



The Irish Highlighter

Volume 3 : Issue 2

Seneca High School

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



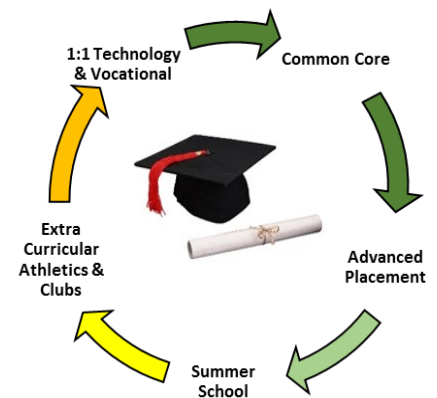
SPRING 2014



Thank you for taking the time to read *The Irish Highlighter*.

It is the goal of the Board of Education to provide a relevant, well-rounded education to all students to prepare them to become competent, contributing citizens who are successful in their future endeavors. The well-rounded education will expose students to a number of elective classes, in addition to their regular subjects. Relevant, real life experience and the added exposure to a wide variety of subjects will help students find their true calling in life.

To that end, I am happy to highlight a few new initiatives:



Real Life Experiences:

- The Shamrock Stop, a student run school store, is part of the business curriculum.
- Students will serve as webmasters next year for the school web-page.
- Building Trades and Drafting students have been involved in a remodeling project at West Campus. The designing phase is complete and the construction phase will begin next school year.
- The Student Help Desk involves 15 students who help troubleshoot problems with the student laptops. The students are taught to provide computer hardware support to both the classroom environment and during the Student Help Desk hours.

Additional Summer School Classes:

- Along with Driver's Education and Speech, Algebra 1, Pre-calculus, and World Studies were added to the summer school offerings. Students who take these summer classes will reap the advantages of more flexibility in scheduling elective courses.

Advanced Placement (AP) classes:

- In addition to the AP English class, an AP Social Studies class was offered this year. Students who complete the coursework and pass a test will be given college credit. IVCC continues to offer an additional 12 credit hours of classes to our students.

1:1 Initiative

- The 1:1 Initiative, where each student was assigned a high-tech laptop to use throughout the school year, was successfully implemented this year. The newly installed iFiber project provided faster internet service.
- New student desks were purchased to provide the needed room for the laptop on the student work area.
- The Blackboard Program installed on all the laptops provides access to homework and assignments. This learning tool will also help to prepare our students for college as it is used regularly by universities.

The 2013-14 school year has been an exciting year, full of new opportunities. We wish the graduates success and look forward to next school year.



State Math & WYSE Team Members

Jacquelyn Newberry, Kassidy Maierhofer, Anna Baker, Lyle Marshall



Not too long ago, after describing some of the educational program initiatives undertaken by the district, I was asked, “So, what is the end result of all of this work? What is the vision for Seneca High School?” After pausing for a bit, I suggested the goal of SHS was to maintain an environment where students of varying talents, interests, abilities, career plans, and levels of achievement are provided an excellent opportunity to prepare for learning, work, and citizenship in the modern world. In short, we are a school for every learner, offering rigorous coursework in the areas of art and music, college preparation, foreign language, physical/health education, technology, and vocational education; and all under one roof. We strive to match the diverse needs and interests of our students with an equally diverse educational program, while ensuring all programs reflect an objective level of excellence.

Offering a high-quality, comprehensive educational program provides our students with opportunities to: 1) develop the foundational skills required of all American citizens; 2) “tryout” classes one might otherwise have forgone; and 3) develop one’s unique talents and abilities. This diversity in programs is best illustrated by examining the intentions of our graduating class of 2014. The table below reflects the reported post high school plans of our most recent graduating class.

Post High School Plans of the Class of 2014

| Post High School Plans | Percent of Class | Locations | Areas of Interest |
|------------------------|------------------|--|--|
| 4-Year College | 32 | Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Tennessee, Wisconsin | Art, athletic training, business administration, computer engineering, education, marketing, mortuary science, nursing, pre-medicine, pre-physical therapy, social work, and many more |
| Junior College | 47 | Illinois | Accounting, agriculture business, auto mechanics, computer software engineering, criminal justice, education, metal fabrication, radiology, nursing, pharmacy technician, and nuclear technology |
| Tech School | 6 | Illinois, Missouri, Ohio | Applied mathematics, illustration, nuclear operations, powersport technician, and radiation protection |
| Military | 7 | Nation-wide | Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and National Guard |
| Workforce | 8 | Unknown | No data provided |

A Farewell Note:

Ah, graduation, truly a tradition so bittersweet. Amid both smiles and tears, 104 spruced up students received their Seneca High School diploma from School Board President Ron Frye. By the end of the ceremony, our graduates became quite skilled at striking a pose on stage for the eager photographers in the audience. The Class of 2014 has contributed much to Seneca High School. I have little doubt that if each graduate applies great effort to the next phase in his/her life he/she will be quite successful. I wish all of our graduates well.

Yours in education,

Jim Carlson





Spring Marks Special Events

Honors Night 2014

Tuesday, May 13th was a special date in our 2013-2014 school calendar. Not only was it the last regular day of attendance for this year's senior class, but it also marked Honors Night, a night we recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of many students at Seneca Township High School.

Over 300 family members and staff filled the high school auditorium as several local and regional dignitaries presented approximately 100 awards to Seneca High School students who were invited to attend. Over \$400,000.00 in monetary awards were issued; celebrating academic, athletic, and community service accomplishments.

On behalf of the student award winners, we would like to thank all of those groups, organizations, colleges and universities for supporting and contributing to the educational growth of our Seneca students.

Graduation 2014

Members of the Class of 2014 participated in and received their high school diplomas on Sunday, May 18th, at this year's commencement ceremony. Superintendent, Dr. Jim Carlson and Board of Education President, Mr. Ron Frye, distributed diplomas to the Class of 2014.

In a survey conducted by the counseling staff of SHS, over 70% of this year's senior class had submitted college plans to continue their education at some form of college, university, trade school or enroll in a branch of the U. S. Military. The staff and administration of Seneca High School would like to congratulate our senior class for their wonderful accomplishments and wish them the best of luck in all future endeavors.

Staff Receives Additional Training, challenges SHS students

Over the last calendar year members of the SHS faculty have received extensive professional development training from local educational experts in mapping curriculum and learning about the new Illinois Learning Standards. Establishing a guaranteed and viable curriculum for our students is one critical component in working toward student success. As our curriculum work grew over the 2013-2014 school year, our teachers identified instructional shifts that must occur in each classroom to assist our students in reaching new standards. During the 2014-2015 school year, our teachers will look to improve instruction by providing students with real life experiences, encourage students into a higher level of thinking, and incorporate student led activities. These adjustments will allow our students to gain a deeper meaning of content and provide each student with the skills necessary to be successful following graduation from SHS.

During the 2014-2015 school year, one of the main goals for our staff was to improve on the progress made last year. Our main objective is to create the most productive and challenging academic course options for our students. Reaching this goal will help to assure student success after graduation, regardless of whether one pursues a post-secondary college, a university experience, or seeks employment in our local work force.



Class of 2014 Valedictorians: Lucas Altobella, Anna Baker, Jacquelyn Newberry, Rachel Towne, and Mackenzie Granby



IRISH EXTRA-CURRICULAR



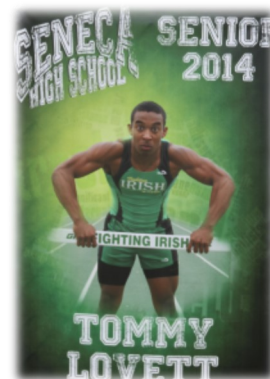
#ActivitiesDirectorSteveHaines

Now that we have closed another school year, it is time to reflect on some outstanding performances:

- Football qualified for the Class 3A Football Playoffs for the first time in 12 years
- Football reached the Class 3A Quarterfinals
- Volleyball Team won their 2nd straight Class 2A Regional Championship
- Ross McCormick qualified for the Class 1A State Cross Country Finals
- Wrestling had 3 individuals qualify for the Class 1A State Wrestling
- State wrestling qualifiers were Dayton Coyle, Sage Friese, and Tommy Lovett who finished 6th
- Fighting Irish Boys Basketball team were I-8 Conference Champs and won the Regional Trophy
- Speech Team's Maggie Thomas qualified for State Finals in Radio Speaking for the 2nd year in a row
- Seneca Scholastic Bowl team won the Class 1A Regional Championship
- Seneca WYSE team were Regional Champions
- Lady Irish Softball team had a good season with an over record of 20 wins, 15 loses
- Lady Irish Track team won the Class 1A Sectional Championship and the I-8 Conference
- Lady Irish Track team qualified 18 individuals for the State Finals
- Fighting Irish Boys Track had five boys qualify for State: Tommy Lovett, Carter Gallick, Trevin Seul, and Lucas Ward
- Tommy Lovett is Class IA IHSA State Champion in 110 Hurdles!



Maggie Thomas—Speech Team
State Finalist in Radio Speaking



New Extra-Curricular Eligibility Policy

In order for a student to be eligible to participate in any school-sponsored or school-supported athletic or extracurricular activity, a student must meet academic criteria outlined in the eligibility policy. The policy provides for high academic expectations, student ownership over their grades, and assistance in regards to improving their academic performance.

WEEKLY ELIGIBILITY

- ◆ Students must not be failing more than 1 subject. If this requirement has not been met, students are ineligible to participate in games/competition for a period of one week (Thursday - Wednesday). * (**See Waiver rule**)
 - ◆ For any failing grade, students must meet with the teacher for academic support and turn in a signed academic support voucher **OR** risk becoming ineligible to participate in games/competition for one week (Thursday - Wednesday).
- ⇒ **Waiver Rule** – Students may be eligible failing 2 subjects for period of 2 weeks, to give the opportunity for the student to raise their grade in one of the subjects. This option can only be given once per semester.

GRADING PERIOD

Each semester has four “mini” grading periods within the semester. Each mini grading period is 4.5 weeks: first quarter progress report, end of first quarter, second quarter progress report, and end of semester.

- ◆ Any athlete must **not** be failing more than 1 subject.
 - ◆ If an athlete is failing more than 1 class at the conclusion of any of the “mini” grading periods, he/she will be ruled **ineligible** for the entire next “mini” grading period (4.5 weeks).
- ⇒ **NOTE:** See Waiver Rule above. This rule can be used at a Grading period, but option can only be given once per semester.



THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



#StudentOfTheMonth

DECEMBER 2013



Left to Right: Beau Carpenter, Most Improved; Torie Knibbs, Rookie; Maggie Thomas, Student of the Month; Chance Gonnarn, Role Model.

JANUARY 2014



Left to Right: Alex Cameron, Most Improved; Sarah Cameron, Rookie; Hope Jackson, Role Model; Kayla Haines, Student of the Month.

FEBRUARY 2014



Left to Right: Ashley Hatz, Rookie; Melissa Smrz, Role Model; Ryan Murray, Most Improved; Jacey Lamboley & Lucas Altobella, Students of the Month

MARCH 2014



Left to Right: Rylee Anderson, Role Model; Mackenzie Granby, Student of the Month; Ana Munoz, Most Improved; Cora Wilkinson, Rookie.

APRIL 2014



Left to Right: Cole Klicker, Most Improved; Brooke Larsen, Role Model; Emily Misener, Rookie; Brenden Tisler, Student of the Month.

MAY 2014



Left to Right: Jonah Barla, Student of the Month; Danielle Hauch, Role Model; Allyson Storm, Most Improved; Cortney Van Ness, Rookie.

IRISH AWARDS



#StudentAchievements

Congratulations to the following SHS Students of the Year!



Student of the Year
Jacquelyn Newberry

Most Improved of the Year
Kirsten Tendall

Role Model of the Year
Mackenzie Juricic

Rookie of the Year
Sean Baker

SHS Citizenship Award

Congratulations to *Miss Hope Jackson* on being chosen as the 2014 recipient of the *Seneca High School Citizen of the Year Award*.

This annual award is sponsored by Bill Bernardoni at Country Financial, who donates an electronic device, as well as the name plaque that is displayed within the school. The award can be given to any graduating student, who demonstrates by their speech and by their actions, that they are exemplary American citizens. Recipients of this award reflect the Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship.

While attending school at SHS, Hope has exemplified all of the qualities of a student with good character. Hope is the kind of person that one can rely on in a time of need, as she treats all she meets with fairness and respect. She always has a bright smile and a good attitude, which makes being around her a pleasure. Her positive outlook on life has helped her to be able to make a difference in the lives of others who are not so fortunate. Hope spends much her time out of school volunteering on missions in other countries; and she is a youth leader in her local church community year-round. Hope also volunteers to tutor children at the Milton Pope Grade School where she once attended. Sincere dedication to her family, friends, community, and school is apparent by her loyal actions. We are all fortunate to have had Hope Jackson as a student at Seneca High, and we wish her much success as she begins her journey past high school and into college and all of her future endeavors.



Hope Jackson: LaSalle Station Diversity Council Scholarship Recipient, Staff Scholarship Recipient, Illinois State Scholar, NHS Student, High Honor Roll Student, 2013-14 Student of the Month Award, 2010-11 Rookie of the Month Award, TRUST President, Class President Freshman – Junior Yrs., VP Drama Club, Spanish Club, Former FCCLA & FFA member, Former Volleyball player, Cast Member of SHS Musicals & Plays.



New Online Registration: Starting this summer, registration packets will only be mailed by special request. The registration process for the upcoming school year will be online. This system will be available the first part of July. Parents will be mailed login information around that time. We will also be implementing a single sign-on. This means parents will use the information in the letter to create personal accounts in PowerSchool. Each parent account can then have all of their students under that single login ID. With the online registration system, most information will be entered directly into the computer and not mailed back to the school. Some forms, like physicals, will still need to be mailed in. **Be sure to watch for more information as that time approaches.**

Student Handbook: We are also developing an online version of the student handbook. The student handbook will be available online and will allow easy access for students, parents and the community.



School App: For the upcoming school year, we will have our own school app. This app was written entirely by our Help Desk students. The purpose of the app is to provide quick access to school related links that are used on a daily basis. Links include: School website, e-mail, Blackboard, PowerSchool, lunch menu, Hudl, activities, student handbook, and the library book search. Credits go to the following students who spent many hours researching and developing this app. Great job guys!

- Ryan Murray - Idea and Project Manager
- Brenden Tisler - Developer /HTML
- Erik Wooldridge - Graphics Design
- Evan Fleck- HTML
- Brett Wright - Tester
- Ben Thrun - Tester
- Robert Newkirk - Functional Prototype
- Mason Mitchell - Tester

- Tristan Underwood - iOS
- Dillon Johnson - Graphics Design
- Nate Anderson- Documentation
- Daniel Niswonger - iOS Tester
- Lucas Altobella - Tester
- Jimmy Kluzek - Tester
- Matt Johnson – Spell Check



Twitter: Our twitter handle is [@SenecaHS](#). Be sure to follow us on twitter as we plan on using this next year for highlights and special announcements.

Technology Assistant, Marty Harig, reports that there were 15 students who were preapproved by tech staff, along with teacher recommendations, to work in the Tech Department’s Help Desk area this first year. All of the students were taught about computer hardware, software, and troubleshooting skills in this Computer Support class. The first year’s class curriculum is based on the A+ Certification, which is a basic hardware and software certification for computer techs. By the end of the school year, most of the students in this class should be close to qualifying to take the actual A+ Certification test. The Help Desk students often work in teams and are responsible for assisting the students and staff with simple computer related problems. Harig said, “The problem solving skills that the Computer Support class students provide allows teachers more classroom time to teach.” Another benefit provided by the class, is that students who work in the Help Desk area are gaining “real-time” experience with computer troubleshooting and how to communicate effectively with people needing computer help. If students have time in their schedules to take a second year of the Computer Support class, they will be learning more advanced technology skills like Computer Networking.



SHS STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



#shscollegedays

SHS Features College Days

On May 8th and 9th, Seneca High School tried something new that we called College Days. On these two days, all staff members were asked to wear a shirt or sweatshirt from the college they attended. Teachers spent about fifteen minutes per class discussing the college they attended, as well as talking about careers that relate to their teaching area. Staff members who were not in a classroom could be stopped by students and asked about their college if the student was interested in learning about it. To go along with this event, there was also a small college fair on Friday, May 9th during the lunch periods.



A college fair is a collection of college representatives who are available in one area to discuss their school and hand out information to interested students. At our small college fair, we had two community colleges, one state university, and four private colleges/universities. Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC) and Joliet Junior College (JJC) were the two community colleges – Northern Illinois University (NIU) was the one state university – and the University of St. Francis, Olivet Nazarene University, North Central College, and Monmouth College were the four private schools. Students were able to attend the college fair during their lunch time. With the great success of the College Days event, we will definitely continue to have this in the future.



At the conclusion of the 2013-2014 school year, we not only say goodbye to our senior class, but also to two very important faculty members. Mrs. Nichole Payne will be leaving us after 10 years of teaching in our English Department. Mrs. Payne's skills in the classroom are palpable. She is a gifted teacher and an even better person. Mrs. Payne will be relocating to central Illinois with her family. Additionally, after 19 years of service to SHS, Mrs. Cathy Bergstrom is retiring. Cathy is a remarkable educator who has committed a significant portion of her career to providing students with academic assistance, social and emotional coaching, and organizational development in a compassionate, respectful, and caring manner. Her commitment to kids is unquestionable. On behalf of the entire Seneca High School community, we bid each of them a fond farewell and leave them with an Irish Blessing.



Mrs. Cathy Bergstrom

***May you always have work for your hands to do.
May your pockets hold always a coin or two.
May the sun shine bright on your windowpane.
May the rainbow be certain to follow each rain.
May the hand of a friend always be near you.
And may God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.***



Mrs. Nichole Payne



Student & Staff Laptop Survey

As the senior class turned in their laptops during their final days at SHS, several students were asked to submit a few comments on the positives and negatives (if any) of having access to the new laptops. Some teachers were also asked to relay a few words about the 1:1 initiative and the challenges (if any) of assigning student use of the laptops. The results were overwhelmingly clear, with a majority of those surveyed leaning towards the positive and convenient aspects of having access to the new laptops. Many stated that just having a computer available at home to use for class assignments was a positive aspect. Several students commented that they liked having access to all of the programs that they needed for class, as well as the having full-access to homework if absent from school. A few of the negative comments dealt with slower Internet speed in the first semester and not liking the laptop carrying case. Teachers also had to make adjustments in their lesson plans to create assignments which included laptop use. One teacher commented on how the laptops allowed students to instantly look-up terms and definitions to assigned content. Now that many of the small “first-year glitches” have been worked out, the Technology Department and the Staff here at SHS will have a better perspective on issuing and using the laptop technology in the classrooms.

Knowing the cost and technology maintenance that would be involved in the project, the decision made by the SHS Board and Administration to take the plunge into the 1:1 laptop initiative was not taken lightly. Keeping the students’ education in mind, the SHS Board and Administration felt that this commitment was something our school needed to better assist students in making the transition into their college years or career field of choice. The SHS Board and Administration would like to thank everyone for all of their support and diligent labor involved in making the program work.



Seneca High’s Spring Musical

On the weekend of March 14th & 15th, audiences were treated to a spectacular performance by the SHS cast and crew of this year’s spring musical “The Wizard of Oz”. Musical Director Phil Hardin put together yet another great show, selecting SHS Junior, Lauren Hickle, to play the lead role as Dorothy. Hickle’s rendition of “Over the Rainbow” left spectators in awe, as she effortlessly sang and entertained the crowd. Her sidekicks, played by Brandon Grossi (Scarecrow), Matt Anderson (Tin Man), and Wyatt Aldrich (Lion), all helped in adding pizzazz to the yellow brick road journey. Kayla Haines (Wicked Witch) and Caroline Collet (Glinda Good Witch) did their part to create



the “good vs. evil” theme. There was even a live dog for the part of Toto (played by Noodles) who performed for a mere few doggie treats! Other cast members included: Josh Mettille (Professor Marvel/Wizard), Joe Mathews (Uncle Henry/Guard), and Gabe Barla (Evil Monkey). Supporting characters from the Land of Oz were played by: Hannah Brickey, Jessica Ellis, Heather Vroman, Carina Collet, Torie Knibbs, Matilda Edwards, Tori Johnson, Julia Petterson, and Madison Carr. Special thanks goes to the backstage crew and performing musicians, whom without, the show would not have been possible. The Senior Citizen show had to be postponed by a day due to a rare March snow closing down the school! Director Phil Hardin commented, “This year, the Wizard of Oz created many great life long memories. The kids still quote and sing from the show in the halls and tell stories that seem to get better with every telling like never before.”





Seneca High School Gleans 30 MPH

After a three week postponement, Seneca High School completed its annual, iconic 30 MPH event on Thursday, April 17th in the road ditches north and south of Seneca. “Students and faculty look forward to this event every year,” said event chairman Wyatt Quigley. “Not only because it kicks off our break, but because they know that they are improving our community. The 30 MPH cleanup has a way of bringing the entire school together for a simple cause.”

The event is led by the Seneca FFA who solicits security and safety precautions from the Illinois Department of Transportation, Seneca Police, Seneca Fire and Ambulance, Grundy and LaSalle County Sheriff, Brookfield and Manlius Townships, and Grundy County EMS. Major financial sponsors again this year were Exelon and CF Industries of Seneca. Exelon also provided supervisors and collection trucks. JB Disposal of Verona donated a dumpster and the hauling away of the trash. The Seneca FFA Alumni members picked up the bags and delivered them to the dumpster. Illinois Central provided buses for transportation and all drivers volunteered their time.

“We would like to thank everyone in the community who supported our efforts again this year. The Seneca FFA is proud to organize this event that involves so many students in a fun and worthwhile event” added Peter Hogue, 30 MPH committee member.



SCIENCE DEPARTMENT ~ RIVERS PROJECT

Fox River Water Quality Testing: On May 2nd, 34 Seneca High School students from the Advanced Chemistry and Environmental Science classes braved a cold, cloudy, damp day to complete the chemical and biological tests on water taken from the Fox River. For the past 17 years the Science Department has been taking students to various locations on the Fox to monitor water quality. Retired Chemistry teacher Moira Marshall started this endeavor in 1997 and it has continued ever since with this year’s trip being led by Mrs. Ogden, Mr. Vroman, and Mr. Maxwell.

After analyzing the results students determined that the water quality was in the medium to good range. Areas showing low values were dissolved oxygen, turbidity and total solids. Students concluded that these values were most likely due to the continuous cold, rainy weather that preceded the testing day. This testing day allows the students to put into practice the analytical and practical skills they learn in the classroom. It also gives them an opportunity to consider possible career options. New this year to the testing was the use of computer-based data-collection technology in the form of Vernier sensors such as pH, dissolved oxygen, flow-rate and temperature probes. This technology was partially funded by a grant from CF Industries written by Mrs. Ogden. The Science Department would like to thank CF Industries for their continued support of this program.





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