

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SEWARD NEWSLETTER

August, 2015



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 2015-16 school year is about to begin as the first day for students is August 13 with a 1:30 dismissal.

The start of a new school year is exciting for some and traumatic for others (children and adults included). Personally, I look forward to the new school year with excitement as I know we will accomplish much in the time we have to work together. Yet on the other side of the coin, I'm also apprehensive about the unknowns that pop up from time to time, the busy evening and weekend schedule, and the pace that picks up once school is in session. One thing is for certain, ready or not, the time is near.

Last year we—students, staff, parents, board members, teachers, and administrators—spent numerous hours working on our strategic planning goals. I can tell you that these goals were the focus of many of our meetings, faculty discussions, board meeting discussions, and professional development. I told the teachers at the end of last year that in my 28 years in education, I don't remember another year when so much was accomplished.

Some of the highlights include: more student recognition, more academic rigor, improved communication with parents, smoother transition between buildings for students, behavior intervention supports, a renewed focus on writing, relationship building, differentiation of instruction based upon student ability levels, integration of technology, and academic interventions. We spent a lot of time talking about data and how we can use that data to improve the education we provide all of our students.

I would personally like to thank all of the people who worked so hard to make 2014-15 a tremendous school year. We have a solid foundation to build upon in the years to come.

New Teachers, Administrator and Staff Members



This year we welcome 8 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.

Mr. Hans Eickmeier will be teaching 5th grade at Seward Middle School this year. Mr. Eickmeier is a Concordia University graduate receiving his Bachelor's degree from Concordia in 1999 and his Master's Degree in 2003. He started his teaching career at

Trinity Lutheran in Grand Island and from there went to Christ Lutheran School in Little Rock, AR. Since 2001 he has taught for Christ the King School in Memphis, TN.

Mr. Charles Gebhardt will be teaching math at Seward High School this year. He will also be sharing some of the assistant activities director's duties with Mr. Moody. Mr. Gebhardt received his Bachelor's Degree from Concordia University in 1991 and his Master's Degree from Concordia in 1998. He began his teaching career in Long Island Lutheran Jr./Sr. High School in NY. From there he served as the assistant principal and science teacher at Lutheran High Northeast in Norfolk, NE. Then from 2005-2011 he served as principal of Salt Lake Lutheran High School in Utah. Since 2011 he has worked in numerous capacities at Concordia University in Seward.

Ms. Natasha Hibbert will teach Kindergarten at Seward Elementary. Ms. Hibbert received her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Wyoming in 2009 and her Master's Degree from Doane College in 2012. She has been teaching at Riley Elementary in Lincoln since 2009.

Mr. Jordan Hinrichs will be teaching math at Seward High School this year. Mr. Hinrichs received his Bachelor's Degree from Concordia in 2009 and has been working for Omni Behavioral Health in Seward since 2008.

Ms. Kate Jungck will be teaching 8th grade language arts at Seward Middle School. She received her Bachelor's Degree from Chadron State College in 2011. Out of college she went to work as a teacher for Hemingford Public Schools through 2014. Since then she has been substitute teaching in various school districts.

Ms. Kari Samuels will be teaching special education at Seward Elementary this year. Ms. Samuels received her Bachelor's Degree from Concordia University in 2003 and her Master's Degree from Concordia in 2009. She began her teaching career at Front Range Elementary School in Littleton, CO from 2005-07. She then returned to Seward, serving as an assistant track coach at Concordia as well as teaching at Immanuel Lutheran School in Polk until 2011. From 2011-13 she taught at St. John Lutheran School in Seward, and since 2013 she has been teaching language arts at Shelby-Rising City Public Schools.

Ms. Sara Smith will be teaching special education at Seward High School this year. Ms. Smith received her Associates Degree in Mortuary Science from Kansas City, Kansas Community College in 2004 and her Bachelor's Degree in Education from Concordia University in Seward in 2013. She served in the mortuary business in Austin, TX from 2004-2009 at which time she moved to Seward to work on her education degree. She has been substitute teaching for numerous schools in the area since 2013.

Ms. Katie Wright will be teaching language arts at Seward High School this year. Ms. Wright received her Bachelor's Degree from the Concordia University in 2005 and her Master's Degree from the University of Missouri in 2015. She began her teaching career at David City Aquinas in 2005 and has been teaching for Crete Public Schools since 2008.

Mr. Scott Axt will be the new principal at Seward High School. Mr. Axt earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Chadron State College. He then started his education career as a 7-12 Social Science teacher at Morrill High School where he served for 10 years. He then gained experience as a school counselor for 8 years in the Morrill, Mitchell, and Grand Island School Districts, and gained administrative experience as the 7-12 Principal and Activities Director at Morrill Jr. Sr. High School for one year and for the past two years, he has been the 9-12 Assistant Principal at Grand Island Northwest High School.

Mr. Russ Wissing is the new assistant principal/activities director at Seward High School. Mr. Wissing received his Bachelor's Degree from Concordia University in 1988. He has two Master's Degrees with his first being in curriculum and instruction and instructional technology in 2000 from UNL, and his second in education administration in 2010 from Concordia. Mr. Wissing taught for Fairbury Public Schools from 1989 to 1995 and has been teaching in Seward since.

We also reshuffled some duties in the district. This year **Mr. John Moody** and **Mr. Charles Gebhardt** will be sharing the assistant activities director's duties at Seward High School, and **Mr. Tom Widler** will be helping with NSSRS reporting (state reports) and our Bluejay Alerts program (Mr. Wissing was in charge of NSSRS and Alerts in previous years).

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 provide 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 on line 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 the Connect 5 notification system to notify enrollees in the event of an emergency, school closing, and event cancellations.

Connect 5 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 Thursday, August 13. Breakfast at the Elementary and Middle School will also start on Friday, August 14. The cost of breakfast and lunches:

	Daily
K-4 Lunch	\$2.30
5-12 Lunch	\$2.45
K-8 Breakfast	\$1.50



Free and Reduced price meal application forms will be sent home with students the first day of school on August 13. 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.

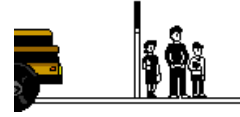
Bus routes for this school year will soon be scheduled and bus drivers will be contacting parents to let them know times for the morning and afternoon routes. If you plan to ride the bus and do not receive a phone call from a bus driver by August 10, please call us and make sure we have you placed on 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 .

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 when 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 August 11th. 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 3. 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 3st, 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 Monday, August 10. See the schedule below:

5:30-6:00 PM – 5th 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. Both were included in the high school newsletter, www.sewardpublicschools.org/pages/SHSNewsAug15.pdf for your convenience. 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 Tuesday, August 11th.

Wednesday, August 5th – 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 6th – 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Monday, August 10th – 2:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.



Ninth Grade/New Student Orientation

Seward High School will be hosting a Freshman and New Student Orientation on Tuesday, August 11th at 6:30 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 10. Organized practices for Cross Country and Volleyball will begin on Monday, August 17. 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.

Schools Receive Sixpence Grant (see press release below)

The Trustees of the Sixpence Early Learning Fund announced last week that Seward, Centennial, and Milford Public Schools, in partnership with Blue Valley Community Action, will receive grant awards totaling approximately \$175,000 beginning July 1, 2015. Sixpence awarded grants to sixteen communities to fund high-quality early childhood programs serving at-risk infants and toddlers across the state.

Sixpence grants are intended to build new early childhood programs or expand existing services to address the developmental needs of Nebraska's youngest children at risk. "We know for a fact that children's preparedness to enter kindergarten and thrive in the K-12 system depends on the quality of their earliest learning experiences," said Dr. Matthew Blomstedt, Commissioner of the Nebraska Department of Education. "Sixpence is about creating the kinds of high-quality early experiences that reduce the achievement gap in our state and improve children's chances of lifelong success." "Sixpence pursues its goal by helping Nebraska parents provide safe, stimulating, supportive environments and relationships during the critical early years of life," said Amy Bornemeier, grant administrator for the fund. "This is especially important for families who face significant challenges in meeting the developmental needs of their youngest children."

Sixpence grants are awarded to community partnerships through local districts. The grants make it possible for communities to provide an array of resources and services such as high-quality child care and specialists who work with individual families to improve parent-child interactions.

With Seward County, the Sixpence grant will be used to provide Sixpence Family Engagement services through home visits for Seward County Nebraska for 24 children age 0-3 and their families with one or more of the targeted risk factors; low income, premature birth or low birth weight, English Language Learners, and teen parents.

Seward County Nebraska has a population of 16,729 with 958 children 0-4 (2012 Census data). 2012 poverty estimates show a total of 1,232 persons (7.9%) living below the poverty rate in Seward County. Of the household living in poverty, 64% are female headed households. 591 of 2,526 students (23.4%) in Seward County participated in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program for the 2011-2012 school year. 269 household (4.29%) received SNAP payments during 2012 with an additional 414 (6.6% household

with income levels below the poverty level that were not receiving SNAP payments. It is estimated that approximately 150 children living in Seward County who will be 0-3 years of age as of 7/31/15 and would be eligible for the Sixpence program based on their income.

“Communities can help families with young children more efficiently and effectively when they understand how to organize and make the most of their local resources,” said Bornemeier. “Sixpence helps make that happen.” Sixpence is an innovative, results-driven model for Early Childhood development in Nebraska. It represents a collaboration between the Nebraska Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, and private investors at the state and local level. “Our partners and donors demand a high degree of accountability for the dollars they invest,” said Bornemeier. “Sixpence grantees are held to a rigorous evaluation process conducted by world-class researchers at Munroe Meyer Institute to ensure that we’re seeing the kinds of outcomes we ought to expect from high-quality programs.”

Bornemeier also noted that each community receiving a Sixpence grant is required to provide matching funds to show a local commitment to this level of early childhood education.

In addition to the Seward, Centennial, Milford, Blue Valley Community Action Sixpence Consortium, the following school district are recipients of the June 2015 Sixpence grant awards:

- Auburn Public Schools
- Crete Public Schools
- Falls City Public Schools
- Fremont Public Schools
- Garden County Public Schools
- Hastings Public Schools
- Kearney Public Schools
- Lexington Public Schools
- Millard Public School
- Norfolk Public School
- Omaha Public School-Educare
- Omaha Public School-Early Learning Center
- Papillion-LaVista Public School
- Schuyler Public School
- Scottsbluff Public School

“Sixpence is a far-reaching investment in our state,” said Cara Small, who was appointed to the Sixpence Board of Trustees by Governor Ricketts earlier this year. “It’s preparing more Nebraska children to succeed not only in school, but in life. That means more graduates with marketable skills, fewer young people entering the criminal justice system, healthier and safer communities, and a stronger economy.”

For more information about the Sixpence Early Learning Fund, visit www.singasonofsixpence.org or contact Amy Bornemeier at abornemeier@nebraskachildren.org, or call 402-817-2018.

For more information about the Seward, Centennial, Milford, Blue Valley Community Action Sixpence Consortium or to apply for the program for a 0-3 year old

child, please contact: Daina Cepure Sain, Blue Valley Community Action, 402-646-2002 or Connie Biaggio, Seward Public Schools, 402-643-2968, ext. 213 or 402-643-2941.

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; 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!



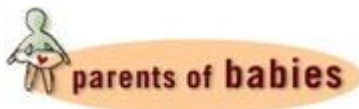
An Important Message to All

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

2015-2016 CALENDAR

SEWARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

JULY

21-24 New Teacher Training at ESU 6

AUGUST

6 New Teacher Workday
 7 New Teacher Orientation
 10-12 Professional Development Days
 13 First Student Day - Dismiss 1:30

SEPTEMBER

7 No School - Labor Day
 21 Professional Development Day - No Students

OCTOBER

9 Elementary Planning Day--No Elem. Students
 15 End of 1st Quarter - 44 Days
 16 No School
 19 Professional Development Day - No Students

NOVEMBER

25 Professional Development for staff until 2:15. No Students.
 26-27 Thanksgiving Vacation

DECEMBER

22 End 2nd Quarter - 43 Days -- 1:30 Dismissal
 23-27 NSAA Competition Moratorium
 23-31 Winter Vacation

JANUARY

1-4 Winter Vacation
 4 Professional Development Day - No Students
 5 School Resumes
 18 No Elementary School

FEBRUARY

19 No School
 22 Professional Development Day - No Students

MARCH

7 Elementary Planning Day--No Elem. Students
 10 End of 3rd Quarter - 46 Days
 11 No School
 14 Professional Development Day - No Students
 25 No School
 28 No School

APRIL

29 Elementary Planning Day - No Elementary Students

MAY

13 Last Day Scheduled (subject to change) - 11:30 Dismissal
 End of 4th Quarter - 42 Days
 15 Graduation
 16 Professional Development Day
 30 Memorial Day



PARENTS - PLEASE READ BELOW

* Snow Days will be added back into the calendar. The last day of school is determined by the number of snow days used. The last scheduled day of school is May 13. The last day may change depending upon how many scheduled days are canceled. If one snow day is used it would be May 16, two snow days = May 17, and so on. Other than rare instances, we will try to complete school by Memorial Day, but in order to do so, other calendar changes could be necessary.

AUGUST 2015							SEPTEMBER 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1			1	2	3	4	5
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30			
30	31												
OCTOBER 2015							NOVEMBER 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					
DECEMBER 2015							JANUARY 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5							2
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30
							31						
FEBRUARY 2016							MARCH 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5			1	2	3	4	5
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
28	29						27	28	29	30	31		
APRIL 2016							MAY 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31				

- End of Quarter
- ◆ Professional Development - No Students
- No School/No Students
- No Elementary School

Visit the school district website for calendar event information at: www.sewardpublicschools.org

Parent-Teacher Conferences

High School - 5:30 to 7:30 PM
 Tues., Sept 8 Mon., Nov. 16
 Mon., Feb. 1 Tues., April 5

Middle School - 4:00 to 8:00 PM
 Mon., Sept. 28 - Grades 5-8
 Tues., Feb. 16 - Grades 5-8

Elementary School - 4:00 to 8:00 PM
 Tues., Oct. 13 Thurs., Oct. 15
 Tues., March 15 Thur., March 17