



Old Steller Yeller

February 2012

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope this finds you well. This quarter is fast approaching its end, and our Spring Intensives will soon be upon us. I can't believe how rapid the time has passed. One difference I have found working at Steller is that absences really make a huge difference in a student's achievement. Because we are on a quarter system and because we have two less weeks in some of our quarters for intensives, the time just flies by. If a student misses more than three or four days in a quarter, it can truly affect their grades. When a student does miss, it's very important that student is called in and excused within 24 hours of missing school. That way, a teacher will know to expect the student to come for makeup work. If the student is not called in, it becomes an unexcused absence, and teachers won't know to prepare work for them.

If you are planning on leaving for an extended time, please make sure your student fills out a prearranged absence form. These can be found in the main office and should be turned in no later than three school days prior to travel. I'd like to remind everyone that though our intensives back up to Spring Break this year, all students should still be signed up for an intensive. It is time a student needs to be in school. If you are planning on being away for intensives, a good idea would be for your student to complete some sort of independent study. The independent study class should be approved by your student's advisor.

Our SBA's and our HSGQE's are also coming up on March 29th and April 3rd through the 5th. 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.



From the Principal
Dale Evern
742-4964

I wish them all the best of luck. 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. Keep it up.



Ashley's 1st hour Spanish I class wrote friendly notes in Spanish on frisbees being sent to students in Nicaragua.

Thanks to Victoria Weindel for organizing this project through her church. The students were very excited to use their language skills in a real-world application and to help others.

Russian and Spanish classes spent Friday, December 9th singing holiday songs in their respective languages to other classes throughout Steller. It was a fun way to show off their language skills and spread cheer throughout the school. We hope to make this an annual tradition. Second period Spanish and Russian classes are shown in this photo.



Congratulations to two outstanding students of Spanish who competed and placed in ASAA's World Language Declamation Regional Competition on Saturday, January 28th. Spanish IV student Max Von Hippel placed third in the advanced impromptu speaking division. He competed against other Spanish IV, V and AP students from around the district. Spanish III student Rebecca Gottstein placed third in the Spanish III poetry recitation competition. They both qualified for the State Competition, please wish them luck on February 18th.



January Artist of the Month

Pablo Sleichter-Gonzalez

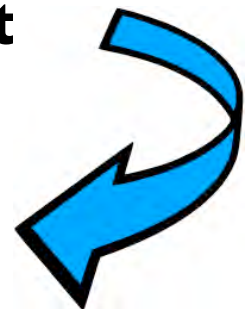
Artist Statement

I think what inspires me the most is my imagination. I like the challenge of using charcoal. I honestly don't know what styles and techniques I like to use. I think my favorite project is either my "keyboard portrait" or my portfolio. I think my keyboard portrait is most successful do to the keyboard on my face.



Important Visual Arts Event

Kaladi Brothers Café Steller Art Show
Opening: February 3rd, 6pm-7pm
Work on Display: February 3rd – February 24th
Sears Mall Student Art Exhibition
Work on Display: February 3rd - March 24th





Staff Corner



During 3rd quarter, it is not uncommon to see students struggle a bit more than usual and grades take a dip, making it a good time for a reminder about support offered at Steller. A good first step when struggling in a class is, of course, seeking help from the teacher at lunch or after school, but there are additional aids that students may utilize.

Academic support includes math and writing lab and a new homework lab. Math lab is available during lunch Monday through Thursday. Natalie and Jen are on hand to answer homework questions and provide test preparation. Writing lab is available in Danielle's room Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at lunch and after school. Students can get one-on-one support editing and revising their written work.

At any time during the day, with teacher permission, students may access help in the study skills room. This is available to all students as well as a 7th hour study hall in Deanna and Claudia's room. A new 7th hour homework lab, supervised by Jen, was recently created to provide support for students who are on or are in danger of being placed on academic probation.

For students who are struggling in areas beyond academics, advisors are a good first step, but there are other specialized staff who can provide valuable information and support. John is a good resource for academic as well as social-emotional issues and can help identify in-district and out-of-district resources. He can also provide help for academic issues that cannot be provided in the classroom. Anne, our school nurse, is available to provide knowledge and evaluation of medical disorders, treatment, referrals, coordination and facilitation of services between the school, health agencies, and other community resources. She promotes preventative measures to encourage healthy lifestyles and provides information on adolescent growth and development. Dealing with crisis situations is also part of her job - suicide intervention, drug assessment, etc., and facilitating both psych-educational and/or support groups as needed.

One of the skills that we strive to promote is that of self-advocacy, which includes realizing when help is needed, identifying appropriate resources and seeking assistance. Some students are comfortable doing this on their own, and others need encouragement or reminders to do so. With parents and advisors both working with students toward this goal, we can help students become strong self-advocates who are well-prepared to practice this important life skill.

Steller Students Attend MIT



Steller Students Emily Garlock, Rose Montgomery-Webb, and Sydney Gill Participate in building a structure strong enough to withstand an earthquake. The ladies represented Steller very well, as their structure did hold up to the test! Nurse Anne was kind enough to sponsor them.



Nurse's Notes



Recently it was brought to my attention that a student was carrying around a backpack that was much too heavy for his size. He was carrying the heavy pack daily because he was afraid something might get stolen if left in his locker. Please assess the use of your adolescent's backpack and how much he or she is carrying. The article below should be helpful. Thank you, Anne

Backs vs. Packs Tips for Healthier Backpack Use

Backpacks help our children bring all their supplies to and from school and free up their hands, but what is the price they are paying? Overloaded backpacks can strain the back, neck and shoulders. Too much pressure applied to the nerves and blood vessels in the shoulders can cause pain and tingling in the arms and hands. If your child is complaining of tingling arms, an aching back and/or shoulders, or if she is leaning forward when she walks with her backpack on, it is time to make some changes.

Loading the Backpack

- Keep the weight of the pack under 15% of the child's bodyweight (e.g. if a child weighs 100 pounds, the pack should weigh no more than 15 pounds) – multiply her weight x .15 to determine the maximum backpack weight.
- Pack heaviest items first, keeping them closest to the child's back.
- Use compartments to distribute weight evenly.
- Arrange items so they won't move around inside the pack.
- Avoid packing sharp items in the pack, if possible. If it is necessary to pack sharp or bulky items, be sure to secure them away from the child's back (in the front of the pack).

Monitoring the Weight of the Backpack

- Establish a routine to go through the backpack at least once per week to empty out unnecessary materials.
- Make sure your child is only transporting necessary materials to and from school. Are there books in the classroom that don't need to be carried back and forth? Can homework be downloaded from a teacher web page instead?
- Use spiral notebooks rather than binders, if possible.
- If your child must have binders, use 1-inch ring binders rather than 2-inch or 3-inch ring binders – the soft plastic ones are lighter than the hard plastic.
- Choose the smallest backpack that will meet your child's needs.
- When the backpack weighs more than 15% of your child's bodyweight, have him carry a book in his hands to lighten the load on his back.
- If your child's school allows it, use a book bag with wheels.

Wearing a Backpack Correctly

Always wear the backpack over both shoulders. **Loading the Backpack**

- Keep the weight of the pack under 15% of the child's bodyweight (e.g. if a child weighs 100 pounds, the pack should weigh no more than 15 pounds) – multiply her weight x .15 to determine the maximum backpack weight.
- Pack heaviest items first, keeping them closest to the child's back.
- Use compartments to distribute weight evenly.
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STELLER SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

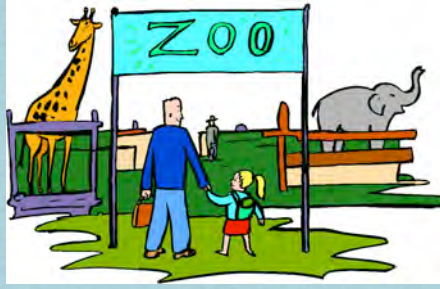
William Willis Attends Conference of Young Alaskans



William Willis

William was selected to attend the Conference of Young Alaskans in Juneau from January 4th through the 7th. The Juneau Empire wrote a nice story about the conference. It can be found at <http://juneauempire.com/neighbors/2012-01-08/future-leaders-meet-juneau-plan-future#.TwxJd287Vms>. 360 North also has the conference digitally saved. It can be viewed at <http://www.360north.org/2012/01/09/conference-of-young-alaskans-2/>.





Una excursión al zoológico

Spanish III, IV, and V students will be going to the Alaska Zoo on February 7th. Students will each research an Alaskan animal and create an informative brochure about their animal in Spanish.

At the zoo, we will tour the animals, with each student presenting and sharing information about their particular animal as we observe the animals in action.

After our field-trip, students will do a creative project about their animal, either a storybook or puppet show depending on students' levels.

Please remind your children to **dress very warmly** for the field-trip. We will be outside for about 2 hours. Students also need to remember a sack lunch. This is a fun experience and one I hope to include annually here at Steller!

Lottery Time

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

Please encourage your friends and family to consider Steller. An Open House is scheduled for February 9th at 6:30 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room at Steller, located at 2508 Blueberry Road. This is for parents and students of any grade. There will be a short program about Steller's alternative program. Staff, students, and Steller parents will be available for questions and small group discussion after the presentation.

SPECIAL DATES AND DEADLINES

OPEN HOUSE (all grades)
February 9, 2012, 6:30-8:00 pm
Steller Multipurpose Room

APPLICATIONS DEADLINE

March 22, 2012 in Steller's Office
No later than 3:00 pm
DRAWING – March 23rd

DON'T FORGET - Lottery applications are required for all students who want to attend Steller *including siblings*. If a student is already attending Steller or is on the waitlist they do not have to do a lottery application. Lottery applications are on the Steller website.

http://www.stellerschool712.org/main/?page_id=35

Calendar Reminder

Steller will have full school days during the district's 3rd quarter conferences on February 15th and 16th. (There will not be school on the 17th, which is an in-service day.) Instead, end-of-the-year conferences will be held May 14th and 15th.

The feedback from parents, students and teachers last year was overwhelmingly in favor of returning to end-of-the-conferences in place of 3rd quarter conferences. Having conference time in May allows for reflection on the entire school year and offers a good time for goal-setting for the summer and following school year. We will continue to do student-led conferences after first quarter in the coming years.





Write Young Alaska

**FREE! February Events for Young Writers
at Teen Underground, Loussac Library**

FLASH FICTION WORKSHOP

with Katey Shultz, editor of Trachodon Magazine

Ages 15-18

Friday, February 17 & Saturday, February 18, 1:00—4:00 pm

Flash fiction: How to write a quick story. Learn to focus on the 4 S's – sensory detail, simile, setting, and shift. Find out what makes a story “work” and why. There will be plenty of time to write your own flash fiction and to share, if you like. You will leave knowing how to find interesting things to write about and how to give voice to your ideas. ***Class size limited to ten.***

Register at [www.49writingcenter.org/classes and programs/WYAK](http://www.49writingcenter.org/classes_and_programs/WYAK).

YOUNG WRITERS GROUPS

Bring your poems, stories, and other writing to share. Practice writing on paper and collaborating on Facebook. Find out about contests and publishing opportunities for young writers. Hosted by WYAK.

Ages 15-18 Monday, February 13, 6:30—8:00 pm

Ages 12-14 Monday, February 27, 6:30—8:00 pm

WYAK (www.wyakwriters.com) is a youth writing initiative of the nonprofit 49 Writers/49 Alaska Writing Center (www.49writingcenter.org)





Anchorage
School
District

Teacher and Administrator Evaluations

State regulations require that students, parents, community members and school staff are given the opportunity to provide information about teacher and administrator performance. These regulations regarding certificated employees do not require such an opportunity for positions not requiring a certificate.

The two forms currently available are the Evaluation Input Form on Teachers and the Evaluation Input Form on Administrators (whether they are site administrators or central office administrators).

If you would like to complete an Evaluation Input Form you have three options:

- Employees can complete the web based EIF anonymously by going to the District Connection at <http://home.asdk12.org>. You will find links to either EIF (Teacher or Administrator) under the special announcements section.
- Members of the public and employees not wishing to remain anonymous can complete a web-based Evaluation Input Form by going to the ASD online Parents & Students page link at www.asdk12.org/parents/ in the Current Events box. Links to both Evaluation Input Forms are available.
- School sites will also have “hard copies” of the form for parents and employees who do not have access to a computer. Each school will determine a location for the form (most likely main office). Hard copies will be kept confidential and routed by the school to the immediate supervisor.

Web-based Evaluation Input Forms will be transmitted electronically by the Human Resources Department (Sarah Hotchkiss Flanagan, Web Programs Specialist) to the appropriate supervisor.

The Evaluation Input Forms are now available on the website and will remain posted in their web locations through May 1, 2012.

Bus Driver Recruiting

The Anchorage School District Pupil Transportation Department is currently recruiting applicants for school bus driver positions. Applicants must enjoy working with children, have a good driving record and be willing to adhere to strict safety guidelines. Applicants will be screened and receive 40 hours of classroom and behind-the-wheel training before being licensed and employed. School bus drivers must obtain a background report from the Troopers, must be 21 years of age, and will participate in a drug and alcohol screening program as federally mandated. The starting wage is \$15.50/hour. Please stop by the Transportation Center to pick up an application or call Marty Elkins, Supervisor of Pupil Transportation, at 742-1200.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Thursday, February 9th

Open House & Ice Cream Social
6:30 - 8:00 pm

Friday, February 10th

School Dance
7:00 - 11:00 pm

Monday, February 20th

President's Day NO SCHOOL

Wednesday, February 15th

Parent Group Meeting
6:00 - 7:30 pm

Friday, February 24th

End of 3rd Quarter for Steller

Friday, February 17th

In-Service Day NO SCHOOL

Monday, February 27th - March 8th

Spring Intensives

STELLER SECONDARY SCHOOL
2508 BLUEBERRY ROAD
ANCHORAGE, AK 99503

