

Sebastian Sentinel



Principal's Message

Dear Eagle Families,

It is hard to believe it is already October! We have had a wonderful start to the school year, and we hope your student is learning and enjoying school. We have been creating opportunities for enrichment for our students in class and out. Clubs are running Tuesdays and Thursdays and our students have a wide variety of experience open to them including Jazz Band, Chess, Cross Country, Biodiversity, Robotics, Drama, National Junior Honors Society and more. It is wonderful to see our students learning new skills and honing talents. I am grateful to all our faculty members who give of their time and energy to create these experiences for our students.

We were also excited to have our first "Fall into School Festival". Over 500 Students attended and enjoyed time together to socialize, play basketball, listen to music, enjoy rock painting and eat a slice of pizza (or two). Much Gratitude to our amazing parent volunteers who along with our faculty made this possible.

This year we held an evening regarding social media use and tweens/ teens. If you were unable to attend, the presentation is accessible on our website. We have lots of ways for families to get involved. Every Sebastian family is a member of the PTO and you can volunteer to help at events like Fall Fest or Volleyball games through the PTO email link on our website. Did you know you can also see a short informational slideshow about your child's teachers on Schoology? Ask your student to log on through our website and you can learn more. You can also see our new Eagle Faculty members featured in this newsletter.

Red Ribbon Week is coming soon, and our student leaders are busy planning fun events for this week that highlights good character and healthy choices. We are also celebrating Mabel Mysterly who was selected as the Sebastian Middle School Character Counts Representative of the year. Continuing with our celebrations, we are thrilled to announce the Teacher of the Year for Sebastian Middle School is Ms. Rowena Barnard, and the Rookie Teacher of the Year is Mr. Austin Stevens. We are excited and proud of these teachers and look forward to celebrating them at the annual recognition dinner.

I am grateful for all of the involvement and support from our families, business and community partners, Eagle Faculty and Staff.

It is my honor and privilege to continue to serve 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.



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

Frankie Portelos

STEM Coach

Amy Borie

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 2023

Volume 7

Issue 4

Sebastian Sentinel

October 2023

Published Four Times Per Year

2955 Lewis Speedway

St. Augustine, FL 32084

Issue 4

*Please watch for our next newsletter in January 2024, 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/>



Teacher of the Year & Rookie Teacher of the Year

*Teacher
of the Year*

Congratulations Ms. Barnard / Teacher of the Year



*Rookie
Teacher
of the Year*

Congratulations Mr. Stevens / Rookie Teacher of the Year

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Patrick T. Canan

New Teachers



Brandon Bryant - Music

Hey, I'm Dr. Brandon Bryant, but you can call me Dr. B. I was born and raised in Miami, FL and just moved up to the Jacksonville area with my wife. I have been playing music for the past 23 years and I just graduated from the University of Miami with my doctorate degree in jazz trombone performance. I worked as musician on a cruise ship and have had the opportunity to visit and play music in many

different countries. This is my fourth year of teaching middle school band, and I am so thankful and grateful that this opportunity is at Sebastian Middle.

Frank Considine – Drama / Dance

Dr. Considine has been a certified teacher in North Florida for the past 11 years. He, his wife and four daughters originally hail from CT. He received his Bachelor of Law Studies from the University of CT. He has attended National University in La Jolla California for his Masters of English Composition, and Ph. D in Education. His dissertation studied the statistical correlation between Emotional Intelligence and the Reading and Writing portion of the SAT. Dr. Considine is a Journeyman with IATSE Local 115 Theatre Union and probably set up most of the lighting, sound and video equipment you have seen at a concert in the area.



Tara Fillare – VE Math / ELA

Hello! My name is Tara Fillare and I'm excited to join the SMS team! I am a Florida native, having grown up in the Melbourne area. I've been in St. Augustine since 1991, having moved here to attend Flagler College and University of North Florida. I enjoy spending time at home with my husband and our two cats. I am looking forward to working with all the new faces here!

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New Teachers *continued*



Dave Glover – Language Arts

Mr. Glover comes to us from Upstate New York with 24 years of experience. He's worked with 8th Grade ELA students, World History, European History, Civics, Economics, and US History. He also taught classes at the AP level and the remedial level.

Mr. Glover has college degrees in Broadcast Journalism (BA), International Studies (MS), Educational Administration (CAS), Educational Leadership with Concentration in Educational Leadership (Ed.D) and most recently Cybersecurity (MS).

He and his family moved to the area to be closer to family.

Carol Saitta - ELA

People tend to think that teachers were good students growing up, the ones who received the best grades. That was not the case for me. Academically, I struggled throughout all my elementary and middle school years because I did not know how to read and couldn't do math without counting with my fingers. I was fortunate to have some great teachers surrounding me throughout those years, ones that did not give up on me, even when I did. It's thanks to those teachers that I was able to find my groove, rebuild my foundations in reading and math, and the reason I decided to become a teacher. Every year my goal is to help, guide, and nurture students in the ways my former teachers did in the hopes that any struggling child can reach their potential, just as I did. I have worked several years with students in the Great Tampa Bay area, and just moved to St. Johns County to gain new experiences in education here. I am excited to see what new experiences await me here.



Travis Lowndes – Reading

Hello, my name's Travis Lowndes and I'm excited to be alongside the SMS team this year. I discovered my niche with teaching when I began as a substitute for various Saint Johns County schools several years ago. I ultimately went back to educate myself on how to become a teacher through the SJR State College EPI program and have enjoyed every second of my teaching experience so far. As an intensive reading teacher, my primary goal is to improve our youth's reading levels. I focus mostly on phonetic awareness, fluency and morphology activities and practice. I've loved our city of Saint Augustine ever since moving here from Maryland in 2009 to attend Flagler College. Some of my all-time favorite activities include culinary arts, surfing with my significant other (when I can ensure we'll be safe from sharks), and being with my friends/family.

Ivannia Moreno-Alvarez – Spanish

¡Hola! My name is Ivannia. My students know me as Maestra Alvarez.

As a native Spanish speaker, sharing the love for my language and culture has become my passion. I was born and raised in Costa Rica where I attended college at the Universidad Latina de Costa Rica and earned my degree in Sciences with a major in Psychology (ULCR).

When I came to the USA, I went to college to validate my degree and I found another passion (Teaching). I think that psychology and education make a good combination.

This is my 7th year teaching Spanish and my 1st year teaching at Sebastian Middle School.

I like hiking, biking, traveling and spending quality time with my family, friends and colleagues.

Gracias y ¡Hasta pronto!



continued

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New Teachers *continued*



Serina Stratton - Art

Hello! My name is Serina Stratton and I am the new art teacher at SMS. As a kid, my grandma helped me realize that I loved the traditional arts like drawing and painting. Then I took my first art class, and I enjoyed it so much I decided to become an art teacher! I started working in a studio teaching classes and hosting paint nights, and it inspired me to share my passion with others. I came to Saint Augustine in 2017 and learned many other art mediums like photography, printmaking, sculpting, and ceramics. I graduated from Flagler College with a degree in Art Education and worked three years

in Clay County teaching art before moving back to Saint Augustine.

Amy Borie – Testing Coordinator

Hi, my name is Amy Borie! I am a seventh generation Floridian, a University of Florida grad, a wife to a Paris-born Frenchman, and momma to two nearly grown daughters who are now in college. I'm extremely happy to be the new Testing Coordinator at Sebastian Middle School! This is my 14th year in the St. Johns County School district. I was most recently at the district office serving as a Clinical Educator Mentor, and prior to that was the Instructional Literacy Coach at Mason Elementary. Before stepping into my role as a coach, I was a third-grade teacher at Ketterlinus Elementary School. It is a joy to see many of my former students each day at Sebastian! I love being here and getting to meet and know all of our SMS Eagles!



Jennifer Taylor - 6th Grade Math

Hi, my name is Jennifer Taylor. I am the new 6th grade math teacher. I am so excited to be here and working alongside Ms. Propst. I was previously a 4th and 5th grade teacher in this county. I have three children who have all gone through this school and it has been an incredible experience. I love that I get to be a part of this amazing place.



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Character Counts in September

In September we honored 4 students from each grade who exemplify the Pillars of Fairness. These students were selected based on their open-mindedness, listening skills, their ability to treat all people fairly, take turns and share. We also honor them for playing by the rules. The following students received a Character Counts bracelet, certificate, free ice cream, and free access to the Eagles Nest. Congratulations:

Kolton Bedell	Elijah Jackson
Maegan Blais	William Johnson
Olivia Compton	Emma Hapke
Dominic Craig	Elizabeth LeMaire
Parker Deaton	Crimson Lemmon
Teagan Kiernan	Teagan Riddle

Art Corner

The art classes collaborated with Ms. Barnard to create a yearbook cover for the 2023-2024 school year. Ms. Hagy's and Ms. Stratton's students used Adobe Express to create the design. Then students came through with their ELA classes the following week to vote on the winner. Ayden Weaver's design was the winner by a landslide. Not only did he win the cover for 2023-2024 yearbook but he also won a free yearbook. Congratulations, Ayden!

Click here to see the Designs!
<https://www-sms.stjohns.k12.fl.us/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/23-24-Cover-Contest-002.pdf>



St Johns County School District Equity Notice

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A huge **THANK YOU** to the employees and customers of Rack Room shoes who participated in The Shoes That Fit Program. Rack Room raised over \$3,000 to help the students at Sebastian with Backpacks and Shoes. The partnership they have with us over the years is so very much appreciated!!

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

Go Sebastian Eagles!



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State Farm

Media Center

The Media Center held its annual Scholastic Book Fair on September 11-15, 2023. Teachers were given the opportunity to shop the book fair the Friday before it started while also being able to have some time to create wish lists and enjoy each other's company. Students then came through the following week with their ELA classes to shop. Teachers and staff members were given at least one book from their wish list and students made guesses on the candy corn if they donated their change. The student with the closest guess won the jar and the candy corn. A generous donation from the United Way was given to the Media Center which was used to purchase books for worthy students. Mr. Tagliarini's Leaders of Tomorrow were one of the deserving recipients of a free book. The Media Center raised over \$5000 in sales with this year's Scholastic Book Fair.



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Sebastian Middle School

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Attention 8th Grade Students and Families

8th Grade Information:

The transitioning to high school is starting early this year. So please pay close attention to dates provided below:

School	Academy Night
BHS	1/23/2024
NHS	1/25/2024
PVHS	1/17/2024
SAHS	1/16/2024
SJTHS	1/16/2024
BTHS	1/22/2024
CHS	1/18/2024
PMHS	1/17/2024
TCHS	1/24/2024
HS Showcase	12/13/2023
SAHS SJCCA Auditions	1/24/2024 1:30pm
Lottery Window	1/4/24-1/31-24

Ms. Fortune will visit classes early December to administer the Career Navigator interest inventory. We will use these results to see if there is an Academy that matches your Career Interest Area.

The Middle School Blitz will occur at Sebastian for students only on December 5. This is an opportunity to hear more about Academies and ask questions.

The High School Showcase is next on 12/13. This an opportunity for both students and parents to visit booths at the World Golf Village highlighting each Academy in the District. Teachers, students currently in the Academies, and Business Partners will be available to make inquiries and gather more information. There is even an opportunity to apply to the Academies of your choice with computer stations set up and district staff there to assist.

The Academy Nights are held at each High School to learn even more!

The auditions for Center of the Arts are on Wednesday, January 24 starting at 1:30at St. Augustine High.

Finally, it is time to Apply on HAC using student log in and password. Directions on how to apply are found in booklet distributed at the World Golf Village or available through Guidance. Remember you can apply from one to three academies.

Please call Ms. Fortune at 547-3847 or email leanne.fortune@stjohns.k12.fl.us if you have any questions about the process.