found here. <https://www-sms.stjohns.k12.fl.us/testing/>