



The Irish Highlighter

Volume 5: Issue 2

Seneca High School

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2016





THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



Board of Education Corner



“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.”

President John F. Kennedy

With the presidential election taking place this year, presidential quotes will be scattered throughout this newsletter. John F. Kennedy, elected 56 years ago in 1960, is remembered for his words “leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.” Learning, whether acquired through experience or the classroom, is certainly an essential part of everyday life here at Seneca High School as we prepare the leaders of the future.

The world is a much different place today than it was 56 years ago, and learning is very different also. The graduating class of 2016 has a vastly different mindset and set of experiences than the graduating class of 1960. Students have never known a world without the Internet. Using a paper map or thumbing through an encyclopedia or dictionary is a foreign experience. In their lifetime, instant communication and access to information has always been the norm. Yet, even though students come to Seneca High School with a different set of skills, the responsibility of the school board has not changed since 1960. Ensuring students are equipped to contribute to society in a positive manner and giving them the skills to be successful in both life and the workplace remain the goal of the Seneca High School Board of Education.

As you read through The Irish Highlighter, please reflect on your own high school experience, and then try to imagine a day in the life of a current Seneca High School student. I am proud of all the opportunities available to our students. High school is a great time for students to spread their wings and try new experiences. Whether it is taking an elective or getting involved in a new sport or activity, students today have many choices to match various interests. Learning, whether acquired through experience or the classroom, is alive and well at Seneca High School.

Best wishes to the Class of 2016,

Ron Frye
Board President



2016
The Class Of



“Without a vision the people perish.”

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN, State of the Union address, Feb. 6, 1985



A message from Superintendent Jim Carlson



President Ronald Reagan noted the critical importance of vision in the progress of a people. He stated, “Without a vision the people perish.” The same wisdom can be applied to any entity or organization. An effective school must be led by a compelling vision of what it wishes to become and to accomplish. A vision provides direction and demonstrates adaptability. As the needs of society change, schools with vision will prepare students for success in the changing world.

As you reflect upon your high school experience, you will undoubtedly note, regardless the generation, many similarities with the education our students receive today. This congruence is certainly proper, as change for the sake of change reflects but a modicum of common sense. Upon closer inspection, however, you will discover significant differences between your own education and that of students today. It is in the intentional implementation of these differences that our vision can be found at work.

The vision of Seneca High School contains both a desired outcome for our students and the manner in which those outcomes can be achieved. This vision is accomplished through a partnership between the school, the student, and home because, in the end, we all want what is best for the students of Seneca High School. The first paragraph of the SHS Vision Statement is provided below for your review.

When students graduate from Seneca High School, they are prepared academically, emotionally, and organizationally to succeed in college, a career, or the military. They have a disciplined work ethic, consistently perform quality work, and readily exceed the minimal requirements and expectations of the task entrusted them. They are committed to developing themselves to their fullest, possess a strong responsibility toward the service of others, maintain healthy attitudes, make healthy choices, and build healthy relationships with others. In short, Seneca High School graduates possess a strong foundation to become future leaders in our world.

Through this vision, we provide our stakeholders the reciprocal to President Reagan’s insights: With a vision the people prosper.



Dr. Carlson congratulates a few of our Salutatorians



Kailah Fomby gives her class a big smile!

Dr. Carlson congratulates a few of our Valedictorians





THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



WE TAKE PRIDE IN OUR GRADS!

CLASS OF 2016 PROFILE

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS CONTINUING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

84%

SCHOLARSHIP AND FINANCIAL AID RECEIVED

Amount earned toward post-secondary education for
freshman year

\$461,760

Amount earned toward post-secondary education for
all four years

\$1,631,410

WE WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE

AND WISH

THE CLASS OF 2016

THE BEST OF LUCK IN ALL THEY DO!



2016 SHS Valedictorians:

Colleen Kinsella
Lyle Marshall
Kaylyn Groth
Samantha De Graaf



2016 SHS Salutatorians:

Matt Anderson
Julia Petterson
Ross McCormick
Abigail Seul – not pictured



President Harry S. Truman once said, "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit."



Semester Highlights from Principal Marty Voiles

When completing research for this edition of the Seneca High School district newsletter, I came across a quote from President Harry S. Truman who said, "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit." Immediately, I thought this quote capsulized the quality work completed by parents who recently joined our Curriculum Advisory Committee as part of our School Improvement Plan at Seneca High School. Combine that work with the continued progress our staff is making as we add new course offerings for SHS students, and that highlights the two topics I will summarize in this edition of our newsletter.

Curriculum Advisory Committee

The Seneca High School administration welcomed eight new members to its Curriculum Advisory Committee at the March 2016 School Improvement Planning meeting. The nature of this advisory committee is for members to assist the administration with ideas to consider as it relates to curriculum enhancement.

The administration and committee members:

- Reviewed *The Seneca Way*, which is a document explaining the philosophy utilized by staff to prepare all students for college and career readiness;
- Discussed new course offerings and program enhancements implemented over the last two school years, plus reviewed additional course offerings that will be implemented during the 2016-2017 school year; and
- Committee members completed a survey that provided the administration with feedback for potential course and program enhancement in the coming school years.

Topics passed to the administration by the committee:

- Develop a more in-depth communication to students about methods that should be considered and used when selecting career pursuits, employment opportunities, and applying to colleges and universities;
- Provide all students with the opportunity to develop real world economic, writing, and communication skills;
- Consider and develop senior year internships and field experiences;
- Expand health care course opportunities; and
- Contemplate service learning projects.

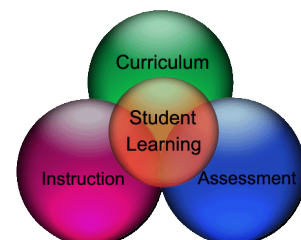
Many of the suggestions provided by the committee mirror the expectations that drive the philosophy behind The Seneca Way. The administration will now take the information gathered from the advisory committee and consider all options when planning potential course enhancements. The administration would like to thank the members of the advisory committee for their time, effort, and feedback related to improving SHS.

Course improvements offered for 2016-2017!

You may recall from articles in previous district newsletters, Seneca High School began making necessary adjustments with course offerings during the 2013-2014 school year. The motivation behind these course additions was to provide career and college pathways for all SHS graduates. Students who take advantage of the new offerings will gain a competitive edge over their peers as they move into the work force or when applying at colleges or universities.

Course offerings that are new for the 2016-2017 school year will be:

- Honors English II
- Dual Credit Speech (thru IVCC)
- Honors Chemistry II
- Welding
- Welding II (opportunity for Dual Credit thru IVCC)



It is the vision of the administration, staff, and advisory committee to continue working together and explore new course options that provide all SHS students with real world experiences.



THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



Students of the Month

DECEMBER 2015



Left to Right: Abigail Seul, Student of the Month; Zachary Rivett, Role Model of the Month; Christian Stropoli, Most Improved Student of the Month; and Joey Thomas, Rookie of the Month.

MARCH 2016



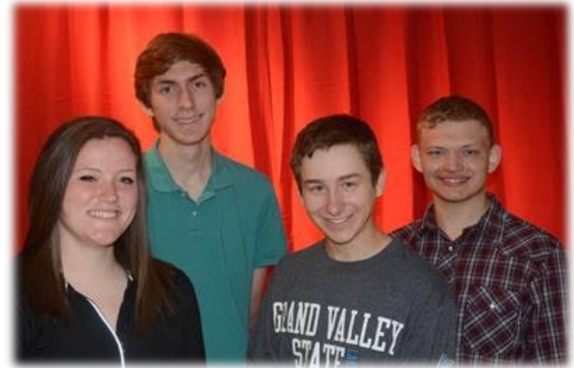
Standing Left to Right: Kylie Winsor, Co-Rookie; Kara Pflzgraf, Most Improved; Maggie Cade, Co-Rookie; Seated Left to Right: Crystal Carlos and Emily Hauch, Co-Role Models; Missing from photo: Hannah Brickey, Student of the Month.

JANUARY 2016



Standing Left to Right: Andrew Baker, Rookie of the Month; Bryana Ward, Most Improved; Seated Left to Right: Samantha De Graaf, Student of the Month; Karlie Cade, Role Model.

APRIL 2016



Back row left to right: Benjamin Thrun, Student of the Month; Greg Granby, Most Improved; Front row left to right: Shawwna Goins, Role Model; and Mark Mehochko, Rookie of the Month.

FEBRUARY 2016



Standing Left to Right: Rebekah Chapman, Co-Rookie of the Month; Kole Gallick, Student of the Month; Kayla Butler, Most Improved Student; Seated Left to Right: Lexi Greve, Co-Rookie; Claudia Paulsen, Role Model.

MAY 2016



Left to right: Cori Daggett, Most Improved; Mackenzie Maierhofer, Student of the Month; Gabriel Barla, Role Model; and Carissa Simon, Rookie.

“Children are our most valuable natural resource.”

President Herbert Hoover



From the Desk of Assistant Principal Mike Coughlin



I am reminded frequently of the above Hoover quote in dealing with students on a daily basis at Seneca High School. I'm so lucky to be a part of a bigger community that celebrates young people, their uniqueness and differing abilities. One such experience that stood out to me in the past couple weeks that perfectly celebrated this idea was Special Olympics at Spring Valley Hall High School on May 7th. The event, like every other year, was so important to the athletes and their families. Although the day included clouds and rain, the spirit of the athletes and their families is always a reminder of the importance of the day. President Hoover being “The Great Humanitarian” stressed the importance and benefits of volunteer work and making it a positive contribution. I would encourage anyone to volunteer their time to such a great celebration of student athletes and their efforts. Regardless of the clouds, let me suggest you wear some sunglasses; I'm confident that you may have to wipe away an unexpected tear or two. I would like to congratulate all the Special Olympic athletes that competed that day and certainly wish them the best as they move on to the State competition to be held at Illinois State University on Saturday, June 11th. Go Irish Go!!!



Our Excellence in Education honorees at the May 5th Regional Office of Education Excellence in Education Banquet. Pictured below left to right: Regional Office Superintendent Christopher B. Dvorak, Todd Yegge and Jeff Stenzel were honored as Teaching Staff, JoAnn Alsvig honored as Support Staff, and Jim Kluzek and Phil Hardin honored as Retirees.





THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



End of Year Achievements with Activities Director Steve Haines



Now that we have come to the close of another school year, it is a good time to reflect on some outstanding performances and look forward to getting started on the next year here in the Land of the Irish.. First of all, I would like to take this opportunity and thank the Seneca Athletic Boosters for everything they have donated to the Irish Athletics and Seneca High School teams.

This past March, the Seneca Athletic Booster held their annual Drawdown Fundraiser. This year was the first year, in the seven years of the fundraiser being held, that all 150 tickets for the event were sold. With a sold out crowd enjoying the FFA prepared meal and the company of other Irish fans, SHS Staff, and Irish Coaches, the fundraiser raised more money than any other Drawdown in the past. This year, the Seneca Athletic Booster Drawdown raised \$18,500 for Seneca athletics. This fund is a vital contribution to our athletic programs...offering equipment and activities that the teams would normally not be able to have. Most recently, these items have included golf bags, hotel rooms for overnight trips, practice jerseys, and other items that the programs at the high school would not be able to offer without parent payments or other fundraisers. The main goal of the Seneca Athletic Booster is to raise funds, so that the athletes and families are not asked to pay for. The Seneca High School athletic department is very appreciative of their efforts and the work they do for Irish athletes!

Another night of reflection was the 2016 Senior Awards night. It was my honor to host this wonderful evening. It was also my honor to recognize the following athletes for their outstanding performances during their careers at Seneca High School.

- ◆ Anna Gay Most Outstanding Female Athlete – Karlie Cade
- ◆ Gerald Hoben Most Outstanding Male Athlete – Ross McCormick
- ◆ Female Irish Pride Scholarship – Claudia Paulson
- ◆ Male Irish Pride Scholarship – Wyatt Quigley



Congratulations to the Class of 2016, you will be missed as you have accomplished much during your time in the Land of the Irish. As graduation signals the end for some, it signals the beginning of yet another summer of off-season workouts for others. High School athletics has become a year-round commitment. In order to compete at the highest level, our athletes use much of their free time becoming better athletes. Our coaches are committed to their programs and to the betterment of their athletes.

"Without a strong educational system democracy is crippled. Knowledge is not only key to power, it is the citadel of human freedom."

President Harry S Truman



Student Highlights



Senior student Julia Petterson was selected to receive the LaSalle County Student Excellence Award. On April 14th, Julia and her family were invited to the LaSalle County Board meeting where she was presented with a plaque by Regional Superintendent Christopher B. Dvorak and County Board Chairman Jerry Hicks.

Julia was also selected by the Seneca High Citizenship Committee members to receive the 2016 SHS Citizenship Award as presented by Mr. Bill Bernardoni and COUNTRY Financial. Julia's name was added to the plaque that is displayed in the SHS Commons, and she was given a new laptop as part of the award during Honors Night.



Madison Carr and Carina Collet are going to girls state this summer.

American Legion Auxiliary Illini Girls State is a week long program dedicated to providing training for young women in city, county, and state government. They are placed into a two-party system and will run for office, campaign, vote, and write legislation pertinent to Illini Girls State as well as the state and nation.

Along with forming their own government of these three levels, they will also hear from guest speakers in the political arena (present and past), veterans and/or active service men and women, American Legion Auxiliary members, and motivational speakers. Americanism and flag etiquette are taught this week as well.

Along with the educational benefits and the importance of voting and getting involved in your community, state, and nation, our goal is also to give young women confidence and knowledge to go forward in their adult lives and not be afraid to go for their dreams.



I-8 Leadership Conference 2015

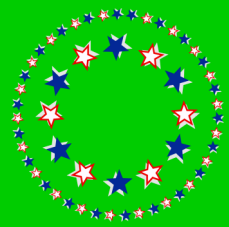


The Interstate Eight Leadership Conference was held on Monday, October 26th at the Morris Country Club. Ted Wiese was the keynote speaker who presented a Dynamic Leadership & Team Building Program. The students worked in small groups to discuss and share leadership topics with the other school representatives.

The students that represented Seneca High School are from left to right: Molly Baker, Joey Thomas, Sara Cahill, Brendan Newkirk, Jamie Goslin, Hunter Simon, Julia Petterson, and Wyatt Quigley



THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



Community Campaign



Educational Foundation

of Seneca Township High School

Dear Community Members,

Over the past four years, Seneca High School has made an intentional effort to raise the rigor of its educational program, including increasing the number of classes for which college credit may be earned. As you are aware, Seneca High School is a district blessed with considerable property wealth which affords it a state of the art building on a wonderful school complex. Despite the district's resources, many of our students come from families where household finances present significant challenges. While some of these students qualify for free or reduced lunches and waiver of school fees, these benefits do not extend to tuition associated with college coursework taken during, and as a part of, the high school program.

It is the goal of the Educational Foundation of Seneca Township High School to provide financial support to the students of Seneca High School who otherwise qualify to participate in college level coursework in high school, but whose financial situation is such that the payment of tuition and fees either prevents them from taking the courses or places a significant financial strain on their family. We are calling this our *Opportunity for Rigor Campaign*. Research shows that, when students graduate high school with college credit or advanced certifications earned, they are significantly more likely to enroll in college after graduation from high school. We believe all students deserve an opportunity to partake in college level coursework regardless of socio-economic status.

As an important partner of Seneca High School, you are receiving this letter asking for your financial support of this initiative. This request represents the inaugural annual appeal of our efforts to assist our students-in-need with access to college level course. To provide perspective for you, during the 2015-2016 school year, the cost of tuition is approximately \$84/credit hour. So for example, a five credit hour calculus class will cost about \$420. At this time, we do not have the tuition rates for next school year from the college.

We appreciate your work with Seneca High School and hope that you find merit in our program. If you are able to help us with our fundraising efforts, please complete the information sheet below and return to . Thank you in advance for your assistance to the students of Seneca High School. The Foundation of Seneca High School is a 501 (C) (3) organization and all donations to it are tax deductible.

Sincerely,

Dan Mehochko, Chairman
Foundation of Seneca High School

“No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.”

President Calvin Coolidge



Educational Foundation

of Seneca Township High School

Thank you for supporting the students of Seneca High School. Please complete the form below and return it by mail in an envelope with your monetary donation.

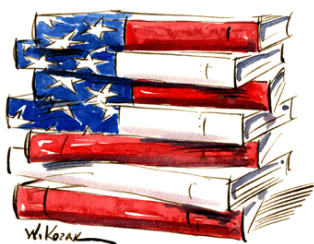
Envelopes and Checks should be made out to:

The Educational Foundation of Seneca Township High School
P.O. Box 20
307 E. Scott Street
Seneca, IL 61360

Name of the Individual or Organization: _____

Contact Person or Family Name: _____

Enclosed is my donation of: \$_____





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