

# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SEWARD NEWSLETTER

## August, 2016



### 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

The 2016-17 school year is about to begin as the first day for students is August 16 with a 1:30 dismissal.

Every year at this time I wonder where the summer went—I never seem to know. One of these days I might figure it out, but for some reason time seems to move faster than ever as I get older.

It has been a busy summer at Seward Public Schools, so maybe that is the reason it seems to have gone by so quickly. In the spring our teachers requisition materials, books, computers, etc. and they also turn in work orders for their classrooms. When summer break arrives, we order the approved requisitions and begin work on the classrooms. The problem we have found with ordering equipment and supplies, is that eventually trucks show up with all of the stuff you ordered. Then we have to do something with all of it.

Of course during the summer there is also mowing and deep cleaning and other summertime projects to work on. We have had a company working on our high school and elementary buildings this summer. They have been repairing cracks, replacing caulking joints, and repainting some of the surfaces on those buildings. It has been a while and it was time. We must continue to maintain our buildings so they will continue to serve our students well into the future.

Some of you might notice that we have done some work to improve the soccer fields north of the elementary as well. We have added sprinklers and will soon have a fence and scoreboards in place.

We've also been busy hiring new staff members, preparing budgets, working with program auditors, registering students, and so on. There always seems to be plenty to do.

So, ready or not, another summer is gone and it's time to go back to school. We look forward to another great year educating students.

### New Teachers, Administrator and Staff Members



This year we welcome 7 new teachers and 1 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.

**Ms. Nicole D'Angelo** will be teaching agriculture courses and co-sponsoring FFA at Seward High School. Ms. D'Angelo is a graduate of the University of Nebraska Lincoln where she has earned her bachelor's and master's degrees and is currently pursuing a doctorate in agriculture. She was a student teacher at Seward High School last semester.

**Ms. Amanda Kenney** will be teaching 8-12 grade band. She is a graduate of Hastings College where she was a member of the band, flag corps, and choir. She was the vocal music teacher for Sutton Public Schools for 3 years and has recently been substitute teaching in the Seward/Lincoln area.

**Ms. Celeste Palensky** will be teaching family and consumer sciences at Seward High School this year. Ms. Palensky earned her bachelor's degree from Wayne State College and this will be her first teaching position.

**Ms. Melissa Pohl** will be the new language arts teacher at Seward High School. Ms. Pohl is a Chadron State College graduate and has been teaching at Kimball High School the past two years. Prior to teaching at Kimball she was a librarian in Scottsbluff for one year and a teacher at Morrill High School for 3 years.

**Mr. Jamie Policky** will be teaching industrial technology courses at Seward High School this year. Mr. Policky is a Wayne State College graduate and has been teaching at Lincoln Southwest High School for the past year.

**Ms. Elizabeth Stutzman** will be teaching 1<sup>st</sup> Grade at Seward Elementary. She received her bachelor's and two master's degrees from Doane College. Prior to coming to Seward, Ms. Stutzman taught in Gretna for seven years and York for one year.

**Ms. Heidi Weber** will be teaching pre-school at Seward Elementary. Ms. Weber graduated with her bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska—Kearney and her master's degree from Doane. Prior to coming to Seward to teach, she taught preschool for ESU 9 out of Hastings for 5 years. Prior to serving at ESU 9 Ms. Weber worked for Grand Island Public Schools and Messiah Lutheran in Grand Island.

**Mrs. Jill Johnson** will be the new assistant principal at Seward High School beginning August 1, 2016. Mrs. Johnson received her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and her Master's Degree from Peru State College, and is pursuing another degree through Concordia University. She started her career in education serving as a high school language arts teacher in Leigh Community Schools. She later served the school districts in Louisville and Milford, and was most recently working as a professional development consultant at ESU 6 in Milford.

### **Student Handbooks**

Communicating with the public is an important part of what we do at 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 their parents 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 check indicating 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.

### **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, 643-2988.

### **Hot Lunch and Breakfast Program**

All Elementary, Middle School and High School hot lunches will be served beginning Tuesday, August 16. Breakfast at the Elementary and Middle School will start on Wednesday, August 17. The cost of breakfast and lunches:

	<b>Daily</b>
K-4 Lunch	\$2.40
5-12 Lunch	\$2.55
K-8 Breakfast	\$1.60



Free and Reduced price meal application forms will be sent home with students the first day of school on August 16. 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. For changes in the afternoon route you may either call the bus garage, the district office at (402) 643-2941, or your child’s school office: Elementary School

(402) 643-2968, Middle School (402) 643-2986, and 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.

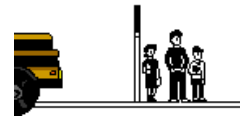
Bus routes for this school year will soon be scheduled and bus drivers will be contacting parents to let them know times for the morning and afternoon routes. If you plan to ride the bus and do not receive a phone call from a bus driver by August 12, please call us and make sure we have you placed on 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 school buildings before and after school. The schedule will be sent out before school starts.

### **Bus Stop at the Youth Center**

The Seward Youth Center will again be used as a pick up and drop off point for cross-town bussing before and after school. The building will be open in the morning if weather dictates the need to be indoors. Morning supervision will be available beginning at 7:30 a.m. with the pick-up time at 7:40. We would prefer that students do not start gathering at this location until 7:30 or after.



This bus stop will also be supervised after school with buses dropping off from 3:45 to 3:55 p.m. Parents, please be aware that we do supervise the bus drop-off area, but we cannot supervise students after they leave the area and begin home or elsewhere. Please talk to your children about crosswalk safety, which crosswalks you want them to utilize, etc.

### **Elementary Open House**



Seward Elementary “Open House” will take place from 6:00-7:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 11<sup>th</sup>. Kindergarten families and families new to Seward Elementary are invited to attend open house from 5:30 - 6:00. This is a great opportunity for parents and students to meet teachers and other staff members, and see the new classrooms that have been added on to the building. Parents may also bring in meal money, immunization records, vision evaluations, and physicals if you have not already done so. 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 31 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 Schools last year should register in the principal’s office starting August 1. Each Kindergarten student, 7th grade student, and

students moving into Seward 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  
643-2968

**Grades 5-8**

Middle School  
2401 Karol Kay Blvd.  
643-2986

**Grades 9-12**

High School  
532 Northern Heights  
643-2988

**School Building Information**

Regular School Hours

Seward Elementary School 8:15 a.m. to 3:22 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 Thursday, August 11. See the schedule below:

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

6:00-7:00 PM – 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 [www.sewardpublicschools.org/pages/SHSNewsAug16.pdf](http://www.sewardpublicschools.org/pages/SHSNewsAug16.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 Thursday, August 11<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Williams will start checking out iPads that night as early as 5:00 on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade iPad Checkout Times:

Tuesday, August 9<sup>th</sup> – 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 10<sup>th</sup> – 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Monday, August 15<sup>th</sup> – 1:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

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

Seward High School will be hosting a Freshman and New Student Orientation on Thursday, August 11th at 6:00 p.m. in the new theater. Parents and students will have an opportunity to visit classrooms, meet teachers, find lockers, receive their iPad, and get 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 students' 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 will be an exciting night to begin the journey of transitioning to high school.



## **Athletic Practices**

Varsity Football, Softball and Girls Golf practices will begin on Monday, August 8. Organized practices for Cross Country and Volleyball will begin on Monday, August 15. 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.

## **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.

## **Extracurricular Activities (Dr. Barnes' Perspective):**

We are in the business of educating students and I like to say that we teach many lessons that don't originate in textbooks. Students also need to experience what I call "life's lessons." Lessons about work ethic, working together, communicating, perseverance, leadership, working through pain, taking advice, talking to the coach or teammates about concerns, praising others when warranted, sportsmanship, empathy, humility, teamwork, time management, and winning and losing. I believe all of these lessons can be learned in our extracurricular programs.

You might know that our high school students often participate in activities that are governed by the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA). The NSAA's motto is: "NSAA activities...the other half of education." I don't know if the fraction  $\frac{1}{2}$  is the right fraction or not. I suppose it depends on the student and how involved they are. Regardless, I do believe there are valuable lessons to be learned in extracurricular activities. Some of those lessons will be enjoyable and others will not, yet I'm confident that lessons learned will prepare children for life.

I've been in the education profession for 29 years and have been in or around school activities for many years more. Over that time I've participated, coached, refereed, and administered activities—I've also had three children of my own participate.

I'm as competitive as the next guy and I really like to win, but as I've watched the many activities that I've watched over the years as a participant, school employee, and parent, I've been more cognizant of the lessons being learned than the wins being achieved. Let's face it, I've seen a lot of teams that didn't have much talent, yet they've functioned pretty well as a team because they learned lessons on work ethic, perseverance, teamwork, etc. Maybe they didn't win every game, but they learned lessons that will benefit them in life. I've also seen other teams that might have loads of talent, but struggle to learn those life lessons like humility, teamwork, taking criticism, sportsmanship, communication, etc. It's easier to blame someone else if things don't go well. Those teams might win some games due to their raw talent, but I worry about how successful those team members will be in life. If they can find a job shooting a basketball, catching a football, spiking a volleyball, or blowing a trumpet, they might be fine, but if they have to learn a trade, take orders for a coworker, or put in the time to make a sale to a difficult customer, are they going to survive? Have they learned the lessons that will help them function well as an employee, an employer, and even a husband, wife, father, or mother?

I feel that school activities have changed immensely, and I'm not so sure those changes are positive for the majority of students. Maybe my thoughts and views are all wrong and I've just not been able to change with the times, so maybe I've failed on my end, but my fear is that extracurricular activities have changed so much that instead of teaching life's lessons, we are more worried about winning championships, playing time, making a college team, individual recognition or honors, or getting a college athletic scholarship.

When we hire our coaches to lead our activities (and I can tell you that is getting more difficult as extracurricular activities change), our expectation isn't for them to win championships, develop college athletes, or worry about athletic scholarships. If the talent is there all are possible, but what I want more than that is to see students and coaches teaching, and learning those lessons I mentioned earlier.

Back in my day as a coach, I can tell you that I wanted my players to have fun and enjoy the sport they played. I will also tell you that I worked them very hard, expected them to give tremendous effort, and when they weren't, I would get on them. I wasn't a screamer and I didn't cuss and so on, but I would certainly let them know when I wasn't happy with what they were doing. When we ran tires (those of you my age will know what I mean), I expected them to hit every tire and hit them full speed. When we ran sprints, I expected them to sprint and sprint through the finish without letting up. I expected them to give me everything they had. I didn't want them letting up at the end. Isn't this what we want out of our children in life? They will be faced with situations in life, but instead of playing time or a game on the line, it will be a job, career, relationship, etc. In the real world people don't get participation medals or equal opportunities to succeed. They will hopefully get a pat on the back or rewarded when things go well, but when things aren't going well they need to learn how to pick up their effort and get back in the game.

I got into education because I loved working with kids. Extracurricular activities provided me an opportunity to work with kids in a competitive environment which I loved. I knew that the kids I worked with were going to range in ability and I knew some

would be able to work hard enough to offset a lack of ability and others would not. I knew some would get more playing time. I knew some would get more recognition. I knew some would work very hard and not ever be good enough to be a starter or the star. I had great admiration for those kids because they stuck it out, worked hard, and made the team stronger. I still keep track of a number of those kids today (no longer kids of course). Those kids that worked hard, persevered, and pushed themselves and their teammates are doing well as adults. I think the lessons they learned in school activities helped.

So why do I bring this up in the school newsletter? First of all, I want you to know what my philosophy is on school activities. I want our participants to be treated with respect by each other, our coaches, and our fans, but I also want them to learn lessons that will benefit them in life. All those lessons are not going to be positive and fun—as in life. Extracurricular activities aren't “just a game”. They are much more than that in my opinion. They are a valuable piece of the curriculum we offer our students that will help them learn real lessons which will help them be successful in life.

### **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 Greg Barnes, 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!



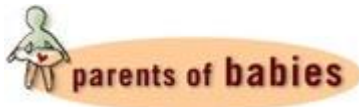
### An Important Message to All

#### 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

8/1/2016	<b>SHUTTLE BUSES FOR 2016 - 2017 SCHOOL YEAR</b>				
<b>A.M. SHUTTLE BUSES</b>	<i>All times listed are approximate.</i>				
<b>AT THE YOUTH CENTER</b>					
BUS #11	Will depart the Youth Center at 7:40 A.M., then go to St. John, then the High School, then Middle School, then the Elementary School.				
<b>AT THE HIGH SCHOOL</b>					
<b>BUSES #9, #10, &amp; #13</b>					
	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 St. John School.				
BUS #20	Will depart the High School at 7:45 A.M., then go to St. Vincent DePaul, then go to the Elementary School.				
<b>AT MIDDLE SCHOOL</b>					
BUS #14	Will depart the Middle School at 7:45 A.M., then go to the Elementary, then St. Vincent DePaul.				
BUS # 18	Will Depart the Middle School at 7:45 A.M., then go to the Elementary School, then the High School.				
<b>PM SHUTTLE BUSES</b>					
BUS #2	Depart Elementary, then St. John, then High School, then goes to the Youth Center.				
BUS # 13	Depart Elementary, then Middle School, then High School, then take students to Youth Center if needed.				
BUS #20	Depart Elementary, then Middle School, then St. Vincent DePaul, then High School.				
<b>BUSES #6, #9, #10, #14, &amp; #18</b>					
	Depart Elementary, then Middle School, then High School,				
<b>BUSES #12 &amp; #19</b>					
	Depart Elementary, then Middle School, then High School, then take students to St. John C.D.C.				
BUS #11	Depart the Middle School, then St. John School, then goes to the Youth Center.				