



Charger Connection

December 2018

Pro Football Player Tyler Lockett should have attended SFT

Like many of you, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steve Pegram follows Twitter to keep up to speed on new educational happenings and hot topics, as well as state and national politics. And occasionally, he comes across a tweet that strikes a nerve with him – sometimes positive and sometimes negative.

And the following tweet from Seattle Seahawks Wide Receiver Tyler Lockett (@TDLockett2) did just that: “I wish schools would teach us the essentials to life. Budgeting, how to file taxes, the process of buying homes, cooking, life decisions, investing, generational wealth, single to married, soon to be mom or dad, and credit. These should be basic requirements before choosing a major.”

The tweet reinforced the importance of what the Santa Fe Trail School District is doing with its Gemini School Redesign project – which was launched last year in district schools. It is focused on social-emotional learning, student-centered buildings, and building relationships with families, businesses, industries and community members.

For instance, SFT High School students will be regularly learning real-world skills through 13 special flex days, called Charger Days, including:

- Cooking/grilling
- Civic engagement and volunteering
- Career and college preparation
- Marriage and family
- Relationships
- Social-emotional learning and character development
- Insurance
- Auto/home loans, banking, financial literacy
- Fire safety
- Health and wellness
- Technology skills and social media etiquette

“I visited with some of the seniors who recently participated in a financial literacy simulation, which mimicked real-life scenarios,” Pegram said. “It was intriguing to hear how many felt overwhelmed by the number of responsibilities they have to plan

for. It is imperative schools prepare kids not only academically but also with the skills for future life readiness.”

Additionally, knowing students learn best when they have strong bonds with their peers and adults, the district is focusing on helping to nurture these relationships throughout the school community.

“These relationships are being fostered through the Overbrook Attendance Center (K-3) families and Carbondale Attendance Center (4-8) Charger Buddies, where Junior High students mentor and interact with the fourth- through sixth-grade students,” Pegram said. “At the OAC, staff is working with a specific group of students from all grade levels on various projects. At both schools, relationships are built by working together on building activities, community service, mentoring between younger and older students and even academic tutoring. These activities have fostered a level of caring that goes beyond the classroom.”

Not only is SFT focused on the essentials to life and relationships, but it is also taking steps to make all students a leader by implementing the principles of the The Leader in Me® program. Through this, students are learning and practicing The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People®.

“We hope leadership in our schools will then transfer to families and communities,” Pegram said. “The focus of schools has traditionally been on achieving a grade or passing a test. However, it may be more important to empower students to find their own happiness and successes in life. And I think Mr. Lockett would have been proud to have attended SFT. It’s a great time to be a CHARGER!”



Students learn how to do personal vehicle maintenance during Charger Days at SFT High School.

A message from the Superintendent

The district has received the ACT scores for graduates of the class of 2018 – and as the superintendent of schools at Santa Fe Trail, I couldn’t be happier.

When compared to the past five years' trends, this class had the highest participation since 2014, at 66 percent. Furthermore, this class scored above the state average in all but one area. The ACT consists of four curriculum-based tests of educational development in English, mathematics, reading, and science. These tests are designed to measure the skills needed for success in the first year of college coursework.

Through collaborative research with post-secondary institutions, the ACT has set college-readiness benchmark scores, which determine the minimum score students need on the

STF class of 2018 ACT scores compared to the state average.		
Subject	District	State
English	20.4	21.0
Mathematics	21.6	21.1
Reading	23.4	22.3
Science	21.6	21.5
Composite	21.9	21.6

subject-area test to pass with a C or higher in their coursework. Our district data shows the class of 2018 was more college-ready in all four areas tested, as compared to the state average. It also indicated continual improvements in mathematics for each of the five years, with the composite score increasing to 21.6 from 20.2 in 2014.

It is my hope with the instructional practices now in place in our district that

future scores will continue to increase above the state averages. However, as the superintendent who is heading out the door at the end of the 2018-19 school year, I am proud of all the efforts this district has made to better serve its students. These results are a great going-away present! It indeed is a great day to be a CHARGER!

Cordially,



Dr. Steve Pegram
Superintendent of Schools

The Leader in Me update

The Leader in Me® leadership and life skills program for students was introduced in the September issue of Charger Connection. Because this program is an area of focus for the district, we will provide updates in this newsletter on what the students are learning.

With the idea every child can be a leader, Overbrook and Carbondale Attendance Center teachers and students are focusing on: leadership, responsibility, communication, teamwork, creativity, among others.

“The Leader in Me® provides a logical, sequential and balanced process to help schools proactively design the culture that reflects their vision of the ideal school,” said Kristy Hamit, CAC principal.

Content from The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People® is a key component of the overall The Leader in Me® process. OAC students have also started focusing on the following Seven Habits: Be Proactive, Begin with the End in Mind, Put First Things First, Think Win-Win, Seek First to Understand, Synergize and Sharpen the Saw.

“Becoming a Leader in Me school is a long process,” said Hamit. “The changes this year will include students knowing the language of the Seven Habits and having more opportunities to be leaders. In the building, we painted murals and quotes on the wall to motivate and encouraging our students.”



Santa Fe Trail part of consortium awarded \$3.2 million literacy grant

Santa Fe Trail families will soon benefit from a new grant-funded project aimed at advancing the reading and writing skills of learners from birth through 12th grade.

SFT is part of a consortium of seven districts awarded a three-year grant totaling more than \$3.2 million from the Literacy Network of Kansas (LiNK), a project of the U.S. Department of Education’s Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program. Consortium districts worked with Greenbush – The Southeast Kansas Education Service Center to develop the grant proposal. One component of the grant is professional development for instructional coaches.

“The purpose of this project is to invest in local teachers – to give them the opportunity to hone their skills even further,” said Monica Murnan, project director with Greenbush. “One way we can do that is to ensure teachers have an instructional coach they can count on to give them feedback, show them something new, or help them work through a challenge.”

Each district within the consortium developed a literacy plan that will support students and their families in a variety of ways, based upon a study of local needs. In some districts, community agencies will provide free books and family reading activities, while others will work with preschool children to prepare for kindergarten.

Throughout the three-year grant cycle, Greenbush will work with the State LiNK team to develop a network of literacy resources for educators and families. These resources will impact reading and writing at the state, regional and community levels, as well as providing professional learning opportunities for teachers and families.

Eight grantees were selected from a competitive application process, according to the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE). Kansas applied for the grant with the assistance of the KU Center on Research and Learning. The eight that were selected – four individual districts and four consortia – represent a total of 32 Kansas districts and 88,000 children.

LiNK will help schools meet KSDE’s vision for education: Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

“More importantly over the next three years, Santa Fe Trail hopes to build capacity within our district that will then impact students birth to 12th grade in all areas of literacy,” said Faith Flory, Santa Fe Trail curriculum coordinator.

Calendar of Events

Vist: <https://www.usd434.org/vcalendar/>