

# BLUEJAY NEWSLETTER

MARCH/APRIL 2021

## SHS BAND NEWS

There are many events for our instrumental music groups for the remainder of the school year. Twelve SHS students were selected for Conference Honor Band on Monday, March 22, in York. We are so glad to be able to have our first in-person honor band this year! Congratulations to Ella Hubach, Mason Larson, Collin Warren, Alivia Hartmann, Julius Justice, Ellen Klintworth, Joshua Jurchen, Eli Adams, Michaela Broadwell, Declan Jensen, Matthew Schultz, and Xander Foulk.

District Music Contest will be held at Norris High School on Friday, April 23. Due to restrictions related to the pandemic, large ensembles are not permitted to perform. However, all students currently enrolled in band ensembles will attend and perform as part of at least one small (24 people or less) ensemble. Although it will be different, we're excited for the opportunity to explore performing in a variety of ensembles. The Jazz Band will also perform at the Bluejay Bash on Saturday, April 24. Our Finale Concert will be Monday, May 10, at 7:00, and will feature all bands and student performances from the District Music Contest. The Symphonic Band will also play at graduation.

Auditions for next year's ensembles will be coming up as well. Color Guard auditions are April 6-8 from 3:45-5:30pm each day. DrumLine audition music will be given out in the next couple weeks, and workshops and placement days are April 13 and 15 from 6-7pm. Section leader interviews will be held the weeks of April 26 and May 3 by appointment. Auditions for Jazz Band and Wind Ensemble for next school year will be set soon. Please contact Mrs. Kenney for information about any of these upcoming events.

# NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTION

## WHEN

**SUNDAY, MARCH 28TH, 2PM**

## WHERE

**532 NORTHERN HEIGHTS DRIVE  
SEWARD, NE**

## MORE INFORMATION

HS Theater

## DANGERS OF E-CIGS

Although e-cigarettes may be marketed as a safer way to smoke, they're not. E-cigs, vapors, or "vapes" as they're sometimes called, are simply a different way to put nicotine into the bloodstream. And they are illegal for anyone under 18 years old. Let your teen know these facts, especially if you suspect that their friends might be "vaping".

## FOOD SERVICE HELP WANTED

Seward Public Schools is currently accepting applications for food service positions for the current school year as well as the 2021-22 school year starting in August. Many of our food service positions have hours that begin after school starts and are completed before school ends. Our food service department plays an important role in helping our students reach their full educational potential, please consider joining our team!

Applications can be picked up at the District Office at 410 South St.

## HOW TO INCREASE CONFIDENCE

Feeling confident can pave the way for high schooler's future success, both in and out of the classroom. Take a look at the tips below to boost your students' self-esteem.

### Stay Positive

Encourage your teen with positive statements like "I know you will ace your test today" and also share with them what gives you confidence like "I was a little nervous about my

presentation at work, but I felt good because I had backed up my points with solid information.

#### *Give them responsibility*

Put your teenager in charge of home projects. Accomplishing small tasks successfully and seeing family members benefit for their efforts can boost their confidence.

#### *Focus on what your teen can do*

Shine a spotlight on what your student is good at. For example, if they are good at explaining complicated ideas in simple terms. Ask them to help another sibling with their homework or perhaps teach the family how to play a challenging board game or use different technology applications.

## BLUEJAY LEADERSHIP TEAM

Bluejay Leadership Team elections will be held in late April. Here are the basics:

- Bluejay Leadership Team members will apply and be elected by members of their class.
- Each class will have four representatives, except seniors who will have five, creating a 17 member team.
- This Bluejay Leadership Team of 17 will elect a senior member to serve as Leadership Team President/School Board representative.
- Each class will elect a leader to serve as a School Improvement Team representative.
- Clubs and teams may appoint one at-large member. These are non-voting, fluid members.
- This team will meet monthly or any time student input is needed for topics such as school safety or sportsmanship.
- All 9th, 10th, and 11th graders will receive an email with this information and an application form. Applications are due by April 15th.

## SPRING 2021 AP EXAM INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

It's exam time for students enrolled in Advanced Placement (A.P.) courses at Seward High School. We strongly recommend that students enrolled in these courses complete the A.P. experience by taking the corresponding exam. The exam cost is \$95. Successful performance on an A.P. exam can lead to affordable college credit. To identify specifically what score a student would need to receive in order to obtain college credit at a specific post-secondary institution go to [apstudents.org/creditpolicy](https://apstudents.org/creditpolicy). Research has found that participation in Advanced Placement courses, and even taking the A.P. exam as a component of these courses, is highly correlated with success at the college-level. Students can sign up with Ms. Baker in the counseling office. The \$95 exam fee is due to Mary Russell in the Seward High School main office. Make checks out to Seward High School. The tests will be ordered in March. Students must have the test paid for before March 17.



Course

Exam Date

Exam Time

Calculus AB

May 4

8:00 a.m.

Human Geography

May 4

12:00 p.m.

U.S. History

May 6

8:00 a.m.

Computer Science A

May 6

12:00 p.m.

European History

May 7

12:00 p.m.

Biology

May 14

8:00 a.m.

Environmental Science

May 14

12:00 p.m.

Statistics

May 17

12:00 p.m.

## YEARBOOKS

Students interested in purchasing a 2020-2021 yearbook need to go to Josten's website (<http://www.jostensyearbooks.com/>). Follow the instructions on the website and you will be able to login and make a purchase.

## PROM

The junior/senior Prom is scheduled for Saturday, May 1 , in the high school gym. Students must be academically eligible to attend. Any student requesting to have a non-SHS student attend with them needs to complete a required form in advance. The form will be available in the main office two weeks prior to Prom. All community service hours for seniors need to be completed by 4.

We encourage you to take the time to talk to your student about making good choices before, during, and after the dance. We want our students to make good decisions, be safe, and have a positive experience. This is a great teachable moment.

## **STUDENT FEES AND FINES/NEGATIVE LUNCH BALANCES**

Please make sure your student pays all of his or her class fees and fines as soon as possible. This will help expedite the end-of-the-year checkout process. It is also appreciated if you could help your student(s) to maintain a positive lunch account balance. Your support is greatly appreciated.

## **JUNIORS: IT'S TIME TO START THINKING ABOUT COLLEGE CAMPUS VISITS!**

Students are encouraged to start looking at colleges during their junior year so they can narrow choices by the time they are seniors. Below are some tips to consider as you begin this process. Please contact Mr. Fields, Ms. Baker, Mrs. Jill Johnson, or Mr. Axt if you have questions or need support as you begin this process.

- Explore your career interests: Before you determine which colleges you want to visit, think about your career interests and then research colleges that fit your interests.
- Check out college websites: You'll find admission requirements, academic and social information, and campus photos or a virtual tour.
- Schedule your visits at least two weeks in advance: Ask for appointments with an admissions representative, financial aid counselor, and a faculty member in your area of interest. Planning these visits early will increase the likelihood that you will be able to meet the individuals you need to see while on campus.
- Be mindful of your high school responsibilities while planning visits: Please attempt to schedule college visits on days when school is not in session whenever possible.
- Visit your top college choices while the schools are in session: You won't get the true flavor of the school during breaks or finals week.
- Additional Helpful Resources Can Be Found at [EducationQuest.org](http://EducationQuest.org).

## **BASIC POST-SECONDARY PLANNING VOCABULARY**

Grade Point Average (GPA): A system to evaluate students' academic performance based on their grades throughout high school.

PSAT/NMSQT: A standardized test that will prepare you for the SAT college entrance exam. If you take it during your junior year, it may also qualify you for a National Merit Scholarship.

ACT and/or SAT: College entrance exams required for college admission to most schools. You should take the exam(s) in the spring of your junior year and again in the fall of your senior year.

Accuplacer: A testing assessment of the required skills for students entering college. While the ACT/SAT are most commonly associated with four-year post-secondary institutions, the Accuplacer test typically relates to institutions like community colleges and trade schools.

ASVAB: Multiple-aptitude battery that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success in the military.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Completing a FAFSA application is often the first step in applying for student financial aid that is available every year, including scholarships, grants, low-interest loans, and work study programs.

Tuition: The amount of money a college charges for courses you will take.

Fees: The amount the college charges for services like computer labs, the fitness center, and career services.

Room and Board: If you live on campus, the college will charge you to live in a residence hall and for the meals you eat in the college cafeteria.

## CLASS OF 2021 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

The 136th annual Seward High School commencement ceremony will be held Sunday, May 16, at 2:00 p.m. in the south gym at Seward High School. Students are to report to the north gym by 1:15 p.m. with cap, gown, and attire appropriate (business casual) for the event. While in the north gym, graduates will receive final instructions regarding graduation procedures.

Parents/guardians/friends of the family will be able to take pictures of the Class of 2021 one last time before the ceremony begins. The entire ceremony will last approximately 45 minutes from start to finish. Students who do not plan to participate in the commencement ceremony should report to Mr. Axt as soon as possible, but no later than Friday, April 30. This information is being provided as early as possible for family planning purposes. Additional information regarding the ceremony will be provided in subsequent newsletters.

## OTHER IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION FOR THE CLASS OF 2021

- Senior Community Service Hours: Seniors must have their community service hours turned into the office and approved by April 28th.



- Honors Night: Tuesday, May 11 (Business Casual Dress – Please no jeans or shorts)
- Last Day for Seniors: Wednesday, May 12
- Graduation Rehearsal: Wednesday, May 12 (Mandatory for all seniors who are planning on participating in graduation ceremonies)
- Senior Skip Day: To eliminate any potential misunderstanding, the school does not approve of any senior skip day while school is in session. Seniors who have participated in a skip day will not be excused and will be assigned a consequence. If parents of seniors call the attendance office, they will be told that the school does not sanction a skip day.
- Fines: Students who owe any fines will not receive their diploma until the fine has been cleared.

Diplomas: This is a reminder that diplomas are awarded after a senior student has completed all activities associated with the high school. Students who have completed all activities following the graduation ceremony will receive their diploma shortly thereafter. Students still involved in activities such as state track, school trips, etc. will receive their formal diploma after their final school activity following graduation.

## PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

The final round of parent/teacher conferences is scheduled for Monday, April 12th from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Parent/Teacher conferences provide an excellent opportunity for you to meet your son and/or daughter's teachers, get updates on their academic progress, and obtain other information that will help you to support your student in the journey through high school.

Parent/Teacher Conference Parent Sessions - 6:00 for incoming freshmen (current 8th Graders and 7:00 current freshmen): Special program will be held for the parents of freshman students and Incoming Freshmen students the evening of the April 12th parent/teacher conferences. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend. The presentations will be in the new theater and will last approximately 35-40 minutes each. School staff will share information regarding a wide array of topics related to the high school experience and post-secondary planning. Don't miss this valuable opportunity!

## FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR, MR. JOHN MOODY

It's hard to believe we are talking about the spring sports season already. Let's all hope for improved weather! Each event and each location that Seward High team's will compete at will have specific COVID-19 protocols that are based on current DHM's, health department directives, NSAA requirements, and local school policy. It is important that we know and abide by the rules established to protect all involved in the event. We all need to serve as positive role models by following protocols at each event. Check our website

<https://www.sewardpublicschools.org/vnews/display.v/ART/5f47db1a913c2>

for weekly protocol updates. Below is a section from the Bluejay Student/Parent Activity Handbook regarding our procedures to promote productive and positive relationships between you as parents and our coaches at Seward High School. This is a critical partnership as we seek to create positive experiences for our students involved in activities and athletics. We look forward to seeing you at Bluejay events throughout the spring!

## RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTS AND COACHES/SPONSORS

Both parenting and coaching are very difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding between coaches and parents, both are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide a more positive experience for everyone.

Parents have the right to know the expectations placed on them and their children. Coaches and sponsors have the right to know that if parents have a concern, they will discuss it with the coach at the appropriate time and place.

### Communicating with your children

- Make sure that your children know that win or lose, you love them, appreciate their efforts and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without fear of failure. Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.
- Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship and actual skill level.
- Be helpful but don't coach them. It's tough not to, but it is a lot tougher for the child to be flooded with advice and critical instruction.
- Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying," to be working to improve their skills and attitudes. Help them develop the feeling for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.
- Try not to relive your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure. If they are comfortable with you winning or losing, then they are on their way to maximum enjoyment.
- Don't compete with the coach. If your child is receiving mixed messages from two different authority figures, he or she will likely become disenchanted.
- Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitude of your child with other members of the team.
- Get to know the coach(es). Then you can be assured that his or her philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his or her leadership.
- Always remember that children can exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before overreacting.

### Communicating with the coach

- Communication you should expect from your child's coach includes:



- Expectations the coach has for your child
- Locations and times of all practices and contests
- Team requirements
- Procedure should your child be injured
- Discipline that results in the denial of your child's participation
- Communication coaches expect from parents
  - Concerns expressed directly to the coach
  - Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
  - Specific concerns in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations
- Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:
  - The treatment of your child, mentally, and physically
  - Ways to help your child improve
  - Concerns about your child's behavior
  - Injuries or health concerns. Report injuries to the coach immediately!! Tell the coach about any health concerns that may make it necessary to limit your child's participation or require assistance from trainers. Students are sometimes unwilling to tell coaches when they are injured, so please make sure the coach is told.
- Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:
  - Playing time
  - Team strategy
  - Play calling
  - Other student-athletes
- Appropriate procedures for discussing concerns with the coaches:
  - Call to set up an appointment with the coach
  - Do not confront a coach before or after a contest or practice (these can be emotional times for all parties involved and do not promote resolution)
- What should a parent do if the meeting with the coach did not provide satisfactory resolution?
  - Call the athletic director to set up a meeting with the athletic director, coach, and parent present.
  - At this meeting, an appropriate next step can be determined, if necessary.

## AFTER SCHOOL STUDY GROUP

Students have access to tutoring on Monday-Thursday, from 3:45-4:45 p.m. in the Seward High School library. Students have access to Seward High School staff members as well as Concordia University students studying to become future teachers. Tutors are able to assist students in a wide-array of course areas. Students needing computer access are also welcome to attend.

# SUICIDE: RISK FACTORS AND IMPLICATIONS

No school district is immune to the rise in suicidal behaviors seen across the country. The information below is intended to help you understand the risks and what we all can do to help our students to stay safe. The Center for Disease Control reports the following statistics:

- For youth between the ages of 10 and 24, suicide is the third leading cause of death.
- Approximately 4,600 lives are lost each year.
- The top three methods used in suicides of young people include firearms (45%), suffocation (40%), and poisoning (8%).
- More young people survive suicide attempts than actually die.
- Each year, approximately 157,000 youth between the ages of 10 and 24 receive medical care for self-inflicted injuries at Emergency Departments across the U.S.
- Boys are more likely than girls to die from suicide.
- Of the reported suicides in the 10-24 age group, 81% of the deaths were males and 19% were females.
- Girls, however, are more likely to report attempting suicide than boys.

Some of the risk factors for exhibiting suicidal behavior:

- Loss of a significant other
- Problems at school
- Substance abuse
- Previous suicide of a peer or family member
- Access to weapons or other means of harming self

Students who are having suicidal thoughts may exhibit a variety of symptoms including, but not limited to:

- Significant changes in behavior such as a change in appearance, changes in grades, withdrawing from friends, changes in sleeping/eating habits.
- Depression and other mental health issues
- Family and personal stress
- Questions regarding sexual orientation
- Appears sad or hopeless
- Self-inflicted injuries
- Saying goodbye to friends and family
- Making suicidal threats: either direct, "I want to die" or indirect, "Things would be better if I wasn't here."

*It is important to remember the signs and risk factors listed above are generalities. Not all students who contemplate or die by suicide will exhibit these kinds of symptoms AND not all students who exhibit these behaviors are suicidal.*

What can I do to keep my child safe?

- Ask. Talking about suicide does not make a student suicidal. Asking if someone is having suicidal thoughts gives him/her permission to talk about it. Asking sends the message that you are concerned and want to help.
- Take signs seriously. Studies have found that more than 75% of people who die by suicide showed some of the warning signs in the weeks or months prior to their death.



- Get help. If you have concerns that your child is suicidal, seek immediate help from a mental health practitioner. Suicidal students need to be evaluated by an expert in assessing risk and developing treatment plans. Parents can contact Seward High School counselors for a listing of resources or suggestions. Parents may also want to consult with their insurance company to obtain a list of mental health providers covered by their policy. When you call to make an appointment, tell the person on the phone that your child is suicidal and needs to be seen as soon as possible.
- Limit access to weapons, prescription drugs, medications and other means.
- Reassure your child that life can get better. Many suicidal people have lost all hope that life can improve. They may have difficulty problem solving even simple issues. Remind your child that no matter how bad things are, the problem can be worked out. Offer your help.
- Listen. Avoid making statements such as “I know what it’s like” or “I understand.” Instead, make statements such as “help me understand what life is like for you right now.”
- Report. If bullying or cyberbullying is playing a role in your student’s feelings of hopelessness, a report needs to be made to a Seward High School administrator or counselor so that the school can intervene.

Know and be ready to use emergency resources:

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-Talk (1-800-273-8255)

Local Police: 402-643-3002 (Dispatch) or 911

For more information about depression and suicide:

American Foundation of Suicide Prevention: [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

National Mental Health Association: [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)



## SEWARD HIGH SCHOOL

 Facebook  @SewardBlueJays

Activity Calendar: [www.centralconference.org](http://www.centralconference.org)

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 [firstname.lastname@seward...](mailto:firstname.lastname@seward...)

 (402) 643-2988

 [sewardpublicschools.org](http://sewardpublicschools.org)