



SFT high school students practice leadership skills by guiding students through the checkerboard. This was one of many activities that took place on Charger Day, a flex day where students learned real-world skills.

Creating engaging experiences for our families and community

Last month, the Carbondale Attendance Center (CAC) invited members of the community from 23 career fields – many of whom were Santa Fe Trail (SFT) graduates – to visit with students during its third annual Career Day.

“Each year, thanks to the hard work of Gretta Hug, we host a Career Day,” said Kristy Hamit, CAC assistant principal. “Many community members come in and share about their occupation, the training required, etc. with fourth- through eighth-grade students.”

Similarly, over at SFT High School, for its first-ever “Charger Day,” students learned a variety of life skills, including the basics of getting a car loan from three expert community members – two car salespersons and an insurance agent.

“We did a practice run this year, but we plan to have 14 Charger Days next year,” said Patrick Graham, SFT High School principal. “It’s basically a

flex day where our students learn real-world skills, like using a job search engine and learning CPR. Next year, we plan to add in community service, as well as other life skills, like how to write a check and how to do your taxes.”

These activities are examples of the extra steps SFT took this year, as part of its strategic plan, to ensure families and the community were more engaged in activities, events and career exploration opportunities.

The CAC also invited the community to assist or participate in many activities, including the Student Council-sponsored Thanksgiving food drive, the annual spring art show and the Veterans Day assembly.

“The district PTO has provided great volunteer and engagement opportunities for the elementary and middle schools,” Hamit said. “For example, this

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A message from the Superintendent



As we celebrate another successful school year, this gives us the opportunity to think about issues we will address in the next school year. In fact, the Santa Fe Trail (SFT) School District is already preparing for our upcoming summer activities, the school redesign program, school safety and school finance.

When summer vacation begins on Tuesday, May 29, the Carbondale, Overbrook and Scranton Attendance Centers (CAC, OAC and SAC) will begin serving summer meals – breakfast and/or lunch. SFT High School will begin its program on Wednesday, May 30. Serving days are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, to align with the CAC and high school summer conditioning programs. There is no cost for these meals, regardless of the ability to pay. We hope our patrons will take advantage of this program. Details are on the district website.

The summer conditioning program – which includes running, agility and weightlifting – will begin on Monday, May 28 (Memorial Day). The session times for high school and CAC students will be posted.

During the summer months, the high school and OAC will be finalizing their plans for the school redesign program. Both building's designs will focus on teaching students practical skills, social/emotional awareness, and implementing project-based activities, to provide students with the skills necessary for facing real-world events in their future lives.

Additionally, we will be addressing several school safety issues for the upcoming school year. We will be looking at training for staff, adding more personnel and enhancing security measures, to name a few.

The issue of school finance also should be determined this summer. The ruling from the Kansas Supreme Court and how the Legislature reacts to the ruling could provide some interesting times this summer. As always, we will keep up with these happenings and report to you what we're hearing.

These are just a few of the events taking place this summer. As events take place, we will attempt to get them on the school district calendar, located on our website.

Cordially,

Dr. Steve Pegram, Superintendent of Schools

Charger Calendar of Events

⚡ June 4 – Crosswind Summer Camp Begins at SAC

⚡ June 4 – Grades 7 & 8 WU Tech Summer Camp

⚡ June 11 – Grades 9 & 10 WU Tech Summer Camp

*Tech Camp Bus Schedule (both sessions)
Pick-up: 7:30 a.m. SAC, 7:45 a.m. OAC, and 8 a.m. CAC.
Return: 4:30 p.m. CAC, 4:45 p.m. OAC, and 5 p.m. SAC.*

⚡ July 23 - KAY Leadership Camp & FBLA Summer Leadership Conference

⚡ Aug. 8 & 9 – District enrollment

⚡ Aug. 20 – First day of school for 2018-2019

All school district events can be found on the district website, www.usd434.org.

Santa Fe Trail 2018 Teachers of the Year

No one person has a greater impact on the education of a child than does the teacher who creates the learning environment where children flourish and grow. This year, Santa Fe Trail (SFT) School District recognizes the following teachers who have gone above and beyond their regular duties to truly make an impact on our students, the district and the community. Nominations for the annual award are made from building administrators.

Gretta Hug: Santa Fe Trail Junior High School

Gretta Hug teaches reading at the SFT Junior High School. She began her career as a substitute teacher in 1984 and was hired as a full-time teacher the following year. Hug consistently goes above and beyond teaching reading to her students. “She is so active with her students and works to make true relationships with them that last well beyond eighth-grade graduation,” said Michael Flax, SFT Junior High School principal. Hug is also involved with students through extracurricular activities and school events. Hug is not afraid to advocate for students and faculty, and she is open to building administration when she believes change, whether in direction or decision, is necessary. “She is such a good person, and others benefit from her participation as a team player and her positive approach to students and faculty,” Flax added. Hug’s husband Ed also teaches at SFT Junior High. They have four children, with the youngest graduating from SFT High School this year.

Elizabeth Kraus: Overbrook Attendance Center

Elizabeth Kraus is a first-grade teacher at Overbrook Attendance Center (OAC) and she has been in the SFT district for more than 20 years. “Kraus is very kindhearted and goes out of her way to make sure her students have what they need both at home and school,” said Dr. David Fernkopf, OAC principal. “She possesses an exceptional ability to connect with students.” Kraus exceeds what is expected of her, and the students love having Kraus as a teacher. Outside of the classroom, Kraus serves on a variety of committees including Site Council and the Student Improvement Team. She is always willing to help other teachers and has mentored teachers in the district. She is continuously self-reflecting and has attended numerous training sessions and in-services to make sure she is up to date on the latest research or best practices. Kraus and her husband, Lee, live in the district and have four adult children, all graduates of SFT.

Derek Terry: Santa Fe Trail High School

“Derek Terry is a great choice for High School Teacher of the Year for many reasons,” said Patrick Graham, SFT High School principal. “He has a ton of energy and excitement for his students in a content area that can be scary for many—public speaking,” he added. Terry works very hard on building relationships and provides a safe learning environment where students can overcome this fear. Terry not only makes a difference in his classroom, but his role in debate, forensics, the school play and musical, and video production has him reaching all students in our school. He began his career as a paraprofessional in the district and worked to earn his degree while serving Santa Fe Trail students. Terry and his wife, Ashtyn, have two daughters who both attend school in the district.



Santa Fe Trail School District’s Teachers of the Year (left to right): Gretta Hug, Derek Terry and Elizabeth Kraus.

Dr. Steve Pegram, SFT superintendent of schools, recognizes the importance of these teachers to the district, stating, “United by the desire to help students learn and be their best possible selves, our teachers play a crucial role in our community, and we are so grateful for the high level of teaching and service provided by this year’s award winners.”



In the News

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In an effort to keep the community informed, the *Charger Connection* goes to every home in the Santa Fe Trail School District, even those without students in our schools. Thank you for your support of your community's schools!

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Our mission is to support individual student needs in preparation for successful lifework.

Creating engaging experiences continued from cover.

year, they sponsored Wade Sisson, a community member and an SFT graduate, to speak to the students about his book, "Racing through the Night: Olympic's Attempt to Reach Titanic."

SFT High School also kept its families and the community busy with several activities, such as Family Engagement Night, Family Science Night, the SuperCharged Talent Show and a community-wide Homecoming parade and pep rally.

The Overbrook Attendance Center (OAC) engaged its families and the community in other ways, such as through Literacy Night, a fall picnic, Family Technology Night and the eight-week (each semester) "Life" program.

"Each week, the 'Life' program offered a new theme and the parents and their children 'traveled' to a different country and spent one-on-one time reading," said Dr. David Fernkopf, OAC principal. "They learned more about the school, built literacy skills and made community connections."

In addition to all these activities, the district worked to educate its students about the importance of civic engagement and making positive contributions to their community – to help prepare them for successful lifework.

