



Senior Sarah Ralston's ACT score has opened many doors to where she can attend college.

## Santa Fe Trail High School senior excels on ACT

Sarah Ralston's inbox has been overflowing lately from schools across the country – asking her to join their ranks next fall.

Why the onslaught? The Santa Fe Trail High School senior received a 30 on the ACT, compared to the national average of 21.

"I get so many emails from schools I have never heard of, because they heard about my score," she said. "I haven't applied to too many schools yet. However, I've had numerous schools waive my application fee, due to my score."

And the score was well-deserved, as Ralston didn't take the test prep lightly.

"I was definitely stressed about the test, so I studied with my friends a lot and took several practice tests," she said. "One of my friends had an ACT prep book, so I could practice the areas of the test I really needed to work on."

Ralston's dedication to her regular studies also helped bolster her score.

"One of the best parts about my classes at Santa

Fe is they are all small," she said. "This means I can ask my teachers for help when I need it, and I know they really want me, along with all of my classmates, to succeed. I am in several dual-credit classes through Allen County Community College, and I think these classes have made me work harder and do better academically."

Ralston stays just as active outside of the classroom, including as a SFT Dance Team member, as Student Council secretary, and in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Future Business Leaders of America, and the Kansas Association of Youth.

Though her abundant college choices are a bit overwhelming, Ralston has no hesitation about what her dream job would be.

"In the future, I would love to be an editor for a well-known magazine or website or work as a journalist for a newspaper or website," she said. "Whatever I do, I want to have fun and be good at it."

And now that Ralston's conquered the ACT, what is she going to do next? She's going to Disney World...for her senior photo session.



# A Message from the Superintendent



Ensuring Santa Fe Trail students are provided the highest quality curriculum and instruction and our staff has the best resources available have always been our priorities.

As I mentioned in the August newsletter, our three-year strategic plan will help us meet the Rigor and Relationship standards for the 5-Rs accreditation model (see accreditation story on page 3), including for curriculum and instruction.

We have four areas of improvement for the Relationship standard. First, staff is working with the district's Curriculum/Standard committee to review and align grade-level and course curriculum with state standards.

Second, new teachers are participating in the Greenbush Southeast Kansas Education Service Center mentoring program, and veteran teachers who are new to the district are mentoring younger teachers.

Third, students will provide feedback on various district areas. For example, the Gemini School Redesign program involves collaborating with 20 Kansas districts to target areas of improvement at individual schools, including social-emotional learning and student-center schools.

Fourth, the district is seeking to improve parent and community involvement by recruiting volunteers for its new site councils, surveying parents, hosting parent nights, and including area professionals in college and career activities.

*Continued on back page.*

# New district strategic plan aligns with new state accreditation model

As we wrap up the first quarter of the 2017-2018 school year, you likely have noticed some changes in how the Santa Fe School District approaches state accreditation.

The district will be following a new accreditation model, established by The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE). The model focuses more on achievement at the individual district level, rather than state assessments.

"What I see with the new accreditation system is it now focuses on the skills the people in Kansas want to see in a high school graduate," said Dr. Steve Pegram, superintendent of schools. "Through statewide community meetings, KSDE ascertained the people in Kansas want graduates who have the qualities to be successful in whatever they choose to do in life, not just academic skills."

The new rubrics, or standards, being measured are called the 5-Rs:

- Relationships
- Rigor
- Responsive Culture
- Relevance
- Results

"Each school district in the state, including Santa Fe Trail, went through a process to determine which of the Rs each needed to most address,

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along with the Results criteria," Pegram said. "The two areas identified for our district were Relationships and Rigor."

The Relationships standard deals with the interconnectedness among curricula, programs, projects, and people, while Rigor focuses on growth and learning through professional learning, career and technical education, resources, and data.

To help meet these two standards, the district has developed a three-year strategic plan, with a focus on six main areas:

1. Communications
2. Community Involvement
3. Course Offerings
4. Curriculum Standards
5. Professional Learning
6. Social-Emotional Growth

"Through this accreditation process and with the district's new strategic plan, we have now identified what the community of Santa Fe Trail wants us to focus on with our students," Pegram said.

And as we move through this school year, we will continuously update you on the progress we are making with the accreditation process and our strategic plan.



# Charger Calendar of Events

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| ⚡ Nov. 9 – Kay Blood Drive, 9 a.m.   | ⚡ Dec. 9 – ACT Testing  |
| ⚡ Nov. 10 – FBLA Fall Leadership Conference in St. Louis, CAC Scholastic Book Fair, CAC Veterans Day Assembly, 1:30 p.m. and High School Musical, 7 p.m. | ⚡ Dec. 11 – High School Art and Woodworking Show, 6 p.m. and High School Band and Choir Concert, 7 p.m. |
| ⚡ Nov. 13 – First Day of Winter Sports Practice  | ⚡ Dec. 13 – 5th Grade Musical, 7 p.m.   |
| ⚡ Nov. 15 – 8th Grade Band and Choir Concert, 7 p.m.   | ⚡ Dec. 14 – OAC Kindergarten Music Program, 6 p.m. and OAC First Grade Music Program, 7 p.m.            |
| ⚡ Nov. 22-26 – Thanksgiving Break, no school   | ⚡ Dec. 22 – First Day of Winter Break, no school  |
| ⚡ Nov. 29 – 7th Grade Band and Choir Concert, 7 p.m.   |   |



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Scranton, KS 66537

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

*Superintendent message continued from page 2.*

For the Rigor standard, the district is enhancing its career and technical education with before- and after-school opportunities, finding ways to provide financial assistance for students and teachers for Allen County Community College classes, and providing more online and blended instruction.

Staff members are developing professional development plans. The district launched a one-to-one initiative, with plans to regularly update and replace old technology. And, while we are data rich, we are usage poor. Thus, we are looking at ways to better use data.

All of the above are steps we are taking in the district as part of our commitment to ensure the continued success of our staff and students.

Cordially,



Dr. Steve Pegram  
Superintendent of Schools

