



# THE SHOOTING STAR



Sarasota Academy of the Arts

May 26, 2014

Volume 1, Issue 34

## Principal's Corner

Thank you to all of the parents who braved the heat and parking problems to attend the recognition ceremony. We are grateful to Mr. Art Jackman for giving us the time as speaker for the 5th through 8th graders and talking to them about citizenship. All of the students were recognized for their special abilities or characteristics ranging from attendance to improvement to the arts. On the downside, we have certainly learned that we have to schedule differently next year to accommodate more parents needing to park. None of us who planned it expected as many parents to attend!

As most of you know, the first of the FCAT scores were published in the Sarasota Herald-Tribune Saturday. Both reported math and reading scores were lower than we would like. Up until recently scores were not reported for grade levels having less than 30 students, but last year the threshold was lowered to 10. Most of the schools (28 out of 31) with scores reported had at least 78 students per grade level. The larger the population, the more valid the score is. When the first charter schools opened, school grades were not reported for the first year. Regardless, we have work to do!

Being a first-year school, we emphasized community and team building among teachers, parents, and students. Students came from many different schools for many different reasons. We started with new faces in each group and had to learn how to best work together. We've seen great success in that area as most of our families completed their volunteer hours and attended many events with their children. There are smiles on the faces of enthusiastic students. And most of the faculty wants to return! It was more difficult in the third grade to do this team building because the first teacher we hired resigned the day before teachers were to start. We scrambled and hired a teacher whose specialty was reading and she started the day before students were to start. She resigned for personal reasons at the end of first quarter and we searched again for a third grade teacher. It's more difficult for any teacher to come in later in the year because you have to start the building process all over again. The same thing happened in kindergarten a month later! **(continued on Page 2)**

## Upcoming Dates:



- May 26th - Memorial Day
- May 27th - Kindergarten Graduation
- May 29th - 5th Grade Trip to Zoo School
- May 29th - 8th Grade Graduation & Dance
- May 30th - School Wide Luau from 12:00pm - 4:00pm
- June 2nd - Last Day of School

## Need Volunteer Hours?

Here is the Volunteer Spot Group Page that lists a couple of opportunities for the coming week.

Please sign up today!

<http://vols.pt/jginqw>



## Principal's Corner (continued)

This year our academic focus was on reading and writing. A good report not in the paper (but available online) is the 8th grade writing FCAT score - 100% of the students scored a 3 or higher with one student scoring a six. At the 4th grade, 70% of the students scored at level 3 or higher. We're pleased with these. Only one other school scored 100% at the 8th grade level for 3 and above and we're in the top third of the county.

So where do we go from here? We are implementing several things. First, in math we are changing from Go Math Florida to Envision which is more aligned to the new Florida Standards. We will purchase Success Maker to use as a review/practice platform for math and it will be required for students to participate. As I did the schedule for next year, I allotted time for intensive math as an additional math class for students who need it. We will not decrease our emphasis on reading; the reading specialist will work more with elementary students who need support in that area. And our teachers are engaging in professional development this summer to hone their instructional skills to match the skills students need. Two teachers are working on gifted education endorsements so we can support students across the spectrum.

We'll send out testing information as we receive it. We thank you so much for your support this year and thank you for being part of the SAA family. If you have questions, please contact us.

Don't forget all of the field trips, graduations, and the luau scheduled for this week. We hope you'll attend as many as you can.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:



**Office Help:** Kathy will be out of the office on May 30th from 2:00pm - 4:00pm. We need 2 people to help out during that time frame. <http://vols.pt/ZzjTmt>

**Luau Help:** We have a whole afternoon of celebration for our students on May 30th, and need a TON of help from our volunteers including set up, volunteering for games, the moon walk, obstacle course, face painting, cooking on the grill, food distribution, ticket booth, and helping with tear down. We have over 100 slots available for volunteers in one hour increments. You can sign up for one hour or several hours depending on your availability. <http://vols.pt/Jgjnqw>