



# Old Steller Yeller

March 2012

Hello Steller Community,

Steller is in the middle of intensives as I write this. I can't tell you how much fun it is to see students actively engaged in hands on learning and taking full advantage of what is being offered. I find myself envious of the students in Greece, but I did hear it snowed on them, so I don't feel too bad. I had the wonderful experience of subbing for Gerald one day in his intensive. Being the curious sort that I am, I asked the students what all they learned. I got an earful of physics that I never expected. The students impressed me with Newton's laws and proceeded to tell me why the ships in Avatar couldn't possibly have flown. Be careful what you ask for. The movie intensive with Svetlana is super engaging. I've seen some of the student work, and I've been told by guest speakers that our students are truly exceptional.

When I see all that is going on, I feel proud to be a part of it. I know the integrity of our program is in tact, and I know that all our students are getting a valuable lesson from these intensives.

I truly hope you all enjoy your Spring Break and if you have the chance, get some well-deserved rest and recreation. For me, I hope to spend some time at Alyeska and some time with my family at our cabin on East Butterfly Lake. Whatever it is you and your students decide to do, make sure it's done safely.

It's very important for students to stay the course and continue to work hard during fourth quarter. With snow melting and birds in the air, minds tend to wander and thoughts of summer invade the classroom. We will be selecting next year's classes during the fourth quarter, we will be testing for the SBA and HSGQE, and we will have prom and the over nighter. There is a lot going on, but I trust you will help us to keep the students focused and in good standing for the rest of the year.

We have been working hard to make sure the curriculum we provide your students matches the policies we have at Steller. This may mean there will be some changes coming in the required classes students will take. I assure you that when change does come, it will have the least possible impact on what your students have already accomplished at school and it will be in line with our philosophy. We, as a staff, will continue to work hard for your students and will do our best to keep the lines of communication flowing. Take care for now.

Dale



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



## Staff Corner



In recent staff meetings and during our last in-service day, the staff has been working on ways to better align our program with Steller's philosophy. A large part of this is ensuring that self-directed learning courses are in the schedule and readily available to students. Offering students the opportunity to challenge themselves, explore their interests and exercise their responsible freedom by directing their education are aspects of our school that set Steller apart from conventional middle and high schools in the district.

With the implementation of Zangle came an elimination of many Steller-specific course titles, including SDLs, self-directed learning classes, which allowed students to pursue a passion in a self-designed *elective* course. To address this, the staff is revising the curriculum for the currently-offered Passages class. This repeatable, general elective course provides enrichment activities for high school students who are interested in expanding their understanding of an area of personal academic interest. Students work with a sponsor teacher to design a semester-long program that is both personalized and rigorous.

Self-directed learning courses such as Passages are valuable because in addition to acquiring knowledge in a particular area, students learn a lot about themselves and how to successfully navigate (and maybe even change) the world they are about to enter as adults. These classes actively prepare students to transition from adolescence to adulthood by challenging students beyond their traditional comfort zones.

Steller already offers a number of unique opportunities for students to take on greater roles of responsibility, including teaching a peer-taught, being a seminar coach, and actively participating in student government and policy-making: Many of these opportunities will be able to be incorporated into a Passages class.

Because it's important to offer opportunities for both personal and academic growth in middle school as well, a Passages-type elective will be offered at the mid school level. As we put together the schedule for next year and beyond, self-directed learning will be one of our priorities. In upcoming Op-Group and Parent Group meetings, and hopefully at the next All-Community Meeting, we will share updates on the revised Passages class and the direction of the program.





# Nurse's Notes



## Tips to keep your family healthy this spring: (I know it's early, but I like to think about spring!)

### 1. Reduce (and Treat) Seasonal Allergies

We still have a lot of snow, but break up will be here before you know it and with break up we have to worry about dust and pollen. Pollen counts begin to rise after the sun does and peaks by noon, making the morning the worst for large pollen exposure. Keep windows closed, rinse hair at night, and launder clothes that have been outdoors to keep pollen from bothering you in the house. If prevention is not enough, over-the-counter antihistamines can relieve symptoms. It is a good idea to check with a health care provider before using for the first time

### 2. Get a Healthy Dose of Sunshine

Guidelines for vitamin D intake suggest that 15 to 20 minutes of direct sunlight on your skin will boost your vitamin D level. After that use the sunscreen to keep out damaging rays or stay in the shade. Speaking of shades, research suggests protection from bright sun can prevent development of cataracts later in life and may prevent other retina problems as well. Glasses block UV rays, in addition to looking cool. 😊

### 3. Prevent and Treat Spring Colds

It's hard to overcome the old wives' tales that getting chilled or wet is going to bring on a cold. Only a virus brings on a cold. Your immune system is what helps fight off those viruses, so indirectly, if you keep warm and dry on the outside, hydrated on the inside, and above all well-rested, you can help ward off spring colds. Eat immune boosting foods to help keep colds bay as well.

### 4. Be Aware of Poisonous Plants

We don't have poison ivy and we don't have Lyme's disease in Alaska, (which is a tick, not a plant), but we do have Devils club. Devil's club can be very irritating to the skin. Keep arms covered when hiking if it is any around. Many kinds of mushrooms can be dangerous too. I see people picking mushrooms when I bike, but unless you're a trained mycologist, don't pick! I have a teacher friend who ended up in a coma after ingesting mushrooms that she picked.

### 5. Exercise

26% of Alaska high school students are overweight or obese. Alaska adolescents need more time for physical activity and less time in front of the television and computers. 24% of students watch three or more hours of television on an average day. 50% play video or computer games or use a computer for something that is not school related three or more hours per day. Everybody should get at least 30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise daily.

So, if you follow these tips you are sure to have a perfect spring! Just watch out for the moose and the mud puddles too!

## SBA, HSGQE & HSGQE Retest Schedule Spring 2012

★SBA <u>Science</u> (Standards Based Assessment)	All Students Grades 8 & 10	March 29 (make up 3/30, 4/2, 4/6-4/11)
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★SBA <u>Reading, Writing &amp; Math</u> (Standards Based Assessment)	All Students Grades 7-9	April 3-5 (make up 4/6-11)
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★SBA/HSGQE (Standard Based Assessment & HSGQE)	All Students Grade 10	April 3-5 NO MAKE UP TESTING
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<u>Reading</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>April 3</u>
<u>Writing</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>April 4</u>
<u>Math</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>April 5</u>

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★HSGQE Retakes HSGQE	Retest Students Grades 11-12	April 3-5 NO MAKE UP TESTING
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<u>Reading</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>April 3</u>
<u>Writing</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>April 4</u>
<u>Math</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>April 5</u>

### High School Graduation Qualifying Examination

The High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE) measures minimum competencies of essential skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Passing all three sections of the HSGQE is part of the requirements to receive a diploma in the State of Alaska. The HSGQE is administered twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Students must take the HSGQE for the first time in the spring of the 10th grade. The HSGQE at the 10th grade will generate a score for the HSGQE graduation requirement and a score for assessing the student's performance based upon the Grade Level Expectations for a 10th grader. The HSGQE is offered twice a year, once in the spring and again each fall for 11th and 12th graders. Eleventh and 12th grade students who need to retake one or more subtests of the HSGQE must retest at least once each year until they meet the proficiency requirement. Students receiving a certificate of achievement can retest twice each year until they meet the proficiency requirement. Once the student with a certificate of achievement has passed all the subtests of the HSGQE, he/she will be awarded a diploma.

### HSGQE Resources

- [HSGQE Brochure](#) (pdf)
- [HSGQE Test Blueprint](#) (pdf)

### HSGQE Math Practice Items

The practice items for the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE) were developed by two math department chairs within the Anchorage School District, Alison Mall at Bartlett High School and Jan Slattery at East High School. They used the *Teacher's Guide to the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Examination* as the basis for their work. Practice test items were developed using the performance standards which tie directly to the way the results of the HSGQE are reported at the student level. The practice test items can be used by students who are preparing for the HSGQE. The answer guide is provided separately so students and/or teachers can check their work.

- [HSGQE Math Practice Items](#) (pdf)
- [HSGQE Math Practice Items Answer Guide](#) (pdf)

### HSGQE Practice Exams

- [HSGQE Reading Practice Test](#) (pdf)
- [HSGQE Writing/Math Practice Test](#) (pdf)
- [HSGQE Practice Reading Scoring Guide](#) (pdf)
- [HSGQE Practice Writing Scoring Guide](#) (pdf)
- [HSGQE Practice Math Scoring Guide](#) (pdf)
- [HSGQE Practice Test Administration Directions](#) (pdf)

# Standards Based Assessments Item Samplers / Practice Tests

**Note:** To view the following files, you will need to have [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) installed on your computer.

GRADE LEVEL	TEST BOOK	ANSWER BOOKLET	TEST ADMINISTRATION DIRECTIONS (TAD)	SCORING GUIDE
7	<a href="#">Reading/Writing/Mathematics Test Book</a>	<a href="#">RWM Answer Booklet</a>	<a href="#">RWM TAD</a>	<a href="#">Reading Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a> <a href="#">Writing Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a> <a href="#">Mathematics Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a>
8	<a href="#">Reading/Writing/Mathematics Test Book</a>  <a href="#">Science Test/Answer Booklet</a>	<a href="#">RWM Answer Booklet</a>  Type to enter text Type to enter text	<a href="#">RWM TAD</a>  <a href="#">Science TAD</a>	<a href="#">Reading Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a> <a href="#">Writing Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a> <a href="#">Mathematics Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a>  <a href="#">Science Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a>
9	<a href="#">Reading/Writing/Mathematics Test Book</a>	<a href="#">RWM Answer Booklet</a>	<a href="#">RWM TAD</a>	<a href="#">Reading Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a> <a href="#">Writing Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a> <a href="#">Mathematics Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a>
10 - HSGQE & HSGQE RETEST	<a href="#">Reading Test/Answer Booklet</a>  <a href="#">Writing/Mathematics Test/Answer Booklet</a>		<a href="#">RWM TAD</a>	<a href="#">Reading Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a> <a href="#">Writing Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a> <a href="#">Mathematics Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a>
10 - SCIENCE	<a href="#">Science Test/Answer Booklet</a>		<a href="#">Science TAD</a>	<a href="#">Science Answer Key/Scoring Guide</a>



## College Entrance Exams Testing Schedule

**Juniors...think about taking an ACT and a SAT Test this year.  
It is a great way to see which one is a better fit for you.  
Then you can concentrate on that test as a senior.**

**ACT** [ACT Registration & Information: www.act.org/aap/](http://www.act.org/aap/)

Test Date	Registration Deadline	(Late Fee Required)
September 10, 2011	August 12, 2011	August 13 – 26, 2011
October 22, 2011	September 16, 2011	September 17 – 30, 2011
December 10, 2011	November 11, 2011	November 12 – 18, 2011
February 11, 2012*	January 13, 2012	January 14 – 20, 2012
April 14, 2012	March 9, 2012	March 10 – 23, 2012
June 9, 2012	May 4, 2012	May 5 – 18, 2012

**SAT** [SAT Registration & Information: www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

SAT Date	SAT Subject Tests Available	Register-By Date*	Late Registration*		Changes By*	Register
			Mail	Phone/ Online		
<b>Mar 10</b> <a href="#">Study plan</a>		<b>Feb 10</b>	<b>Feb 24</b>	<b>Feb 24</b>	<b>Feb 22</b> <a href="#">Learn how</a>	Deadline passed! <a href="#">Learn about standby testing</a>
<b>May 5</b> <a href="#">Study plan</a>	▶ <a href="#">Subject Tests</a>	<b>Apr 6</b> <a href="#">Reminder</a>	<b>Apr 20</b>	<b>Apr 20</b>	<b>Apr 18</b> <a href="#">Learn how</a>	<a href="#">Register Now</a> 37 days left
<b>Jun 2</b> <a href="#">Study plan</a>	▶ <a href="#">Subject Tests</a>	<b>May 8</b> <a href="#">Reminder</a>	<b>May 22</b>	<b>May 22</b>	<b>May 16</b> <a href="#">Learn how</a>	<a href="#">Register Now</a> 69 days left

**Steller Secondary School Code: 020007**

Congratulations to this year's National Merit Finalists!!!!  
Academically, they are among the top students in our  
nation!



Anna Miller



Kaylin



Saur



Aryeh Lax



# NEXT YEAR INTENSIVE TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES

Interested in traveling next year during Intensives? Four trips are being planned for next year-sailing in the Caribbean, skiing/snowboarding at Whistler, Shakespeare Festival at Ashland, OR, a California Service Adventure. Here is a preview of what trips are being planned.

**Winter 2012 - *Learning to Sail in the Caribbean*:** For this December 2012 Intensive, students will be traveling to Puerto Rico and then traveling through the Caribbean on a sailboat. This is not a sailing cruise, but rather a hands on learning experience where students will be members of the crew and learn all aspects of sailing including navigation, rigging, weather, and more. They will also study marine science, leadership skills, and learn about the culture and history of the islands that we visit along the way. Daily activities will include sailing, hiking, snorkeling, and much more.

Cost: \$2500-\$3200, depending on the number of students. (Cost includes all but 5 meals)

With: Leigh Anne Email Leigh Anne at [bonney\\_leigh@asdk12.org](mailto:bonney_leigh@asdk12.org) or check out <https://sites.google.com/site/leighanneatsteller/sailing-intensive> for more information.

***Skiing/Snowboarding at Whistler*:** A genuine winter wonderland, Whistler offers endless ways to enjoy the great outdoors. Aside from the best [skiing and snowboarding](#) in North America, Whistler offers so much more: icy skating, zip lining, tubing, cross-country, and Nordic skiing!

We are working on the itinerary and accommodations right now, trying to keep the costs at \$2500 (airfare included)

Please sign and experience the Olympic quality trails!

With: Svetlana and Troy



**Spring 2013 - *Shakespeare Festival*:** We will be traveling to Ashland, Oregon for the Shakespeare Festival. We will be attending classic Shakespearean plays and possibly some modern theater pieces too. We will have access to actors from the plays as well as joining some acting workshops. Join for some (positive) drama!

Who: Bob Email Bob at [Vandergriff\\_Robert@asdk12.org](mailto:Vandergriff_Robert@asdk12.org) for more information. When: May 2013

***California Service Adventure Intensive*** : Experience the bounty of California and Nevada's most magical landscapes as you not only see them, but also help to improve them! In this intensive you will be challenging yourself in a variety of physical activities including: whitewater Kayaking in Cache Creek, backpacking along Point Reyes National Seashore, learning to surf the epic waves of California's coastline and much more! You will also be helping the community and gaining vast community service experience and hours. Some of the community service projects will include: a conservation project in Lake Tahoe, serving meals to San Francisco's homeless, and helping out and learning what it means to be a Scientist at the Marine Mammal Center. All together you will rack up over 20 hours of community service while also exploring the great outdoors.

Cost of trip: \$2000 + airfare (price includes everything except souvenirs) With: Jen. For a more detailed itinerary and a price breakdown please email Jen at [neff\\_jennifer@asdk12.org](mailto:neff_jennifer@asdk12.org).

Please feel free to contact teachers for more information.





Anchorage  
School  
District

## Think twice before bringing a knife

The Anchorage School District strictly prohibits weapons anywhere on school property, or in the vicinity of a school sponsored event. This policy includes all knives, pocket knives, ulus, filet knives and knives traditionally used as utility tools.

The safety of students and staff is a top priority and harsh penalties will be enforced. Students found with weapons, or look-alike weapons of any kind, while on school grounds, are subject to suspension or expulsion and arrest.

Parents are encouraged to discuss this important issue with their children and make them clear of the dangers and consequences of taking any weapon to school or any public place.



## 2012 ASD Climate & Connectedness Parent/Guardian Survey

You may complete this [2012 ASD Climate & Connectedness Parent/Guardian Survey](#) form by printing it. Afterwards you may turn it back in to the Steller or you can mail it to:

Anchorage School District  
Assessment and Evaluation  
5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd Ste 16  
Anchorage, AK 99504-9986

Parents/guardians may complete the survey [online](#).

Let your voices be heard.

## School board revises preliminary 2012-13 budget

The Anchorage School Board revised the district's preliminary budget at a meeting in early February. The current budget includes more than \$20 million in reductions/cuts. The budget now moves to the Anchorage Assembly for approval and then will go on hold until the legislature and governor have finalized their plans in late April or later.

Some of the reductions include: all summer school; middle school career guides; elementary counselors; two student support program supervisors; Curriculum, English Language Learner, Purchasing/Warehouse and custodial positions; several administration positions; and school supplies – \$5 per student at all schools. Reductions were made in nearly every department districtwide. Read a full list of reductions at [www.asdk12.org/depts/budget/1213/ReductionList\\_BoardApproved.pdf](http://www.asdk12.org/depts/budget/1213/ReductionList_BoardApproved.pdf).

"I believe many of the positions and programs being reduced are important to providing a high-level education," said Superintendent Carol Comeau. "In the coming months, I hope you will join me in speaking with our elected officials about the importance in investing in public education, both locally and statewide, and of the effects these cuts will have on our young people. Together, we can continue to provide outstanding educational opportunities to our youth."

## Enrollment update



Look for more information to come on this year's centralized enrollment event. We'll need you to help get the word out to new families.

### **2012-13 registration update** **Central enrollment**

The district is excited to offer a centralized enrollment opportunity for new-to-ASD students again this coming school year. More than 300 students and their families enrolled during last year's inaugural three-day event. It also included several community booths and ASD stations for families where they could get immunizations, learn about school lunches and bus routes, get interpreter services and more.

This year, the target audience will expand to include additional students:

- ELL
- Military
- Child in Transition
- Migrant
- Special Education
- Families with children at multiple schools

The purpose of centralized enrollment is to provide good customer service to new ASD families and to help alleviate pressure on registrars and front-office staff during the registration process.

It's important to note that the centralized enrollment opportunity is strictly for families who are new to the district and not for students who attended last year and need to register for the coming year.

#### **No online registration next year**

Unfortunately, the district is unable to offer online registration for the 2012-13 school year. Legal processes have slowed some of the district's efforts and have prevented ASD from going live with this option next year.

Online registration remains at the top of the "to-do" list and, once the company that owns Zangle gets up to speed, the district looks forward to the opportunity to bring it online in the near future.

In the meantime, there are several new parent features that have been added to Zangle that are receiving a positive response, including GPA information, graduation requirements, testing information and transcripts.

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## Friday, March 9th

End of 3rd Quarter  
In-Service Day NO SCHOOL

## Monday, March 12th - Friday, March 16th

Spring Break - NO SCHOOL

## Wednesday, March 21st

Parent Group Meeting  
6:00 - 7:00 pm

## Thursday, March 22nd

Lottery Deadline 3pm

## Friday, March 23rd

Lottery Drawing

## Friday, March 23rd

March Dance

## Thursday, March 29th

All Community Meeting  
6:30 - 8:30pm

STELLER SECONDARY SCHOOL  
2508 BLUEBERRY ROAD  
ANCHORAGE, AK 99503

