



SEWARD MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

WINTER EDITION

Principal's Report

As we begin our second half of the school year the results of our students performance in last year's state test (NSCAS) have finally been made public. Your child's individual results were sent home just before Thanksgiving but each school's performance were made public recently. Seward Middle School students performed superbly on the state test! The Nebraska Department of Education rates the districts and those districts which have different buildings, each of the buildings are rated as well. Seward Public Schools as a district received the top rating of 'Excellent' which only two school districts in Classes A and B attained. Seward Middle School also attained a rating of 'Excellent' and our building tests all grade levels. All middle school grades (5th through 8th) test English and Math while fifth and eighth grade also test in Science, therefore giving 10 different tests in our building alone. When comparing middle school test scores to conference schools we were first in five categories and second in the other five.

There is plenty of reason to celebrate these scores as our students perform with the best in the state. This, by no means, is because of any one factor. SMS kids continue to perform at this level for a variety of reasons. Support from home is the most influential to all student learning. Teacher connections, instructional effectiveness, student interest and school environment also play major roles in student learning.

I am overwhelmed with the level of commitment and teamwork I see on a daily basis within our middle school staff. Yes, our impactful teachers are doing what is needed to facilitate learning at an elevated level. However, often times people forget the impact an entire staff can have on kids and from my position I get to see that. Every adult in the middle school is a member of this team which puts students first and does their job to ensure the students have what they need to learn. This team functions well, interacting effectively and helping each other while also holding peers accountable to the benefit of our kids. Yes, our teachers deserve much credit but so does our school counselor, para professionals, secretaries, work room assistants, school nurse, custodians, 4R room para, bus drivers, technology coordinator, kitchen personnel, instructional specialist and school psychologist as they all have an important component in student success.

We will do our very best to educate every student who walks through our doors. Thank you for sending us such respectful kids as this makes all of our jobs easier. Your time to raise such great kids is truly appreciated but more importantly it sets them up for future success.

From Mr. Weatherholt

High School Counselors to Meet with 8th Graders in January

On January 30th the Seward High School Counselors will be meeting with the 8th graders to go over high school registration for the 2019-2020 school year. They will talk to the students about what classes are available to 9th graders, provide them with information on the schedule, and answer any questions. Students will be provided with a registration handbook, which will also be available on the Seward Public School website. They will also provide them with a registration form that will be due on February 6th.

As parents, please spend some time talking with your child about classes in high school. This is all new to them and they need guidance from both their counselors as well as their parents. If you have any questions please contact Mrs. Baker or Mr. Fields at Seward High School or myself at Seward Middle School.

Bully Response Team

At Seward Middle School we have defined bullying as unwanted, harmful, repeated acts towards a person or group which involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The Bully Response Team, also known as the BRT, works hard to address and deal with bullying at Seward Middle School. The 'team' is made up of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders who have gone through a selection process. SMS students are encouraged to go to a member of the team or go to one of the sponsors of the team if they suspect there is a bullying situation occurring. Undoubtedly, their biggest job is to be the eyes against bullying in our school. We do not want our students to be bystanders as bullying is taking place.

Some of the activities the BRT are involved with are interventions with bullies and victims, providing posters on the walls of the school, making announcements, and making presentations. The BRT also plans on being involved with a couple of school assemblies along with the student council.

Throughout the year members and sponsors meet every week and amongst other things talk about how to react to bullying when it is experienced or observed. Mr. Marroquin and Mr. Weatherholt are the sponsors of the team.

First Winter Season Completed: Boys Basketball Just Starting

We have completed the first winter sports season at Seward Middle School at the end of the first semester. The girls basketball teams have done very well. Both the 7th and 8th grade 'A' teams won the Seward Invitation Tournament. The wrestlers finished their season on December 15th in the Seward Middle School Wrestling Invitational. Throughout the season there were a number of boys who earned medals and placed at tournaments. It was a successful season as both the girls basketball teams and the wrestling team represented Seward Middle School very well.

Nate Stepp and Hans Eickmeier were the coaches for the wrestling team. Vance Winter, Mack Alspaugh, and Kate Jungck were the coaches for girls basketball.

The 7th and 8th grade boys basketball season has begun. Practices started on January 7 and games will start in a couple of weeks. Mr. Vancura and Jon Marroquin coach the 7th grade teams while myself and Mr. Eichmeier coach the 8th grade teams. We are expecting an exciting and eventful season out of both the 7th and 8th grade boys. Go Bluejays!

8th Grade SHS Class Registration Coming Soon!

On Wednesday, January 30, 2019 the SHS counselors will be visiting during 8th grade Social Studies classes to train students on how to register for classes. Registration information packets will be sent home and students will select what classes they'll take during 9th grade. Student will then register online for SHS classes on Wednesday, February 6th during Social Studies classes. ***Please do not schedule any appointments, etc. for these important days!***

8th Grade Happenings

Another fantastic quarter with the 8th grade class has come to an end. Throughout the semester, we held small group challenges to work on communication and teamwork. The students always make it fun, and it's a great way to build relationships among students and teachers. In the last few weeks, we had a coin war to raise money for families in need in our community. Thank you to everyone who donated to this wonderful cause! Students transitioned from writing to Spanish at the start of 3rd quarter. In January, students will also learn about high school classes and they will begin the registration process. We're all looking forward to a new year and second semester with the 8th grade class.

7th Grade News...

We had a great second quarter, and we hope you all enjoy your break!

Spanish: We are becoming masters at telling time and weather expressions.

Math: Miss Hartman had the chance to teach all the classes this quarter! The 7th graders worked on Geometry in Math 7 and Algebra in Pre Al!

Science: We worked on ecosystems and biomes.

English: We worked on figurative language, and are mastering the 4 sentence structures.

Soc Studies: We are covering the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Greetings from the 6th Grade Team!

In Physical Science we have been studying atoms, properties of elements and the Periodic Table. Students are now finishing up our unit on coordinate planes and graphs. The students were able to practice coordinate planes by playing Battle Graph. A more intricate game similar to Battleship using all 4 quadrants. In January we started our chapter on Force.

In Math, students finished up Unit 3 on ratios, rates, and proportions. As we started Unit 4 and second semester, algebra concepts and solving expressions are our priority. Just a reminder, on test days, I will do study sessions from 7:30-8:00 AM for any students interested in joining.

Students are busy learning about expository texts. We are currently reading a passage about the Rainforest and learning how to read graphs, charts, tables, and diagrams in addition to printed text. Students are busy finishing their second chapter book. All students should be reading each day 20-30 minutes or more at home as part of their homework. Please continue to encourage your child to read.

We have been "digging" into ancient civilizations in social studies, and we've just finished learning about ancient Mesopotamia, Sargon, Hammurabi's Code, and the Babylonians. We are beginning to study Ancient Egypt and will be busy working on our projects and learning about the amazing world of the ancient Egyptians!

At the end of first semester we created fun-filled parodies for Christmas Carols in writing. Students did a nifty job counting syllables, rhyming lines, and caroling their songs around the school. January brings the district practice writing test and a review of many descriptive writing skills. It's been nice to see the students' progress over the semester.

Many of the students are in need of scotch tape, pencils, colored pencils, scissors, erasers, etc. Please check with your student to see if their pencil bags need to be restocked or if new notebooks/folders are needed.

We wish you a great New Year!

Quiz Bowl

5th Grade News

Greetings 5th grade parents! It is amazing that we have completed first semester and well into second semester already. We have enjoyed your children and greatly appreciate your support. We have seen some improvement with your children on responsibility, organization, and work ethic which is helping them develop life skills needed for their future. We feel that communication is very important as we all work together to do what is best for your children. We appreciate your time and input communicating with us this semester. Please continue to communicate with us throughout the school year. Once again, we appreciate your support! Happy New Year! GO BLUEJAYS!!!

7th Grade Basketball

It has been an amazing year for the 7th grade girls basketball team. We have achieved great strides in our skills and our performance throughout the year. The improvements were due to our hard work and determination every day for practice. Our goal was to be better than you were the day before. From the start of the season to the end of the season I could see a huge improvement in our mindset and ability just to achieve our goal. The C team went 1-3, the B team went 6-1, and the A team went 8-2. We battled in every game and always gave our full effort whenever we faced adversity. I am extremely proud of the way the girls performed and wanted to become better everyday. The future is bright for the 7th grade girls basketball team and will be a force to reckon with in the future.

The Seward Middle School 8th Grade Quiz Bowl teams competed at the 8th annual State NE AMI Middle School/Freshman Quiz Bowl in November. Both the Blue team and Gold team competed in four matches of pool play in the morning and during the single elimination tournament in the afternoon, the Gold team lost to Kearney Catholic. The Blue team placed third out of the 12 large division schools in attendance. This is the highest place that any 8th Grade Quiz Bowl team has placed at this tournament! The 8th Grade Quiz Bowl Blue and Gold Teams enjoyed the experience, showed potential, and positively represented Seward Middle School! The SMS 8th grade Quiz Bowl members for the Blue team are Derek Erickson, Noah Fields, Kaylie Nelson, Rachel Runyan, Alex Tonniges, and Zach Vrbka. Members for the Gold team are Eli Adams, Tanner Bye, Micah Hackbart, Ava Krahulik, Austin Schroeder, and Ellie Wunderlich.

Band Notes!

In the band room, we're looking forward to our upcoming Winter Band Concert to be held Thursday, January 17th. You'll find us at the SHS Auditorium and the concert will begin at 7:00 PM. This will be your first opportunity to hear the 5th grade beginning band as well as the 6th & 7th grade concert bands. It will be a BLAST!

We currently have a number of 7th & 8th graders auditioning for the Meridian Honor Band. These students go above and beyond to prepare some materials that are recorded and sent away for judging. Results will be made available in late January. Good luck to those "leaders" in our bands!

As always, we would like to thank parents for their continued support of their child in the SMS band program. Isn't it exciting to hear the progress? The rewards of participation go FAR beyond music education! We could write a book about the research, which by the way, has been done many times.

Notes from the Music Room!

Congrats to the following 8th Graders for being selected to represent SMS at the 2019 Singing Youth of Nebraska Honor Choir in Beatrice! This will be taking place on Saturday, January 19th. Those selected are: Eli Adams, Bailey Broadwell, Noah Fields, Karnie Gottschalk, Kalen Knott, Morgan Kulhanek, Andres Lopez, Emma Lowther, Dominique Newton, Barrett Nitz, Tanner Todd, and Elianah Wunderlich.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Friday, January 25th – Heartland Festival Choir in Henderson, NE. ALL 8th Grade Choir Members will be attending this event! We will leave SMS at 10:45am. Concert will be at 7:00pm and free to the public! It will also be streamed live on Striv.tv. If your child is attending please be watching for a note coming home with details!

Tuesday, March 26th - 7/8 Grade Musical “Alice in Wonderland”

7:00pm at the MIDDLE SCHOOL

* If your child is involved in this please make sure you are signed up for the remind101 alerts!

Thursday, April 11th - 5th Grade Concert “Hit the Lights!” – 7:00pm at the High School

*Be watching remind101 at the beginning of April for more details.

Monday, May 13th – 7/8 Grade Choir Concert “#WORD”

7:00pm at the High School

A Special Thank You...

The teachers would like to thank everyone who made The 15 Days Till Christmas Break possible. We were blessed by your generosity and looked forward to each new day. Thank you also to PTO for donating money to decorate the teachers lounge. Seward Public Schools has such supportive parents.