

Santa Fe Trail Junior High School

October Family Newsletter
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Better Together!

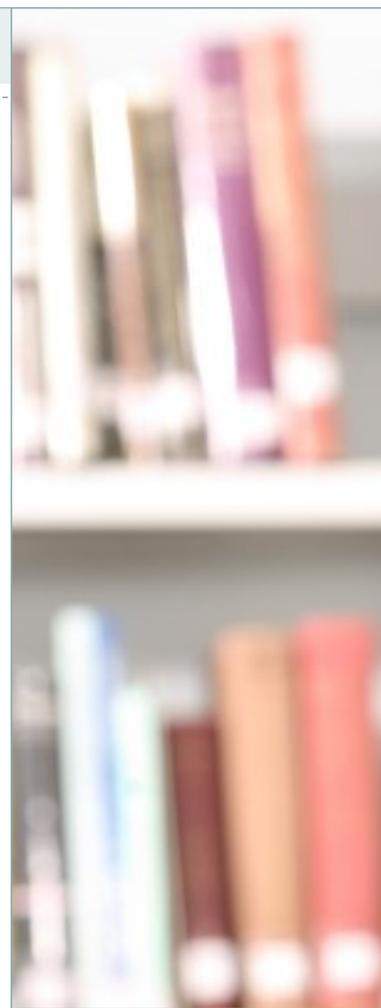
SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Last Spring staff members at our school, along with district and BOE support, began designing our multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for our Chargers with the goal of increasing student achievement in the areas of reading and math. Their efforts continued into the summer with the development of a school schedule that dedicated time during the school day to teach our students who are performing below expected levels at their current level of reading and math performance. The first six weeks of school have been spent administering the assessments, analyzing the resulting data, and developing schedules and small group class lists. We are officially ready to begin our small group MTSS instruction on Monday. This means that most of our students who scored below level on their MAP or Fastbridge assessments will receive an additional 25-minutes of instruction beyond their normal classes without extending their school day at all. We will utilize Charger Time to teach these students in MTSS groups. If you have questions about our MTSS program or your child's participation, please never hesitate to reach out to JTesta@usd434.us. I am here for you, as well as your children.

As part of our school district's accreditation process, and because we invite your voice as a parent, we are ready to establish our SFTJH site council for this year. Characteristics of an effective school site council include but are not limited to:

- Focus on improving student achievement for all students
- Maintain a high degree of collaboration
- Demonstrate good problem-solving skills

Site councils exist to monitor school performance, assess needs, set priorities, identify issues and barriers, make recommendations, and advocate for equal education for all children. This year our site council will be comprised of parents, local business community members, staff, school administrators, and students. Parents, students, staff, and business community members can become involved by emailing JTesta@usd434.us. Please include your full name and phone number in the email. Our first meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 20 at 7:00 pm. At this meeting we will establish our meeting calendar for the rest of the school year based on the availability of our members.



Positive Office Referrals

Staff members have been busy noticing and celebrating positive student choices by writing positive office referrals. We are celebrating whole-class and individual endeavors in the following areas:

- ♦ Cooperation
- ♦ Highly Active Learners
- ♦ Eagerness to Give Effort
- ♦ Academic Success
- ♦ Ready and Willing to Learn
- ♦ Respect
- ♦ Self-Motivation
- ♦ Goal Focused

Whole-class acknowledgements are celebrated with a special treat from Ms. Testa and a 'shout-out' during our morning assembly. Individual acknowledgements are mailed home to families for your personal celebrations.

To celebrate a staff member send an email to JTesta@usd434.us Celebrations of staff will be shared at our all-school morning assembly!



ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES

Our volleyball teams wrapped up their 2021 season on Saturday. The seventh grade team brought home third place medals in the Pioneer league tournament while our eighth grade team finished in fourth place. Our football teams and our cross country team will continue to compete this month. We encourage you to follow along with athletic updates on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CACSFTJH>. We try to post as many pictures as we can for each event.

To participate in KSHSAA activities, including sports and KAY, students must maintain academic eligibility standards. Any student who has less than a 60% average, cumulative for the quarter, in more than two subjects will be ineligible for the next week. Weeks will run Sunday 6:00 a.m. through Sunday 5:59 a.m. Information about your child's academic grades can be found in PowerSchool. If you need support in accessing PowerSchool please do call our school office at 1.800.836.9525 between 8:00 a.m. and 3:45 p.m.

Mr. Bachura, Ms. Jarrett, and Ms. Testa will begin designing our Student Council with a goal of having elections in October. Students will receive membership information at our morning meetings in the weeks to come. Please encourage your child to take an active role in our school by becoming a candidate to represent his/her homeroom class as a StuCo rep.

BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our team met last week to establish building goal areas for the school year.

1. Establish Vision for School Redesign
2. Multi-Tiered System of Support—effectiveness
3. Student Improvement Team Planning and Process
4. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
5. Establish a StuCo
6. Establish a Site Council

BUILDING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING TEAM

Our team recently met to begin to understand the needs our students have in regard to social emotional learning. We designed and implemented a student survey in order to better understand the levels which our students are connected to school staff. Research shows that students who feel a genuine sense of belonging at school are more likely to do well in school, stay in school, and make healthy choices. This sense of belonging is often described as school connectedness. In coming weeks we will review this data and plan efforts to increase the school connectedness for our students.



PLEASE WELCOME NURSE SAMANTHA CAROTHERS



PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Our parent-teacher conferences will be held on Monday and Tuesday, October 25 and 26 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. In the coming days we will design a digital sign up option for families to coordinate their own conference schedule as they choose. We will use SignUpGenius to do this. Sign up links will be sent out the week of 10/11 via email from Ms. Testa. Please do watch for that email and sign up to meet with each of your child's teachers as soon as possible.

Parent-teacher conferences are designed to help you understand what your child is learning at school, their progress both academically and social-emotionally, and what you can do to support them. They are also designed to provide you an opportunity to share input you have regarding your child as his/her first educator. If your child is having particular difficulties, parent-teacher conferences give you and the teacher time to plan how you can both help them best.

We encourage our students to attend each parent-teacher conference and to be an active participant in the conference, too. We purposefully do not hold any after school activities on parent-teacher conference days so our students can be available to attend.

Teachers are already preparing for conferences. Below are some questions you might consider asking your child's teachers. Of course, feel free to bring your own questions!

1. How will you respond when my child struggles or excels in class?
2. What are my child's strengths and weaknesses?
3. How can we further support our child's school success at home?
4. How are creativity and innovative thinking used in your classroom?
5. What am I not asking but should be?

