



SEAMAN

communicator

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SEAMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Area Dates & Events

APRIL

- 15 **NO SCHOOL - Professional Learning**
- 16 SEBC Auction 6:00 pm, Optimist Building
- 18 **NO SCHOOL - Snow Day Make Up**
- 18 School Board Meeting 6:00 pm
- 18 EL Site Council/PTO
- 18 WI PTO
- 19 PH Site Council/PTO
- 24 Rochester Open House 2 pm
- 26 Wellness Night @ SHS 6:30 pm
- 28 Elmont Kindergarten Round-Up 6:00 pm
- 28 SHS Band Percussion Concert 7:00 pm
- 29 Logan Kindergarten Round-Up 9:30 am
- 29 N. Fairview Kindergarten Round-Up 9:30 am/1:00 pm
- 29 Northern Hills Kindergarten Round-Up 9:30 am @ RO
- 29 West Indianola Kindergarten Round-Up 9:15 am

MAY

- 1 Pleasant Hill Open House 1:00
- 3 NF PTO
- 3 Elementary Band Concert @ SHS 7:00 pm
- 3 Ron Vinduska Retirement Party 3:15 SHS
- 9 School Board Meeting 6:00 pm
- 9 SHS Choir Pops Concert 7:00 pm
- 10 RO PTO
- 10 Elementary Orchestra Concert @ SHS 6:00 pm
- 12 SMS/SHS Orchestra Concert @ SHS 7:00 pm
- 13 Mike Mathes Retirement Party 3:30 SMS
- 15 SHS Graduation @ Expocentre 4:00 pm
- 16 WI PTO
- 17 SMS Promotion @ SHS 7:00 pm
- 18 Sixth Grade Promotions (Check school's calendar)
- 19 **EARLY RELEASE - Last Day of School**

Please check the online calendar for current info and locations. www.seamanschools.org/calendar



Using technology to strengthen a student's learning experience

pg. 6



Week-long reading celebration

pg. 7



Sixth grade girls explore STEM futures

pg. 3



Mathes set to retire

pg. 4



James Adams
Board President

“Next year, the 1:1 initiative will allow us to enhance our current environment so that each student in the middle and high school will be issued a MacBook Air to use at school and at home.”

I'm excited to talk to you this month about the current state and future plans for technology integration in our district. Since being elected to my first term in the spring of 2011, I have served on the District Technology Advisory Committee with other patrons, students, teachers and administrators. In that time, I have been fortunate enough to see first-hand how decisions that were implemented by my predecessors have impacted many students and teachers in a positive way. Serving on this committee has also afforded me the opportunity to have an active role in helping shape what the future of technology in our district will look like and how it will enrich the learning experience for the students of tomorrow. We live in a very fast, technology-rich society, where keeping up with the latest devices and trends is nearly impossible. However, I believe that we have an obligation to our students, who expect and deserve the very best, to keep our district as technologically advanced as possible, so long as we can do so methodically while still maintaining our fiduciary responsibilities. Technology can be an invaluable tool for teachers to engage students and to enhance the learning process, however it is essential that technology choices are based on well-defined learning goals and that teachers are provided with the necessary professional development to effectively integrate digital learning into daily instruction.

Seaman Schools has a proven track record of being a leader in technology and has many accomplishments as highlighted in the District Digital Learning Plan, available on the district website www.seamanschools.org/DigitalLearningPlan. One of my goals as Board President is to continue this long tradition of technology integration in the classroom, and be a model district for others to emulate once our plan is fully implemented.

Last fall, members of the District Technology Advisory Committee continued exploring different 1:1 technology initiatives in local districts similar to ours in order to gain a deeper understanding and witness, in person, how policies and procedures were implemented and learn about the advantages and disadvantages that other districts have seen arise surrounding technology in schools. These visits went on for a period of 2-3 months, policies were drafted, and ultimately presented to the board for approval at the February board meeting. Most recently, these policies were disseminated to staff, parents, and students.

At the March board meeting, the Board of Education approved the 2016-17 Technology Purchase Plan that will provide for a 1:1 initiative in Grades 7-12 and create technology-rich environments in Grades PreK-6. This plan was designed to align with the approved district technology plan to transition to a student-led learning model districtwide. This is an important step toward one of our goals as outlined in the 2015-2020 District Action Plan. The plan includes the purchase of 1,700 MacBook Airs and 150 iPads along with other technology purchases (cases, software, servers, protection plans, support, etc.) totaling approximately \$1.5 million. In order to prepare for this influx of technology,

additional plans were put in place to improve the district IT infrastructure, refresh staff laptops, as well as provide training for staff to prepare for the coming school year when students will come to class equipped with their own devices (in the secondary grades). Currently in our secondary schools, students have the ability to check out laptops as needed for classroom assignments. Next year, the 1:1 initiative will allow us to enhance our current environment so that each student in the middle and high school will be issued a MacBook Air to use at school and at home. We'll be providing our students with equal access to digital technology while helping better prepare them for the responsibilities of the digital world, both academically and professionally. I'm very excited about the opportunities and access this provides to these secondary level students. Understandably, parents and students will have questions. We have provided answers to some of those online, www.seamanschools.org/1to1FAQs.

In the classrooms, teachers should also see an increase in instruction time without the need to check out/check in/start up/shut down laptops during class, and students will no longer be restricted to classroom resources or out-of-date material. Information will be at their fingertips.

We are investing a lot of time, energy and resources into this all-digital transition, from providing the funding through capital outlay, preparing our teachers with necessary training for various digital teaching methods, to establishing our infrastructure to handle the newly needed bandwidth in our classrooms. The board has also approved the purchase of a new learning management system (Schoology) designed to increase online student collaboration, as well as collaboration amongst teachers. With Schoology, a third grade teacher at North Fairview can log in to this powerful tool and see how a third grade teacher at Logan is teaching the same lesson, allowing each other to collaborate more easily while maintaining a standardized lesson across the elementary schools. A seventh grader can post a question to a group of classmates to start an online discussion on an assignment. A parent can log in to see upcoming assignments, all in one place, for their child.

As you can see, the 1:1 initiative is designed to enhance and make all areas of life at USD 345 run more efficiently. Soon, you'll begin to see communication from the district that will include updated policies and procedures, such as the fee structure. As with any new initiative, there may be tweaks here and there needed to accommodate different circumstances. The plan will have its challenges and we fully recognize that issues that naturally occur with technology will arise, and we are committed to addressing those and working through them for the greater good. We believe our technology plan will ensure that we reach our learning goals and that supporting our students with the tools necessary to achieve their maximum potential to become college and career ready is our duty.



SIXTH GRADE GIRLS EXPLORE FUTURE IN MATH & SCIENCE

Last month, 52 sixth grade girls from across the district came together with around 50 professional women in Kansas to attend Emporia State University's Enhancing Your Future with Mathematics and Science Conference. This day-long conference for young women in middle school is designed to increase young women's interest in science and mathematics, to foster awareness of career opportunities in mathematics and science-related fields and to provide young women with an opportunity to meet and form personal contacts with women working in mathematics and science-related careers.

During the morning sessions, participants selected three career discussions from a list of approximately 20 choices, such as forensic scientist, financial advisor, information systems technologist, veterinarian, paleobotanist and aerospace engineer. In the afternoon, the girls attended two hands-on workshops such as "dental dynamos", "water treatment", "physics toys", "high-powered air rockets", and "synthesis of a magnetic fluid."

Parents and teachers were also encouraged to attend the annual conference. They have a separate program designed to assist them in learning strategies for encouraging young women in science and mathematics.

"This is a great opportunity to expose our girls to STEM careers with hands-on workshops," said Director of Elementary Education Annie Diederich. "My daughter attended this and I truly believe this is one reason she's graduating with a degree in mathematics this year."

The Enhancing Your Future program has been held for over 20 years. The students attending this year represented Elmont, Logan, Rochester and West Indianola. Teachers and principals served as sponsors on this trip.



IS YOUR CAR SEAT INSTALLED PROPERLY?
FCCLA & KANSAS TRAFFIC SAFETY RESOURCE OFFICE
PARTNERING TO BRING YOU A
CAR SEAT  CHECK LANE
APRIL WELLNESS NIGHT AT SHS
TUESDAY, APRIL 26 AT 6:30 PM AT SHS



3,870
STUDENTS

PRE-K: 70
ELEMENTARY: 1,929
SMS: 580
SHS: 1,201

11
BUILDINGS

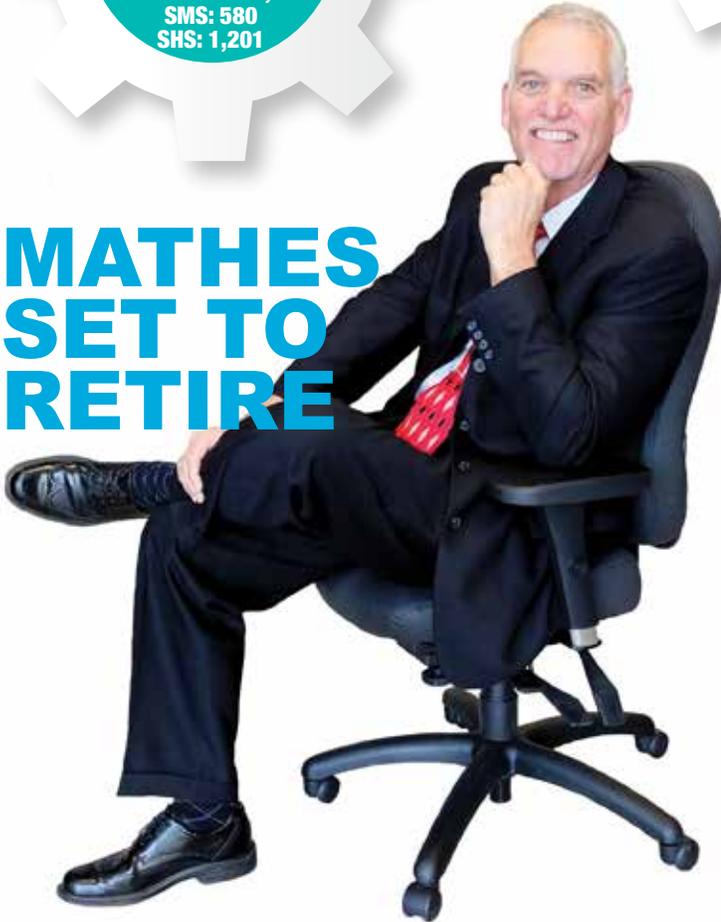
\$41 MILLION
BUDGET

7
BOARD
MEMBERS

698
STAFF

FULL TIME: 574
PART TIME: 124

MATHES SET TO RETIRE



LEAVES BEHIND A LEGACY

The fourth superintendent in the history of the district will be retiring at the end of this school year, and he leaves behind a strong legacy of accomplishments. "It's been a good run," said Superintendent Mike Mathes. "I'm proud of what we have accomplished both academically and with the physical plant. I'm proud of the staff, students and community."

Under Mathes' leadership, the district has grown both in students and programs offered. When Mathes became Superintendent in 2002, he and the board outlined their goals for the district and they've been busy ever since. Included in that list was making full-day kindergarten in the district a priority and since 2007, every elementary school in USD 345 has been preparing five-year olds for a lifetime of learning. "Mr. Mathes is an awesome leader," said Board Member Susan Fowler-Hentzler. "He is key to creating a board that functions well by keeping us informed and listening to our concerns. Wherever the board discussion goes, Mr. Mathes always brings it back to the district's goals and mission." Mathes also began an elementary Spanish program designed to develop our elementary students' linguistic skills and Chinese at the

secondary schools. He made the special education program a top priority. "Our special education program does a fantastic job of staying up-to-date with new teaching methods, concepts and ideas and just making sure that we are serving *all* kids and helping *all* kids reach their full potential." This is the same philosophy behind his idea to move ninth graders out of the middle school and into the Freshman Center, which was added to the high school building in 2009. Ninth graders are now introduced to the schedule and culture of SHS while maintaining a transition period designed to prepare them for their future. In the freshman program, students are

required to take a nationally renowned Success 101 class. After Success 101, students enter the tenth grade with a 10-year plan and ready to continue consultations with college and career advocates for the remainder of their years at Seaman to help them stay on a track for success. Mathes also helped implement a

required course on personal finance in the high school to teach money management skills and a career internship program designed to give high schoolers a sneak peek into a career that interests them. "Our students are not only learning math, science, language arts, etc., they're learning how to become productive citizens with these new programs."

There's no question Mathes has accomplished a lot and made some tough decisions as superintendent, including consolidating buildings in order to increase efficiency. "We knew right away that our building configuration was not very efficient and that we were going to be weathering economic and political storms. We are in much better shape both financially and academically due to our re-configuration." The district is currently in its final phase of the 10-year facilities plan, closing Rochester and Pleasant Hill at the end of this school year and making room for a newly renovated Northern Hills Elementary scheduled to open in August 2016.



MIKE'S LEADERSHIP THROUGH NUMEROUS DISTRICT INITIATIVES IS UNPARALLELED AND HAS POSITIONED OUR DISTRICT AS ONE OF THE PREMIER PUBLIC SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS IN THE STATE...

-JAMES ADAMS, BOARD PRESIDENT

“When Mike became Superintendent, he respected the traditions of the past but was not afraid to recommend and advocate for change,” said Board Member Fred Patton. “Over our 13 years working together, Mike and I formed a strong working relationship that focused on making the Seaman District a top notch school district. We didn’t always agree, but we always respected each other’s position (even when he was wrong...haha). It is nice when someone leaves a place in a better position than when they came. There is no doubt Mike has done just that. I sincerely appreciate the work he has done on behalf of our staff, our taxpayers, and, most importantly, our students.”

“I get more credit than I deserve,” Mathes said. “The elected officials on the board are the ones who deserve the credit. I’ve always had courageous and progressive board members throughout my tenure. Without them, we would have accomplished none of this. I’m very thankful and proud of the 18 men and women who served on the board during my time as superintendent (even Fred when he was wrong 😊).”

And the beat goes on...

Dr. Steve Noble, current superintendent for Hillsboro USD 410, will be taking the reigns in July and Mathes is confident the district will remain in good, progressive hands. “One of Dr. Noble’s strengths is technical career pathways and in my opinion, the more pathways we can offer the better positioned our students will be for postsecondary opportunities. We accomplished a lot but there’s more we can do, and Dr. Noble will keep our momentum moving forward.” When asked if he had any regrets, Mathes said, “No, but there are some things we didn’t get done. I’m disappointed we were never able to establish an ROTC program at the high school. I also wish we could’ve done more to individualize learning—meeting more kids where they’re at, intellectually, but that takes a lot of extra time and resources to do that. Next year, with 1:1 Digital Learning in secondary schools and more computerized blended learning in elementary schools, that goal becomes more obtainable. There will be parts I won’t miss. One of the hardest things I’ve had to do is tell people, who I consider friends, they didn’t get or no longer have the job they wanted, and of course, we’ve had more than our fair share of tragedy.”



MR. MATHES HAS ALWAYS BEEN WILLING TO SAY, "WHY NOT?" WHEN IT CAME TO MAKING CHANGES THAT SEEMED RADICAL, BUT WAS GOOD FOR OUR STUDENTS! HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN WILLING TO MAKE THE TOUGH DECISIONS AND SUPPORT THE BOARD IN OUR DESIRE TO RAISE THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR OUR DISTRICT.

-FRANK HENDERSON, BOARD MEMBER

2002 Goals

- ✓ Provide Full-Day Kindergarten
- ✓ Move the 9th graders
- ✓ Increase Rooms at SHS
- ✓ Solve Rochester Overcrowding
- ✓ Eliminate one-tract schools
- ✓ Provide Alternative School

While Mathes may be stepping down as CEO of the district, he’s not going far. “I’ll still be around, just in a different role.” Mathes was instrumental in the creation of the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute (KELI) at Kansas State University, and he plans to work with KELI mentoring new superintendents across Kansas. He also plans to sign up for Watch D.O.G.S. at his grandson’s school.

“Supporting our school district and community will be as important to me in my retirement as it has been while leading the district. We’re all in this together and we can all make a difference if we’re involved in our schools. I have a lot vested in Seaman with no plans to leave. Maybe a little traveling here and there, but I’ll always remain a Viking, just like many of those who have retired before me. My family is here, and I love this community. I couldn’t walk out this door any happier.”

Mike Mathes has been in education for 38 years and served as superintendent of schools for Seaman USD 345 since 2002. Mathes came to Seaman in 1993 as an assistant principal at Seaman High School before moving to Logan Junior High as principal in 1995. In 2000, Mathes moved to the district office as assistant superintendent.

Mathes has been recognized throughout his career for his excellence in leadership. In 2002, the Kansas Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance named him as an Outstanding Administrator in Kansas. He was President of Kansas School Superintendents’ Association (KSSA) in 2011 and named the 2012 Kansas Superintendent of the Year by KSSA. This past year he received the KSSA Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding contributions.

- ▶ **ALL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS COMPLETE**
- ▶ **PLAN TO REPLACE/PAY FOR ALL ROOFS & HVAC SYSTEMS**
- ▶ **BUDGET IS IN GREAT SHAPE**
- ▶ **MILL LEVY REMAINS STEADY & SET UP TO STAY THAT WAY**
- ▶ **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT & GRADUATION RATES CONTINUE TO RISE**
- ▶ **NEW, YOUNG, ENTHUSIASTIC ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM**
- ▶ **INCOMING YOUNG, YET EXPERIENCED SUPERINTENDENT**
- ▶ **STABLE AND PROGRESSIVE BOE**

“I couldn’t walk out this door any happier.”

-Mike Mathes

Save the Date

**Please join us for Mr. Mathes’ Retirement Reception
Friday, May 13, 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.
Seaman Middle School
5530 NW Topeka Blvd**

“It’s exciting to see all the technology-rich activities we have going on in a single day in our Seaman schools.”

-Megan Nussbaum



On February 17, students and teachers across the district celebrated Digital Learning Day (DLD). DLD is a day for educational institutions to highlight great teaching practices and showcase the innovative teachers and leaders who implement digital learning practices in their schools.

“Since every day is DLD in our district, we wanted to use it as an opportunity to highlight what is regularly going on in our classrooms,” said Assistant Curriculum Director for Technology Integration, Megan Nussbaum. “We have students researching the Seven Wonders by visiting the locations using Google Earth, classrooms engaging in a game show type project to learn math facts and vocabulary,

to name a couple. Our students are able to conduct their own research and share findings with their peers. They’re staying engaged and excited about learning using technology.”

Seaman teachers are constantly being trained on how to use technology in the classroom and encouraged to find and share innovative ideas. Next year, they’ll be managing curriculum using a Learning Management System (LMS) called Schoology. The new LMS will be an online site for teachers, students and parents to communicate similar to the post-secondary setting as they gear up for the transition to 1:1 next August.

1:1 Digital Learning Preview

“Equal access to digital technology and providing the resources to be sure our kids are ready for the digital world is a priority to the district. Next year, we’ll be going 1:1 at the middle school and high school with MacBook Airs for each student,” said Superintendent Mike Mathes. “We’ve always integrated technology into learning; now we’re going to be able to personalize that learning more specific to the student. Going 1:1 is not about the device, it’s about how we can use the device to better prepare the student for life after graduation.”

To see a video of DLD visit the district’s YouTube Channel by visiting seamanschools.org/youtube.

Stay updated by visiting seamanschools.org/1to1

WHY 1:1

- closing the digital divide
- more instruction time
- personalized learning
- more collaboration
- 24/7 access to school material
- student customized tools
- updated resources
- classroom flexibility
- increased parent engagement

TENTATIVE TIMELINE

MARCH

Tech purchase plan approved

MAY

Technology fees approved

Parent letters mailed

JULY

Online enrollment opens

AUGUST

1:1 parent orientations

Students pick up laptops

STUDENTS WILL BE ISSUED:

- Carrying case & laptop ID
- 11” MacBook Air

WHAT ABOUT ELEMENTARY?

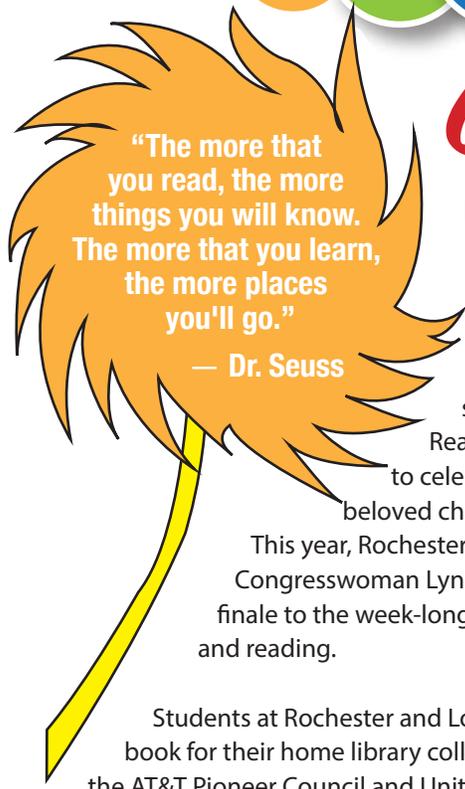
- 1:2 Digital Technology iPads/MacBooks
- Blended Classrooms-where students learn, in part, through delivery of digital content at an individual pace.



read across

America

is an annual reading motivation & awareness program that calls for kids to celebrate reading on March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss.



“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.”

— Dr. Seuss

Schools all across Seaman School District planned special activities during Read Across America Week to celebrate the birthday of beloved children’s author Dr. Seuss.

This year, Rochester was selected to host Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins as the grand finale to the week-long celebration of books and reading.

Students at Rochester and Logan also received a free book for their home library collection thanks to the AT&T Pioneer Council and United Way. United Way of Greater Topeka CEO, Miriam Krehbiel, said United Way staff was energized about the opportunity to help so many kids in the community. “Because of our experience with our Junior Leader Reader (JLR) program, we know that just owning a book can be a big deal for many students,” said Krenbiel. “AT&T’s generous investment lets us reach beyond our normal kindergarten and pre-K audience for JLR and give a book to every elementary student at these schools.”

Having an exciting book at home makes it more likely that a child will spend time reading. “For younger students, just 20 minutes a day reading aloud with an adult or role model strengthens relationships, encourages listening and language skills, promotes attention and curiosity, and establishes a strong reading foundation, Krehbiel said. “We ask the children to share their books at home, whether they are reading to someone or having someone read to them.”

Other celebrations throughout the week
 Rochester’s Kindergarten Teacher Christine Ketron lined up celebrity readers in her class to celebrate the week as well. School Board Member and State Representative Fred Patton, Superintendent Mike Mathes, Director of Elementary Education Annie Diederich and Director of Secondary Education Rod



Children who are read to at home have a higher success rate in school.

Garman all visited the class to read Dr. Seuss classics. They also cooked some green eggs and ham for breakfast one morning.

Elmont’s first graders dressed up like their favorite book character and had a costume parade through the school led by the Cat in the Hat (a.k.a. Principal Wells).

“We’re proud to be part of an event that highlights the importance of literacy,” said Mr. Mathes. “We want all of our kids to enjoy reading and become lifelong readers—our teachers and librarians play an important role in making that happen.” “There’s just something special about a kid and a book,” Mathes said. “You can almost see the doors opening for them.”

FACTS ABOUT CHILDREN’S LITERACY

Children who were read to frequently are more likely to:

- count to 20, or higher than those who were not
- write their own names
- read or pretend to read¹

The more types of reading materials there are in the home, the higher students are in reading proficiency²

1 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2000.
 2 Educational Testing Service, 1999, America’s Smallest School: The Family.
 3 U.S. Department of Education, 1999, The Condition of Education 1999.

Keep students involved this summer with
SEAMAN SCHOOLS

Summer Camps

seamanschools.org/SummerCamps

The Seaman Communicator

Seaman Unified School District #345
Mike Mathes, Ed. S., Superintendent
Seaman Education Center
901 NW Lyman Rd.
Topeka, KS 66608
785-575-8600
www.seamanschools.org

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
AMERICAN
PRE-SORT INC

**APRIL
NO SCHOOL DAYS**

15, 18

**LAST DAY OF SCHOOL
(EARLY RELEASE)**

MAY 19

**NOW ACCEPTING
IN-DISTRICT
TRANSFER REQUESTS**

seamanschools.org/transfer

Questions?

785-575-8600

Summer Drivers Education

Online enrollment: April 1 -May 1

WELLNESS NIGHT

April 26, 6:30 pm @ SHS

Rochester Open House

April 24, 2:00 - 4:00

Pleasant Hill Open House

May 1, 1:00 - 4:00

Come and visit with old classmates and say goodbye to the schools.

KINDERGARTEN ROUND-UP APR. 28 & 29

seamanschools.org/RoundupSchools

Alumni Banquet

June 5 @ Capitol Plaza Hotel

Reception at 4:00 p.m.

Dinner at 6:00 p.m.

Cost is \$28 | Door Prizes

Celebrating Class reunions for:

1946, 1951, 1956, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976,

1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006

seamanschools.org/alumni

Retirement Receptions

Mark your calendars for:

Ron Vinduska

Tuesday, May 3, 2016

Seaman High School

3:15 – 5:00 p.m.

Mike Mathes

Friday, May 13, 2016

Seaman Middle School Commons

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

The Seaman Communicator is published monthly during the school year by

Seaman USD 345

901 NW Lyman Rd.

Topeka, KS 66608

785-575-8600

www.seamanschools.org

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SeamanUSD345



@SeamanSchools

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Seaman USD 345 does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The Seaman USD 345 superintendent has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies and he may be reached by contacting Mike Mathes, Seaman Education Center, 901 NW Lyman Rd., Topeka, KS 66608 (785-575-8600).

Notice for a Drug Free Workplace

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in Seaman USD 345. Violators will be prosecuted.