

# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SEWARD NEWSLETTER

## August, 2017



### Mission Statement

The School District of Seward, in cooperation with parents and community, affirms that all students will have the skills to become productive and contributing members of a global community. The district is committed to the development of each student academically, emotionally, socially and physically.

### Welcome from the Superintendent, Dr. Fields

I am honored and privileged to serve as the new superintendent at Seward Public Schools. This will be my sixth year serving Seward Public Schools, and my twentieth year in education. My wife Jamie and I have two children: our son, Christian, will be an eighth grader at Seward Middle School and our daughter, Karsyn, will be a fourth grader at Seward Elementary School. Seward Public Schools is a destination district for us, and we feel blessed that we have the opportunity to raise our family here and have our children educated in Seward Public Schools. Dr. Barnes left big shoes to fill, but I will work tirelessly to ensure Seward Public Schools continues on the path of excellence. Our district strategic plan will continue to be our roadmap for that path, and our people will continue to be our biggest asset as we work everyday to ensure our mission becomes a reality. The important work of educating your child(ren) is an awesome responsibility, but when the schools and parents/guardians can partner together, we can better ensure that our future will continue to be bright for ALL of our students at Seward Public Schools. Thank you again for letting me serve as your superintendent, and I look forward to a great 2017-2018 school year. The first day of school for students is Wednesday, August 16th with a 1:15 p.m. dismissal for elementary students and a 1:30 p.m. dismissal for middle and high school students. The start time and normal dismissal times for schools are listed later in the newsletter.

### New Teachers, Administrator and Staff Members



This year we welcome nine new teachers and one new administrator to our school district (see a brief biography on each below). We also changed some duties among existing staff, and we have numerous new classified staff additions, but we are still in the process of filling some of those positions so I will not provide information on classified positions at this time.

**Dr. Matt Dominy, Director of Curriculum and Professional Development:** Matt will be starting his seventeenth year in education. He is coming from Lincoln Public Schools where he served as the elementary principal at Adams Elementary for the last four years. He was also a building administrator at Millard Public Schools for six years and a teacher/administrator in Page, Arizona for six years.

**Mrs. Erin Collings, District Instructional Specialist:** Erin will be starting her thirteenth year in education. Erin was an elementary coordinator with Lincoln Public Schools and also a special education teacher before being an elementary coordinator.

**Mrs. Jennifer Frihauf, Early Childhood Teacher:** Jennifer will be starting her eighth year in education. Jennifer was previously a preschool teacher for Beatrice Public Schools in Nebraska. Jennifer has also taught in North Carolina, Illinois, and Kansas. Jennifer did her undergraduate work at the University of Wyoming and received her master's degree from Kansas State University.

**Mrs. Amanda Clouse, Third Grade Teacher:** Amanda will be starting her fifth year in teaching. Amanda was a third and first grade teacher at Friend Public Schools before coming to Seward. Amanda graduated from UNL and received her master's degree from Doane University.

**Mrs. Madelyn DeSimone, Fourth Grade Teacher:** Madelyn will be starting her second year of teaching. Madelyn taught 7<sup>th</sup> grade science and social studies at Muscatine, Iowa. Madelyn graduated from the University of Northern Iowa.

**Mrs. Beth Seegebarth, Elementary Special Education Teacher:** Beth will be starting her second year of teaching. Beth was a special education teacher last year for Lincoln Public Schools at McPhee Elementary School. Beth has done both her undergraduate and master's work at Doane University.

**Mrs. Lori Todd, Middle School Family Consumer Science Teacher:** Lori will be starting her sixth year in education. Lori has subbed in the district and was also a half time teacher at the elementary school for three years. Before coming to Seward, Lori was a second grade teacher for Hastings Public Schools for three years. Lori graduated from the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

**Mr. Vance Winter, Middle School/High School PE/Health Teacher:** Vance will be starting his first year teaching at the middle and high school level. Vance taught college classes at Concordia University and was also the Concordia University Head Football Coach. Vance graduated with a teaching degree from Dakota State University and received his master's degree from Wayne State College.

**Mr. Jeffrey Hass, High School Industrial Technology Teacher:** Jeff will be starting his eleventh year in education. Jeff has taught for Milford Public Schools the last nine years and also taught one year for Omaha Public Schools. Jeff received his bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and received his master's degree from Chadron State College.

**Mr. Nathan Knott, High School Art Teacher:** Nate will be starting his first year in education at Seward High School. Nate was a long-term art teacher substitute at the high school last year. Nate graduated from Doane University.

## Student Handbooks

Communicating with the public is an important part of what we do in the School District of Seward. In an effort to save paper, we will not send home paper copies of our high school and middle school handbooks; however, parents and students should read the handbooks on our school website at <http://www.sewardpublicschools.org> (the handbooks are located under the “For Parents” section).

High school and middle school students will be given signature pages to take home for students and parents/guardians to sign stating that they have gone online and read the handbook. Those forms will then need to be returned to the school. There will also be a place on the form for parents to indicate that they do not have access to the internet or would prefer a hard copy of the handbook. We will send home a printed copy for any parents requesting one.

The elementary school handbook will be available online, but we will be sending home hard copies with all elementary students as well.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

## The Great American Solar Eclipse

Parents, we are excited to offer our students the opportunity to witness the 2017 Great American Eclipse on Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>. We recognize the importance and the uniqueness of this opportunity, and we believe that we can make the eclipse a great learning moment for our students. Our school district has secured NASA-approved eclipse viewing glasses, and students will be taught the protocol for wearing the glasses to safely observe the eclipse. Students will be in designated locations at each school approximately 15 minutes before the total eclipse and 15 minutes after the total eclipse. Various learning activities will be completed before, during, and after the eclipse. Parents will be given the opportunity to opt-out their children from this activity, and students will be given an alternate activity, if necessary. We look forward to sharing this learning moment with our students! The letter that students will receive the first day of school is included at the end of the newsletter.



## New on-line payment option for breakfast/lunch beginning August 9th!

The Seward Public School District is pleased to introduce a new program called *e~Funds for Schools*. This program offers various options for parents/guardians who **choose** to make payments online and is extremely user friendly. Not only will you have the ability to have lunch payments electronically withdrawn from your checking account or charged to your credit card, you also have the flexibility to make a payment at any time through the school's website. The *e~Funds for Schools* service is offered to you by a third party service provider, and they charge for processing your payment(s), similar to other online banking services. The district does not request or keep records of family checking or credit card account information.

The *e~Funds for Schools* electronic payment service is provided to the school by a third party service provider. The service provider has a nominal fee for their service. **There is a \$1.00 transaction convenience fee for each electronic checking payment.** The system carries a Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) charge if the payment is “bad.” **For**

**payments made by credit or debit card, there is a convenience fee of \$2.65 per each \$100 increment in the transaction.** When you set up your account, please review your options carefully.

You are in full control of your account and can make a payment at any time that is convenient for you. **No payments will be allowed without your knowledge and authorization through this secure payment system.** By providing your home and/or work email address, an email notification informing you of the student's name, purpose of the payment, and the amount of the item, will be sent to you each time that a payment is to be processed. The *e-Funds for Schools* site is secure and uses industry standard data encryption.

### ***How does e-Funds for Schools work?***

Families set up and maintain their own logins, passwords, and payment preferences. Your account information is retained in a password-protected file.

*e-Funds for Schools* will help to eliminate last minute check writing hassles, improve efficiencies, and help cut costs for both you and the school district.

- Online payments will help eliminate the worry that your children could lose or forget the money intended for school lunch.
- Payments from a credit card or checking account may easily be set up.
- Parents/guardians may establish a recurring payment or may opt to make a one-time payment.

The link to E-Funds can be found here: <https://eps.mvpbanking.com/cgi-bin/efs/login.pl?access=56180>



### **New Math Curriculum for K-5<sup>th</sup> Grade!**

The Seward Public School District is pleased to announce the implementation of a new comprehensive math program K-5 for the upcoming 2017-2018 school year. The new EnVision 2.0 math curriculum focuses on mathematical practices, in depth understanding of mathematical concepts, and individualized instruction through both a print and digital format. EnVision 2.0 is rooted in problem-based learning and engages students through interactive learning aids and video tutorials as well as personalized practice with immediate feedback. The EnVision resource is aligned to our new Nebraska Math Standards, giving students the ability to dive deeper into the content and make connections. This coherence and rigor promote critical thinking and higher math achievement.

## **New Math Curriculum for 6-8<sup>th</sup> Grade!**

This year your child will be using a new math program called *GO Math!* *GO Math!* offers an engaging and interactive approach to learning the Nebraska Math Standards. The program emphasizes understanding, computational fluency, and real-life applications. *Go Math!* also has a component for personalized and adaptive instruction that is tailored to the needs of the learner.

## **New Math Curriculum for High School!**

Our core math classes will be supported this next school year with resources from McGraw-Hill. Algebra I, Algebra II, and geometry materials are focused on higher-order thinking and deeper conceptual understanding. Each course also offers dynamic digital tools for students to practice, explore, and visualize math concepts. Advanced math courses at the high school will also be using new materials from a variety of publishers, which are focused on deeper math learning using traditional and digital math resources.

## **Parents and Staff Learn Together at Coordinated Health Institute**

This summer, Seward staff and parents attended a six-day training in Columbus focused on coordinating health and wellness practices in our district. The institute provided participants with the necessary skills, tools, and resources to create a sustainable school health infrastructure that will be sustainable for years to come. Topics covered during the institute included focus on the link between student health and academics, school health assessment, school health/wellness councils, evidence-based strategies to address health-related issues such as physical activity, healthy eating, policy development, and strategies to help revise/update your school wellness policy. The goal of the institute was to create a sustainable, coordinated school health infrastructure to address the health of children and staff with assistance from community partners. A special thank you to the parents who participated in the institutes: Jennifer Janousek and Mindy Anderson-Knott

## **Bluejay Alerts**



We are currently using a notification system to notify enrollees in the event of an emergency, school closing, and event cancellations.

Our alert system pulls contact information of parents from PowerSchool, our student management software, so if we have the correct information in PowerSchool, you will automatically receive notices.

If you have questions or are having issues with the system, you may contact Mr. Tom Widler at the high school at 402-643-2988.

## Hot Lunch and Breakfast Program

All elementary, middle, and high school hot lunches will be served beginning Wednesday, August 16th. Breakfast at the elementary and middle school will start on Thursday, August 17th. The cost of breakfast and lunches:



	Daily
K-4 Lunch	\$2.50
5-12 Lunch	\$2.65
K-8 Breakfast	\$1.60
Milk	\$0.30

Free and Reduced price meal application forms will be sent home with students the first day of school on August 16th. If you wish to apply for free or reduced priced meals, please fill out the application and return it to the school. Please follow the directions and fill out the application as accurately as possible. Accurate and complete applications will speed up the determination process.

## Busing



Seward Public Schools has numerous bus routes traveling many miles each day. We do what we can to ensure that students do not ride an excessive amount of time, yet, we know some students are going to spend a good deal of time on the bus each day. We try to do the best we can with the limited resources that we have available, and we appreciate the cooperativeness of the parents and students.

COMMUNICATION is an important aspect of our transportation program. It is important for us to be notified of any changes. **If your child or children regularly ride the bus and for some reason do not plan to on any given day, please call ahead and let us know of the change.** In the morning you may call the bus garage after 6:30 AM at (402) 643-6069 or contact the route driver before their route starts. For changes in the afternoon route you may either call the bus garage, the route driver, the district office at (402) 643-2941, or your child's school office: Elementary School (402) 643-2968, Middle School (402) 643-2986, or High School (402) 643-2988. If we do not answer the phone, keep trying—other people may be calling, and we might be on the other line. Parents may also send a written note in advance to the bus driver or the school office describing the bus route changes.

Bus routes for this school year will soon be scheduled, and bus drivers will be contacting parents to let them know times for the morning and afternoon routes. If you plan to ride the bus and do not receive a phone call from a bus driver by August 11th, please call us and make sure we have you placed on a route. Also, if you are new to the district, or if you have changed addresses, please call and let us know where you live and phone numbers where you can be reached so we can get you on a route.

Bus evacuation drills will be conducted once per semester for all students.

SHUTTLE BUSING will be provided for students to shuttle back and forth between public school buildings before and after school. The schedule is included in the newsletter.



### **No Bus Stop at the Youth Center**

As a reminder we will no longer be picking up or dropping off students up at the Youth Center. We will also not be picking up any public school students at the St. John or St. Vincent bus stops because of this change.

### **Elementary Open House**



Seward Elementary “Open House” will take place from 5:30-6:30 p.m. on Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup>. Kindergarten families and families new to Seward Elementary are invited to attend open house from 5:00 - 5:30 p.m. This is a great opportunity for parents and students to meet teachers and other staff members and visit their classrooms. Parents may also bring in meal money, immunization records, vision evaluations, and physicals if you have not already done so.

You may also bring school supplies to open house. Marty Telecky, busing supervisor, will also be present to answer any busing questions parents might have.

### **Pre-Registration Information**

Kindergarten: Children must have reached the age of five years on or before July 31st to be enrolled in kindergarten. **Birth certificates and immunization records are required for registration for all new students. Students enrolling in kindergarten or transferring from out of state must have a visual evaluation. Students will not be allowed to begin school without these records.**

K-12 students who did not attend Seward Public Schools last year should register in the principal’s office starting August 1st. Each kindergarten student, 7th grade student, and students moving into Seward Public School District from out of state, must have a physical before the start of school. Starting on August 1<sup>st</sup>, all school offices will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to answer any questions.

#### **Grades K-4**

Elementary School  
200 East Pinewood  
402-643-2968

#### **Grades 5-8**

Middle School  
2401 Karol Kay Blvd.  
402-643-2986

#### **Grades 9-12**

High School  
532 Northern Heights  
402-643-2988

### **School Building Information**

Regular School Hours:

Seward Elementary School 8:15 a.m. to 3:17 p.m.

Seward Middle School 8:05 a.m. to 3:23 p.m.

Seward High School 8:15 a.m. to 3:37 p.m.

Phone Numbers:

District Office – 643-2941

Bus Garage – 643-6069

Elementary – 643-2968

Middle School – 643-2986

High School – 643-2988

Maintenance – 643-2664

### **Middle School Open House**

Seward Middle School is having an open house for students and parents this year on Monday, August 14th. See the schedule below:

6:00-6:30 p.m. – 5<sup>th</sup> Graders and any new students at SMS

6:30-7:30 p.m. – Returning 6-8 Graders



### **iPad Distribution Event Dates (Located at Seward High School):**



iPad distribution this year will take place on the dates indicated below. Students in grades 10-12 can pick up their iPad in the high school library. Students will need to come with a signed parent/student handbook receipt as well as an iPad User Agreement. These forms are located at <http://www.sewardpublicschools.org/pages/SHSNewsSummer2017.pdf> Students will also need to bring a \$35 technology fee with them at the time of checkout. Please note that iPad distribution for incoming freshmen and new students will correspond with the orientation event on the evening of Monday, August 14th.

10th-12th Grade iPad Checkout times:

Wednesday, August 9th: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, August 10th: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 15th: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### **Ninth Grade/New Student Orientation**

Seward High School will be hosting a freshman and new student orientation on Monday, August 14th at 7:00 p.m. in the new theater. Parents and students will have an opportunity to visit classrooms, meet teachers, find lockers, receive their iPad, and become acclimated with the building. Information will also be provided regarding schedules, school policies, college planning, activity tickets, the automated lunch program, school organizations, and other relevant school information. We encourage parents to come prepared to put money in your student's lunch account and to pay for activity tickets before school starts in order to avoid the rush on the first few days of school. This should be an exciting night to continue the journey of transitioning to high school!





### **Athletic Practices**

Varsity football, softball, cross country, volleyball and girls golf practices will begin on Monday, August 7th. All middle school equipment check outs will take place after school starts. Each student in grades 7-12 must have a physical in order to participate in practice. Please contact the high school office at (402) 643-2988 for any high school athletic questions.

### **Student Surveys**

From time to time our school district works with agencies to educate our children about the consequences of risky behaviors such as alcohol and illegal drug use. In an effort to determine how often our students engage in risky behaviors, we aid these agencies in conducting surveys. The data we gather from these surveys is confidential and individuals cannot be identified. We can use the group data to apply for grant dollars to help educate our students.

If you prefer that your children do not participate in these, or similar, surveys, please inform their principal, in writing, of your objection.

### **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Seward Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, marital status, or based on such protected classes, in admission or access to, or treatment of employment or educational programs and activities. Any person having information or inquiries regarding any such discrimination is directed to contact Superintendent Josh Fields, in writing at 410 South Street, Seward, NE 68434 or by telephone at (402) 643-2941. Any person may also contact the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education: by email at [OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov); by telephone at (816) 268-0550; or by fax at (816) 268-0599, regarding complaints of discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability as well as complaints concerning the denial of access or other discrimination against Boy Scouts or other youth groups.

# Babies Can't Wait!

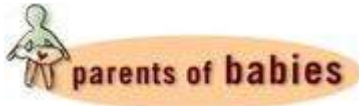
## An Important Message to All

### If you Suspect Something is Wrong...Early Intervention Can Help

If you suspect that your child isn't developing as he/she should, it's important to get another opinion as soon as possible to see if a problem really does exist. You can turn to a variety of places for help: doctors, health clinics, school districts, and community agencies.

While some professionals may believe that a child will outgrow a problem, it's better to provide help early to make sure that the child has a better chance of success. Many children do not "outgrow" a problem - they may need extra help called early intervention.

Your school and the ESU #6 Preschool Interagency Coordinating Council have a service called Child Find designed to identify children (birth to age 3) who may be at risk for learning and could benefit from special services. Children who display trouble with learning, moving, playing, hearing, seeing, and talking may qualify to receive free assistance. All children develop at different rates.



If your child is found eligible for services, an Individual Family Service Plan will be developed by you, the parent, and the people who will help you meet your child's special needs. The program will build on your child's strengths and improve areas of weakness. The program will provide support, encouragement, and assistance for you in working with your child.

***Make the call that really counts. A professional will be happy to discuss your concerns about your child's development.***

*Call a Services Coordinator at:*

Educational Service Unit #6

210 5th Street

Milford, NE 68405

800-327-0091 or 402-761-3341

**Seward County Sixpence**



Seward County Sixpence is a joint countywide program between Seward, Milford, and Centennial Public School Districts and Blue Valley Community Action. The program is beginning its third year and is currently recruiting families for our program. Specifically, the program works with families who are prenatal or have children up to three years old to track development, promote learning and strengthen families. Families who are interested or would like more information about Sixpence may contact us at 402-643-2968, ext. 216



## Solar eclipse viewing permission form

On August 21, 2017, Seward will be in the path of a total solar eclipse. This event is being called "The Great American Solar Eclipse," because it is the first time since 1918 a solar eclipse will be visible on a path across the entire continental United States. Seward is one of the few cities in the path of totality. Planning is already underway to ensure our students can experience this once-in-a-lifetime event.

Safety is always a top priority for Seward Public Schools. We will take all precautionary measures with both students and staff to make this experience both safe and enjoyable. Homemade filters or ordinary sunglasses, even very dark sunglasses, are not safe for looking at the sun. Students will not be permitted to look at the uneclipsed or partially eclipsed sun through unfiltered cameras, telescopes, binoculars or other optical devices, with or without glasses. For eclipse viewing, every student and staff member in Seward Public Schools will be given "Eclipse Shades" manufactured in the USA by Rainbow Symphony, Inc. (For more information regarding the safety certification of the special viewing glasses, please visit [www.eclipseglasses.com/pages/safety](http://www.eclipseglasses.com/pages/safety)) For information about safely viewing the eclipse please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8PINPo9mWw>

All of our schools will practice safety procedures, explain when and where to wear the "Eclipse Shades" and share with students the dangers of looking at the sun. Please understand that your child(ren) will need to follow our safety procedures to ensure there is no damage to their eyes. If you **do not** want your child to participate in this activity, please fill out the form below.

I **do not** want my child participating in the Eclipse Viewing and I am requesting an alternate activity for my child.

PARENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL (2017-18): \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE (2017-18) \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL (2017-18): \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE (2017-18) \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL (2017-18): \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE (2017-18) \_\_\_\_\_

8/3/17

**SHUTTLE BUSES FOR 2017 - 2018 SCHOOL YEAR**

**A.M. SHUTTLE BUSES**

*All times listed are approximate.*

**AT THE HIGH SCHOOL**

**BUSES #9, #10, & #13**

Will depart the High School at 7:45 A.M., then go to the Middle School, then go to the Elementary School.

BUS #6 Will depart the High School at 7:45 A.M., then go to the Middle School, then go to the Elementary School, then drop off rural St. John's students.

BUS #20 Will depart the High School at 7:45 A.M., drop off rural St. Vincent DePaul's students, then go to the Elementary School.

**AT MIDDLE SCHOOL**

BUS #14 Will depart the Middle School at 7:55 A.M., then go to the Elementary, then drop off rural St. Vincent DePaul's students.

BUS # 18 Will Depart the Middle School at 7:55 A.M., then go to the Elementary School, then the High School.

**PM SHUTTLE BUSES**

BUS # 10 Depart Elementary, then Middle School, then pick up rural St. John's students, then High School.

Bus #14 Depart Elementary, then Middle School, then pick up rural St. Vincent Depaul's students, then High School.

BUS #20 Depart Elementary, then Middle School, then High School, then Bright Beginnings CDC.

**BUSES #6, #9, #13, & #18**

Depart Elementary, then Middle School, then High School.

**BUSES #12 & #19**

Depart Elementary, then Middle School, then High School, then take students to St. John C.D.C.