

The Dove's Nest

The Official Newsletter of



Susie King Taylor
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

February 2020

Happy February SKTCS families!!! Although February is a short month of the year, it will be a packed month for Susie King Taylor. First up, our fourth through sixth graders will be attending a field trip to see the [Hiplel](#) dancers. This field trip will allow students to see a performance art show that combines hip-hop and ballet, and it is sure to be a memorable experience.

All grades will be taking Black History related field trips during the month of February, and the school as a whole will culminate the month on Friday, February 28 at 2 PM in the gym with our own special assembly. This assembly will focus on the themes of peace, conflict resolution, and community. Many students will perform songs, poems, dance and/or speeches from famous African Americans. You are all invited to watch the amazing creativity of our students and staff.



Family Engagement Activities

Pokemon Club

A new Pokemon Club for 4th-6th graders is being planned by SKTCS students. This student led (parent supervised) club will meet at the school on Mondays from 4-5pm starting Feb 24th through March 30th. There is a suggested registration fee of \$5 to help cover supply costs. Students do not have to have cards to participate. We will play games, trade cards, and more!

Email sktcspokemon@gmail.com with any questions or to sign up your child!

Science GMAS Prep

5th graders are gearing up for Science and Social Studies GMAS this year. If you would like your student to get extra help to prepare for the science GMAS, there is a parent who is willing to help students prepare! Think of it like a SAT study group (but for 5th graders for GMAS!). If you would like your 5th grader to attend and/or would like to help volunteer with this valiant effort please email yanis.medina@sktcs.org.

The Study Group will take place on Fridays from 4:30 - 5:30 in the science lab.

GMAS

Recently, the school sent home GMAS tutorial invitations. Tutorials are tutoring sessions provided to students at no-cost in order to build upon skills that students may not have mastered previously.

At SKTCS, we are cognizant that the students in our testing grades (three through six) started their education in a variety of places. Some of them were public schools, some were private schools, some were homeschooled, and some were not even in the state of Georgia. Given the recent knowledge that charter schools in Savannah are not a part of the strategic waiver awarded to SCCPSS pertaining to the state's requirement to retain students in grades three, five, and eight based on reading and/or math proficiency, we are taking advantage of recent grant monies awarded to us in January to provide these free tutorials.

Students were selected for tutorials based on the probability that with extra support they would be able to make gains and move into the next tier of achievement. Most students with IEPs were not invited to tutorial because we believe that they are working at their maximum potential during the school day. Additionally, students who are already achieving at the highest tiers did not receive invitations.

At SKTCS we provide a 10:1 tutorial ratio. Meaning that for every 10 students there is one adult in the room. This allows specific and intentional interventions for the students. Students' programs will be individually prepared for them based on their Iready diagnostic reports.

As those of you who have been with us from the beginning know, SKTCS does not believe that one test measures to greatness of our students. However, we have been placed in a precarious position by the state that we must have students test in order to get a CCRPI score

that will keep the doors of the school open. There are ways fight this rule, but it starts with the legislation in Atlanta. These are rules that have been given to us by the state.

I know we answered many of your questions during the meeting on Wednesday, but please feel free to send any additional questions to our testing coordinator, Mrs. Medina at yanis.medina@sktcs.org.



Dress Code

You've spoken and we've listened ...

Last month we ran a survey for the parent body with a number of key questions regarding policy creations for next year. One of the questions was in relation to parents' opinions about the dress code. Overwhelmingly, parents would prefer to have a less limiting dress code, which would include students' ability to wear clothing with words and/or logos. We would like to test out this policy during the month of February. During this month only, students will be able to wear shirts with logos and/or appropriate wording.

In order to continue this policy for the remainder of the school year and/or into the next school year, we are going to need to have parents monitor the appropriateness of the clothing. Meaning, if too many students have inappropriate wording we will go back to the old policy. Inappropriate wording includes any innuendos, negative connotations or suggestions, or offensive slang. We want for students to be able to express their individuality. We also want to make sure that we are being school appropriate.

The changes to the dress code are only in relation to words and logos. The rest of the dress code remains. Please be sure that children wearing leggings to school are wearing them under skirts, shorts, or dresses. They may not be worn with just a shirt - even for students in kindergarten. Please help us to keep school time focused on learning and not on clothing by re-enforcing the dress code at home.



Georgia Charter Schools Association

Plant a charter. Grow a kid.

GCSA Charter Advocate

On Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020, you are invited to join GCSA and 150 charter school students, parents, school leaders, teachers and community advocates to rally in support of our charter schools. Dr. Patricia Ratcliffe, Savannah's charter advocate (and SKTCS Board Member) will be there to share with our legislators how bills and the state budget processes impact charter school students and families. Discussions will address current legislation and the state budget processes that impact charter school students and families.

This event will begin with breakfast at the Georgia Freight Depot Blue Room, directly across from the capitol. If you are interested in participating, consider that capacity is capped at 150 so [please register ASAP!](#) School participants will receive transportation reimbursement.

Good to Know Info ...

Charter School Basics

<https://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Charter-Schools/Pages/General-Frequently-Asked-Questions.aspx>

Whom can I contact if I did not find the answer to my question here?

Please contact the Charter Schools Division at (404) 657-0515 or lsatterwhite@doe.k12.ga.us.

SKTCS Family Handbook

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1t5eB8x4B7pzTgZ2cMEi2EBIxxaGwxLjf/view>

Who to Contact?

Teachers

Your classroom teacher is typically your first stop for information. SKTCS employees may be contacted through their SKTCS emails. The format of emails is firstname.lastname@sktcs.org. Please do not contact employees through their personal email, phone numbers, home addresses, or social media regarding school matters. At SKTCS we respect our employees' home lives and expect them to have a work-life balance. Therefore, unless it is an emergency, please allow 24 business hours to pass for a returned phone call or email. Additionally, contacting them about school business on their personal

devices, phones, homes, and/or email accounts is a violation of their agreement with their school.

Teachers can answer questions regarding:

- grades
- tests
- schedules
- behavior
- peer relationships
- recess
- curriculum
- lunch activities

Meeting with the teacher

We know that you value instructional time as much as we do. Impromptu conferences during the school day – including at arrival and dismissal – prevent teachers from being able to prepare for the day, monitor, and supervise your students as well as the classrooms and hallway. Furthermore, hallway discussions will not give you the proper time or privacy you deserve.

Please be considerate of teachers' planning and break time by scheduling meetings or phone calls at a mutually convenient time. Conferences can be scheduled during the teacher's planning time during the school day, before and after school during the teacher's contractual hours as long as they don't interfere with mandatory school meetings or duties the teacher must attend. Teachers will respond to your request within 24 hours and plan to meet with you within 48 hours of your request. If you are experiencing difficulty getting a response from an employee in a timely manner please contact the School Director.

Dean of Social Emotional Learning - Mrs. Sandra Hardy (DSEL@sktcs.org)

The Dean of Social Emotional Learning (DSEL):

1. Assesses Student, Family and School Needs

Assess and address the assets and needs of students, families, and SKTCS personnel in order to utilize our community's strengths.

2. Provides Direct Services / Service Delivery

Successfully implement crisis interventions, home visits, conflict resolution, Second Step, and individual and group counseling as determined by the school.

Counseling services are available for students through the Dean of Social Emotional Learning. Students may be eligible for individual or group counseling based on their level of need and scheduling availability of the DSEL. Students may be referred for individual or group counseling by parents and/or teachers. Students themselves may also request to see the DSEL for an individual counseling session. Please note that students have the right to request to see the DSEL at any time. However, if the DSEL believes that ongoing counseling sessions may be beneficial to the student, she will

contact the parents/guardians for permission to continue meeting with the student. Written permission from parents/guardians will always be obtained prior to placing students in a counseling group. Small group counseling may include (but are not limited to) topics such as grief/loss, divorce/separation, self-esteem, self-control, or anger management.

If you would like to request to meet with the DSEL to discuss concerns and/or possible counseling services for your child, please contact Mrs. Hardy.

3. Advocates

Identify and initiate mental-health and behavioral services for students and their families as needed.

4. Is the Behavior Response To Intervention Coordinator

Provide school-wide support to assist in the identification of students in need of RTI services, implementation of interventions, and coordination of SST meetings.

5. Creates Positive School Climate

a. Acts as a resource and provides professional development for teachers in their instructional practice, especially as it relates to issues of discipline, relationships with students, classroom management, and school culture,

b. Assists teachers, students, and parents in the effective creation and implementation of individual behavior plans,

c. Helps to reinforce the effective use of a school-wide behavior plan,

d. Keeps accurate student discipline records, documenting all conferences

6. Is the 504 Coordinator

Reading Coach/Academic RTI coordinator -

Mrs. Yanis Medina (reading@sktcs.org)

The Reading Coach/RTI coordinator has the following responsibilities:

1. Academic Response To Intervention (RTI) Coordinator

a. Provide school-wide support to assist in the identification of students in need of reading RTI interventions in Tiers 1-3.

b. Implementation of reading interventions and reading progress monitoring for Tiers 1 - 3.

c. Coordination of Student Support Team meetings.

d. Coordinator of all academic RTI plans.

2. Teacher Coach

Make regular visits to classrooms to observe teachers informally, provide feedback, and monitor progress. Meet with teachers as scheduled to problem-solve issues related to reading as they may arise.

3. Vertical Alignment

Assure that the reading curriculum meets both Georgia standards and the innovation models of the school.

4. Professional Development

Seek and implement professional development opportunities for staff as related to the school's annual improvement plan and the Five Year (Innovation) Plan.

5. Testing Coordinator

Assist in the preparation of staff, students, and technology for formal district assessments. Assist in administering MAP/NWEA and GMAS tests.

Gifted Education

If you have a question about your student's gifted contract, would like to have your student evaluated for gifted, or would like to schedule a meeting regarding your student's official gifted identification please contact:

Ms. Erica Scalmato (erica.scalmato@sktcs.org).

Special Education

If you have a question about your student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), would like to have your student evaluated, or would like to schedule an amendment meeting please contact:

Grades K - 3: Mrs. Robbin Sikes (robbin.sikes@sktcs.org)

Grades 4 - 6: Mrs. Kisha McRae- Kennedy (kisha.mcrae-kennedy@sktcs.org)

Front Office Manager

Mrs. Quiana Aikens (frontoffice@sktcs.org)

The Front Office Manager Can Assist With:

- Enrollment
- Withdrawal
- Demographic Update (e.g. - phone numbers, addresses, email, etc)
- Early Dismissal
- Absences (notification of and excuses for)
- Student Records
- Messages for students/teachers
- School Director's Calendar
- Building/Facilities Maintenance Issues
- Directing entities to the right party
- Lunch orders
- School calendar/schedule

- Mailings
- Communications

School Director

Dr. Latrisha Chattin (director@sktcs.org)

The School Director Can Assist With:

- Answering questions about policies or procedures if the classroom teacher or other directly responsible employee cannot provide an answer.
- Conflict and/or official grievances between families and teachers or families and families
- Student suspensions
- Community liaisons
- Questions regarding implementation of mission and vision
- Volunteerism

Governing Board

Governing Board Clerk (clerk@sktcs.org)

Grievance Coordinator (grievances@sktcs.org)

The Governing Board oversees compliance with the charter contract, school policy and supervision of the School Director.

The Governing Board can assist with:

- Answering questions about school policy, not school procedures (School Director oversees school procedures).
- Support navigating the school Conflict Resolution and Grievance Policy.
- Discussing serving on a committee, task group, or joining the Governing Board.

Lunches

Ms. Nicole Black (nicole.black@sccpss.com) 912 - 395- 5235

Transportation

912 - 395 - 5591



Save the Date

Thursday, February 6

Governance Committee Meeting, 5:30 - 7:30pm

Friday, February 7

3rd Quarter Progress Reports sent home

Student Success Committee Meeting, 12:30 - 2pm

Wednesday, February 12

Board Work Session, 5 - 6pm

Board Meeting, 6 - 7:30pm

Monday, February 17

NO SCHOOL for STUDENTS

Wednesday, February 19

PTA Meeting, 6 - 7:30pm (SKT Gym)

Wednesday, February 26

Finance Committee Meeting, 4:30 - 6pm

Friday, February 28

Black History Program, 2:30 - 3:30pm