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### Media Release

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## South High School Students Engaged and Inspired by Meg Medina, Esteemed Author

South High School (SHS) students recently learned more about writing, directly from a highly-esteemed author. The school proudly hosted a visit by Meg Medina, the 8<sup>th</sup> National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. She met with all SHS students during two meetings, thanks to a proposal and arrangements made by Elizabeth Burke, SHS library media specialist.

"Students heard about the significance of community dialogue and connection through storytelling," said Burke. "One student, a school newspaper editor, interviewed Ms. Medina's editor about her career, while another student was inspired to join our book club and possibly start a podcast."



Medina shared the story of how her first book came about and emphasized how that was just the start. "You have to keep working on it," explained Medina. "The first thing you do isn't usually the best thing you can do." She reminded students that even when you find success you will experience a lot of detours. She stressed the importance of perseverance.

"Students saw themselves in her journey as a person and writer, highlighting the importance of perseverance and overcoming self-doubt," explained Burke. "Her authenticity resonated with them, showing that their voices and stories matter and that success is often accompanied by challenges."

Several South High students presented in the SHS auditorium with Medina. These student cuentistas (storytellers) spoke on stage about book talks they had prepared. They asked Medina about being an author, lessons learned and storytelling. Kingston Montgomery, Grade 11; Jocelyn Hamilton, Grade 12; Analeigh Draper, Grade 11 and Fernanda Orr, Grade 9 were the cuentistas.

Danielle Ogden, senior, was inspired by her talk. "I liked her book a lot," said Ogden. "I think it really spoke to how high schoolers are." While listening to Medina, Ogden experienced a shift in how she

feels about literature. "I find it more inspiring now. She talked about how her process works and how she became an author."

Aidan Coon, junior, shared, "It made me realize that writing doesn't have to always be hard, you can write from personal experience."

"I feel more motivated in writing my own stories," said Analeigh Draper. "I gained some new ideas of how to deal with writer's block and stories that I am no longer working on."

Kingston Montgomery realized that "...there is so much more to explore in the book world." Being on stage and talking with Meg Medina, whom he considers an amazing author, was his favorite part of being a cuentista. And, he got her autograph!

*This special opportunity was made possible through a proposal written by Elizabeth Burke to host the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. Special thanks to the Salina Education Foundation, volunteer readers, SHS staff members and the Salina Public Library.*



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