



Old Steller Yeller

February 2014



**From the Principal
Dale Evern
742-4964**



Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope this finds you well. It seems like yesterday, we were all on Winter Break. Now, as I look at the calendar, we are almost half way through our third quarter of school! This month, we have a lot going on, so pay attention to the Activities Calendar. We have the Ice Cream Social for prospective students on the 6th of February, a dance on the 13th, and the Talent Show on February 21st. The Alternative Fair will be on the 1st of March. On top of all that, there is no school on the 14th or the 17th of February. We will, however, have full days of school on the 12th and 13th of February because we hold our student led conferences at the end of the year. Please plan accordingly.

I am sure all of you have heard or read about the Anchorage School District moving to a seven period day for students. Many schools are scrambling to figure out how to implement new schedules while maintaining the integrity of their programs. At Steller, we believe we don't have to change much. However, we are looking at creating an Academic Plan for our Advisory class that will allow our students to receive a quarter credit for each semester. This will create some extra work for students and teachers, but the work will be in the area of career exploration, community service, and school involvement.

There is some unrest in the district because of the loss of teachers due to the lack of funding in next year's budget. All schools will see a decrease in the amount of teachers in their buildings. Steller is no exception. We will do the best we can to maintain as many classes as possible. However, we will lose some classes and there will be a slight reduction of teaching staff. I will do my best to keep you informed as this process unfolds.

Our SBA's and our HSGQE's are also coming up from March 27th and April 1st - 3rd. All 8th, 9th and 10th graders and anyone in 11th and 12th grade that hasn't previously passed the exam will be taking it. The best you can do for your student or students is to make sure they have been fed breakfast and are well-rested from the night before. Steller has an excellent reputation of achieving high test scores, and I believe we will continue the tradition.

Lastly, I would like to remind all of you how important it is to be involved in your students' lives. Those of you who are, know how time consuming and valuable it is. I would love to see you come to a parent or advisory board meeting. The year is short, so take advantage of being in our building when you can. I appreciate all of you who make a difference in your child's life. Don't forget to take care of yourselves as well. Healthy parents promote healthy students. Keep it up!

Staff Scoop

Statewide, it's a tough time for schools. However, against the backdrop of budget cuts, the staff is committed to maintaining and growing a thriving educational environment. We are proud of our program and its unique learning opportunities, such as peer taughts, Passages, seminar, and intensives. We are starting to think about spring intensive offerings and it seems a good time to celebrate some highlights from our last intensives.

The Toy Building Intensive was a busy workshop as students created 3 different toys from raw materials to finished product. Students employed several types of equipment in the making of their doll, marionette, and wooden car, including sewing machine, jig saw, electric carver, and drill press. Most of them had never used any of these before, but they all handled themselves like pros. The production level was high as projects were finished and the toys came to "life". The final task occurred as students handed one or more of their toys to the staff of the AWAIC Shelter, to be given to those at the shelter, in hopes of brightening up the holidays for the children staying there.

Twenty students traveled to Belize for a 8-day ecology trip to study the flora and fauna of Belize. Students explored the rainforest, mangrove, and coral reef ecosystems. Highlights from the trip included visiting Xunantunich and learning about Mayan culture, interacting with Black Howler Monkeys in their natural habitat, identifying medicinal plants, zip-lining through the rainforest canopy, exploring a Mayan cave, and snorkeling at a barrier reef with many tropical fish, sting rays, green sea turtles, spotted eagle rays, and nurse sharks. Students also volunteered at Liberty Children's Home for an afternoon, visiting with 41 kids who ranged in age from infant to 16-years-old. Students collected and provided donations for the children to include books, games, socks, medication, and medical supplies. Reflections included the following questions for students: "What would you do to help solve the problem of poverty in Belize?" and "What impact will you leave on the planet?". Students learned the importance of tourism and conservation as a means for economic growth and protecting our planet.



Staff Scoop cont'd

Basketball Camp saw leaps and bounds of improvement from all the students due to running, drills, and games. Some went from not knowing the rules of the game to being able to play important minutes in full-court, 20-minute games.

Creative Writing students' passion for writing was evident every day, and their willingness to openly give and accept feedback was impressive. There was consistent creative energy throughout the intensive and students created amazing original pieces in a variety of genres. A special thanks to Steller parent and award winning author Charles Wohlforth, who shared his expertise with the class and conducted individual conferences with students.

As always, during intensives, parents helped in a variety of capacities, from driving students to various activities to supervising small group projects. We greatly appreciate this. There's an upcoming opportunity for parents to support our program: consider attending the Open House on February 6th to share your enthusiasm about Steller with prospective students and parents. Please contact Rosa at Hohnstein_Rosalie@asdk12.org or call 742-4950 to sign-up.





Guidance Things

1. Seniors and Senior Parents (Parents of Seniors sounds a little better doesn't it?); actually everybody should read this:

[Seniors: get your FAFSA submitted & apply for financial aid! The great college aid game; Ways students can avoid full sticker price](#)

[Most students never pay full tuition, but it takes savvy help to make that happen.](#)

2. [Financial Aid for Alaska Students](#)

3. [The Lingo of Financial Aid](#)

4. Gentlemen 18 years old, or will be within the next couple of months...you have to register for [Selective Service](#). It's not only necessary to register so you can receive ANY type of financial aid for school...IT'S THE LAW. If you need any help with this see me ASAP.

5. [ACT & SAT \(SAT Subject Tests\) Registration Dates and Test Dates](#) (includes good Test Prep links and cost info.

6. [College Admissions: Which Classes Are Selective Colleges Looking For?](#)





Nurse's Notes

Parents,

I frequently use warm saltwater gargles for colds and sore throat symptoms in the nursing office at Steller. Below is an article that supports gargling.

Gargling With Salt Water Can Ease Cold Symptoms

By ANAHAD O'CONNOR New York Times

Nothing but time can cure the common cold, but a simple cup of salt water might ease the misery this winter. A sore, itchy throat and respiratory congestion are some of the more common symptoms of a cold, and gargling with salt water seems to help for several reasons. A saline solution can draw excess fluid from inflamed tissues in the throat, making them hurt less, said Dr. Philip T. Hagen, editor in chief of the "Mayo Clinic Book of Home Remedies," which is due out in October. Dr. Hagen pointed out that gargling also loosens thick mucus, which can remove irritants like allergens, bacteria and fungi from the throat.

In a randomized study published in The American Journal of Preventive Medicine in 2005, researchers recruited almost 400 healthy volunteers and followed them for 60 days during cold and flu season. Some of the subjects were told to gargle three times a day. At the end of the study period, the group that regularly gargled had a nearly 40 percent decrease in upper respiratory tract infections compared with the control group, and when they did get sick, "gargling tended to attenuate bronchial symptoms," the researchers wrote. Other studies have also found gargling helpful against sore throats and congestion.

According to the Mayo Clinic, for best results, dissolve half a teaspoon of salt in a full glass of warm water and gargle the solution for a few seconds before spitting it out. Adults who want a more palatable remedy against cough and sore throat can try mixing warm water with lemon and honey. No need to spit it out.



THE BOTTOM LINE Gargling with a saline solution can ease symptoms of a cold.

For those scientific types who want an explanation...salt is a natural dehydrator, often used in food preparation and preservation. It has the ability to draw the water out of food, thus allowing foods like pickles to keep their crunch after months in a jar.

The same principle applies in your throat. Sore throats are often due to inflammation (edema). These areas of inflammation are filled with water which can wreak havoc on the soft tissues (mucosa) of your throat.

Gargling with salt water draws edema out of the tissues through osmosis. Microorganisms grow best in wet, moist environments. Consequently, by getting rid of extra fluid in your tissues you destroy some of the bacteria and viruses.

The relief from pain and swelling is real, however, gargling with saltwater will not necessarily cure the ailment. Additionally, too much salt can harm your mucosa, causing dehydration, and increased pain. So, gargle in moderation (and wash your hands frequently). If your symptoms persist or worsen, go see your healthcare provider.

Call or email with questions

Anne McCarron, RN (Steller school nurse)

Direct line - 742-4963

McCarron_Anne@asdk12.org





STELLER 2014/2015 LOTTERY INFORMATION

The time is here for students and their parents to be thinking about the next school year.

One alternative you may want to consider is Steller Secondary School, a 7-12 alternative school in the Anchorage School District. Our [Open House](#) is scheduled for **February 6th** at Steller Secondary, 2508 Blueberry Road, in the Multipurpose Room. This is for parents and students 6th through 11th grade. There will be a short presentation about Steller before the Open House. Steller staff, students, and parents will be available for questions and small group discussion after the presentation.

STELLER SECONDARY SCHOOL SPECIAL DATES AND DEADLINES

OPEN HOUSE

February 6, 2014

Steller Welcome - Gymnasium
Program - Multipurpose room
6:30pm - 8:00pm

DEADLINE FOR ONLINE APPLICATIONS

(all grades)

●●March 27, 2014●●
●● 3:00 p.m. ●●

Parent Notification of results - April 4*

PLEASE DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE to submit your application **online**. THERE ARE NO BONUS POINTS FOR BEING LAST AND YOU RUN THE RISK OF MISSING THE DEADLINE



Steller Secondary School



February 6, 2014

6:30 - 8:00pm

OPEN HOUSE

and Prospective Student Ice Cream Social

See our artistic murals, learn about Steller's unique philosophy, meet with Steller's principal and teachers one-on-one, discover our fascinating approach to core subjects and electives, and learn the answers to all questions you may have regarding the Anchorage School District's oldest and most established alternative program for grades 7 - 12.

The Strength of Our Youth Project

Background: Several years ago, Anchorage students created a stunning, strength-based, positive social norms brochure utilizing 2009 YRBS data and entitled it “Strength of Our Youth.” As the students explained in the brochure:

“You know those myths, that ‘everyone’ does drugs, that ‘everyone’ is drinking alcohol, that ‘everyone’ is having sex? Don’t believe them – the numbers show that they are false? If you make good decisions...then know that you are in the majority. You are surrounded by a community of strong youth!”

High schools distributed this brochure two years ago, and students got to see how strong they are.

2013 Anchorage Student Advisory Board Support: This year, the Anchorage Student Advisory Board enthusiastically and overwhelmingly voted to update the Strength of Our Youth brochure and distribute the brochures to every traditional high school student in a classroom setting. The students also worked on projects to accompany the distribution (see more below). Thanks to the ASD Print Shop, the brochures are printed and ready for distribution.

Why This Supports Students: This effort is student driven and supported. Anchorage high school students asked for, designed, and prepared the Strength of Our Youth brochure; and have requested that it be distributed to every student in a classroom setting.

Research shows the value and impact of communicating positive social norms, since youth behaviors and attitudes are strongly influenced by perceptions of their peers’ action, and unhealthy peer behavior is generally overestimated.

Why This Supports High School SEL Goals: This project advances ISP SEL goals by positively impacting Climate, Infusion, Direct Instruction, and Parent Involvement. Utilizing this in class will advance many of the SEL Practices listed in the SEL Teaching Practices Inventory.

Why This Supports Destination 2020 and the Goal of a 90% Graduation Rate: In the American Institutes for Research (AIR) 2012 study for the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB), a key finding was that: the number one reason that youth cited for peers dropping out of schools was drug or alcohol use.

Associated Student Projects and Requests: The Anchorage Student Advisory Board specifically worked on and/or asked for the following efforts to accompany the distribution of the brochure: 1) PA announcements highlighting some of the empowering statistics (samples have been prepared); 2) posters (which the ASD print shop is preparing); 3) screen savers; 4) having the brochure be part of an assembly, such as the Homecoming Assembly; 5) mentioning the brochure in the school newsletter to parents with a link to an electronic version of the brochure so that they are aware of the statistics; and 6) a game regarding the statistics with a prize (Anchorage Youth Development Coalition (AYDC) would be pleased to help with this, including providing small prizes, as appropriate).

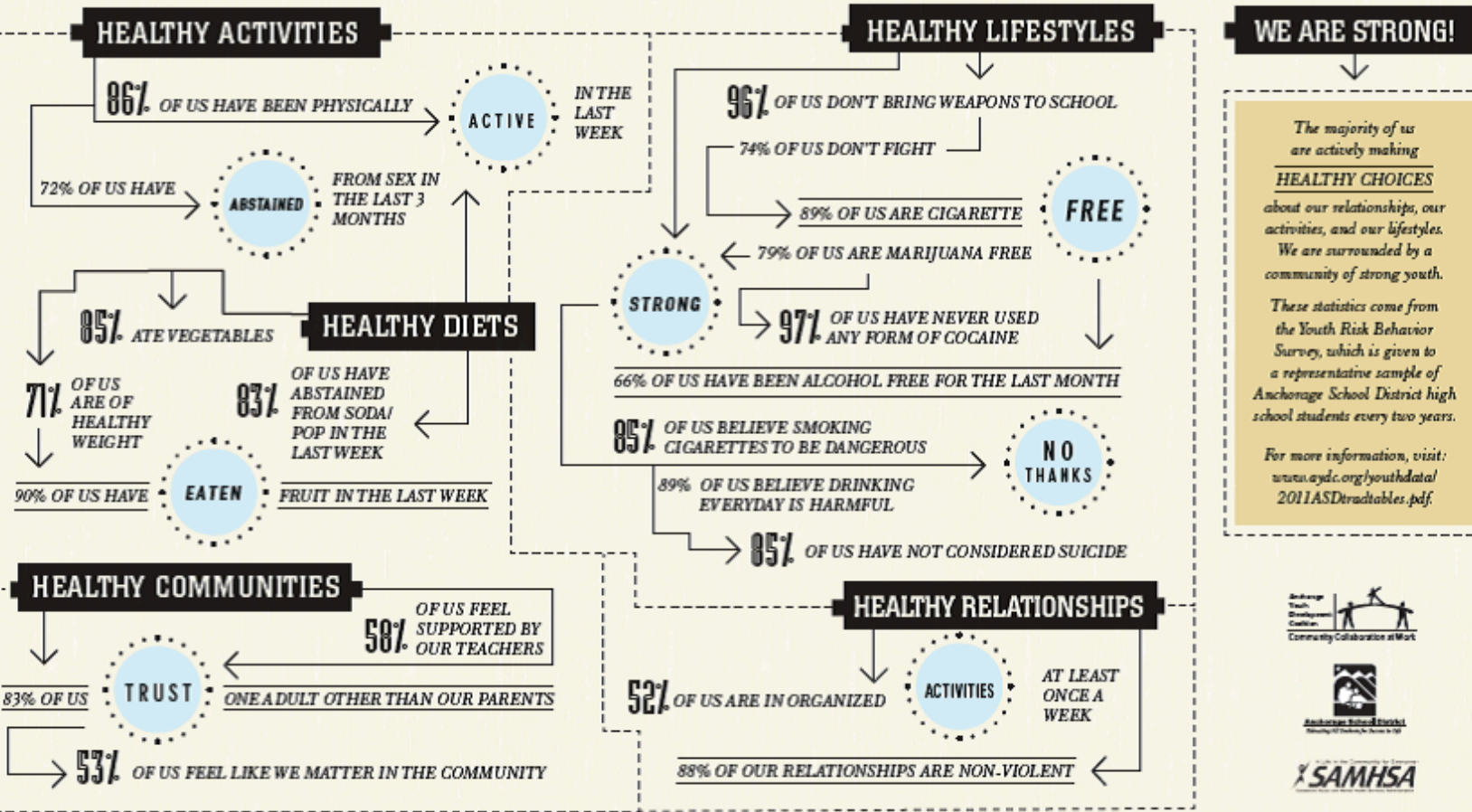
ASD Point of Contact: Melanie Sutton, Curriculum Coordinator, Health and Physical Education

Sutton_melanie@asdk12.org 742-4853

AYDC Point of Contact: Deborah Williams

DWilliams@aydc.org 277-4179

THE STRENGTH OF OUR YOUTH



ASD Announcements



Take the Climate and Connectedness Survey

The Climate and Connectedness Survey provides schools with information about the perceptions and experiences of students, staff and parents/guardians for use in setting school goals and redirecting resources. The survey will give principals and school staff valid and reliable data regarding school climate and connectedness, which have been shown to be pre-conditions for learning to take place.

New this year: parents will fill out one survey per school they have a child attending (rather than one per student).

Schools can provide printable copies of the parent survey in Hmong, Samoan, Spanish and Tagalog.

The survey can be accessed on the homepage of the ASD website at www.asdk12.org. The survey closes on Friday, Feb. 28.

Steller has copies available for parents located in the office. There is a basket for completed surveys as well.

Thank you

Art contest for high school students

The American Bar Association invites students to create a two-dimensional representation of an art piece that highlights the theme American Democracy and the Rule of Law: Why Every Vote Matters. The [Law Day Contest](#) is open to students, student groups and classes in grades 9-12. The entry deadline is March 7.



**Anchorage
School
District**

2012-13 Anchorage School Board

Jeannie Mackie, president

Tam Agosti-Gisler

Don Smith

Pat Higgins

Natasha Von Imhof

Kathleen Plunkett

Superintendent

Ed Graff

ASD Announcements cont'd

February is Visit Our Schools Month

Community members, businesses and parents are invited to visit any ASD school during the month of February to learn more about our public schools. While schools welcome members of the public year-round, Visit Our Schools Month will provide parents and community members an opportunity to learn more about the many educational opportunities available to them.

Who: Everyone! You don't need to be a parent to visit our schools.

When: Tours are scheduled for 9:30 a.m. every Tuesday in February. All schools will also hold an evening tour at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 25.

Where: All ASD schools.

For more information, go to www.asdk12.org/visit.

Planetarium shows available at no cost

Thanks to sponsor ExxonMobil, any planetarium showings, general admission and busing are available to school groups at no cost. This opportunity is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Completing the online process does not guarantee a no cost field trip. Start planning by completing the [online registration process](#).



- 90% proficiency
- 90% graduation
- 90% attendance
- 90% parent recommendation
- 100% safety
- Operational efficiency



Students invited to Providence career fair

Providence Health and Services Alaska will host its 9th annual Career Night event from 3-7 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 25. All students interested in exploring health care careers are invited to attend. Attendees will learn about occupations in the health care industry and be able to talk to Providence employees on how to get started. For more information, call 212-2976. [Please share this flier](#) (PDF) with interested students.

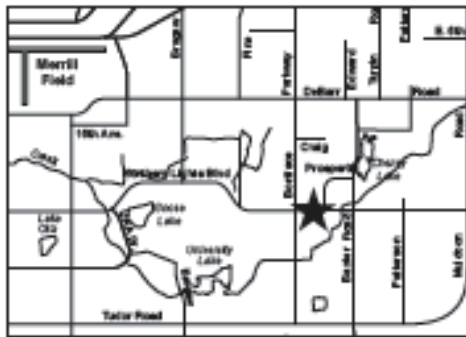
Alternative Programs



Anchorage School District

Saturday, March 1, 2014
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

ASD Education Center
5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd.



Online applications due by 3 p.m.
Thursday, March 27, 2014.

Spring lottery date:
Friday, March 28, 2014.

18th Annual K-12 Alternative Programs Fair Saturday, March 1, 2014 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Please join us and learn about alternative programs in the Anchorage School District for the 2014-15 school year. Alternative and charter schools will be represented at the ASD Education Center. Participating schools include language immersion, ABC Back to Basics, Open Optional, School-Within-A-School, Montessori, Multi-Sensory Instruction and charter schools.

ASD Alternative Schools and Programs

Students have varying needs and some learn better in an environment different from that at a standard elementary, middle or high school.

As in neighborhood schools, students in alternative schools and programs attend classes and other activities throughout their school day. While the instructional methods used can vary, high standards are established and maintained regardless of the school structure or philosophy.

Students, parents, counselors or teachers may suggest one program or another, depending on student need and ability. Each program has its own admission requirements. Parents are responsible for providing transportation to alternative programs that are not at their neighborhood schools.

The school district will utilize an online lottery system to provide an equal opportunity for students who request participation in an alternative program or school for which the number of applications exceeds the number of available openings. Approval or denial is based on space availability and grade level and gender balance. Lotteries are held two times each year.



UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, FEB 5

PARENT GROUP MEETING 6:00-7:30PM

FRIDAY, FEB 14

IN-SERVICE DAY /NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS

THURSDAY, FEB 6

**OPEN HOUSE - PROSPECTIVE FAMILIES
6TH GRADE FAIR & ICE CREAM SOCIAL**

MONDAY, FEB 17

PRESIDENT'S DAY / NO SCHOOL

SATURDAY, FEB 8

ACT TESTING

THURSDAY, FEB 20

AD BOARD MEETING 6:00-7:30PM

THURSDAY, FEB 13

FEBRUARY DANCE

FRIDAY, FEB 21

TALENT SHOW 7:00-9:00PM

FRIDAY, FEB 16

END OF 3RD QUARTER FOR STELLER



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Anchorage School Business Partnerships
5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99504-3135
www.asdk12.org/depts/sbp/



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Thank You**

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