



January 2025

South Middle

The mission of South Middle School is to provide a high quality education for all students in a safe, equitable learning environment. This mission is best accomplished through a partnership including students, family, community, teachers and staff, preparing students to become life-long learners in an ever-changing world.

Principal Message

Cougar Families,

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a restful and joyful holiday season filled with quality time with loved ones. As we welcome 2025, it's a great time to reflect on past accomplishments and set our goals for the months ahead.

In January, we will continue to focus on fostering a positive learning environment where every student feels valued and supported. As we work towards academic success, we also remain committed to building strong character and emphasizing kindness, perseverance and respect.

Here a few important updates and reminders as we begin the new year:

- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** Keep an eye out for information about upcoming conferences the first part of February. This is a great opportunity to connect with teachers and discuss your child's progress.
- **Extra-Curricular Activities:** We will begin Boys Basketball, Girls Wrestling and Scholar's Bowl in January.
- **No School Days:** School will not be in session Friday, January 17 and Monday, January 20.

As always, I want to thank all of our families for your partnership and support. Together, we can make 2025 a year of growth, success, and joy for our students. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Wishing everyone a fantastic start to the new year!

Dustin Dooley - Principal

Scholars Bowl

The South Middle School Scholars Bowl team is gearing up for an exciting season of competition! The team boasts a talented group of students who will represent our school in various upcoming tournaments, testing their knowledge and quick thinking in subjects ranging from history and science to literature and current events. The team has just begun practices and are working with buzzers and fine-tuning their skills to prepare for competition. The first meet is on January 7 at South Middle School.

Seventh Grade Reading

Reading students are starting the second semester with a unit about persuasion and technology. We will be creating a large project by the end of Quarter 3. Students will be encouraged to read William Allen White books. The William Allen White award is a statewide honor given to books that Kansas students read and cast their vote for. Students should read a minimum of 20 minutes a night to keep flexing their skills and to be able to vote in mid March. Quarter 4 is another class novel, *Refugee*, and will be returning to assigned reading and questions due every week. Vocabulary quizzes are still very important this semester and will happen every other week; please continue to support your student by studying the words often. A link to the vocab flashcards is available at the top of the Reading Classwork page in Google Classroom.

Sixth Grade Intensive Reading

Students in sixth grade modified reading classes read from modified texts, receive extra phonics instruction, and practice comprehension strategies to bridge gaps and get them closer to reading and comprehending grade level text. Students were recently tested on their reading skills using the i-Ready Reading diagnostic. During the test, they read fiction and nonfiction passages and answered comprehension questions to determine their reading proficiency. Students made great progress, showing improvement in vocabulary, phonics, and comprehension. Several students demonstrated the skills needed to join a regular reading class for second semester. We are so proud of their progress!



Student Council

On December 6, Student Council made their annual trip to Wal-Mart to help make sure some fellow students and siblings have a Merry Christmas. This year STUCO was able to shop for 27 kids thanks to help of our SMS staff donating to the cause! Afterward, they spent the afternoon sorting and wrapping all of the gifts so they were ready to go to the families.



Dillons Rewards

SMS families can support the South Middle School PTO by using their Dillons Plus shopper's card. A percentage of all purchases are allotted to our PTO. Here's how to enroll in the Dillons Community Rewards program:

- Sign in to your existing online account or create an account
- Find and select South Middle School PTO or organization #VN011 and click save
- Shop at Dillons and scan your existing Plus shopper's card



Visit Dillons Community Rewards

Girls Wrestling

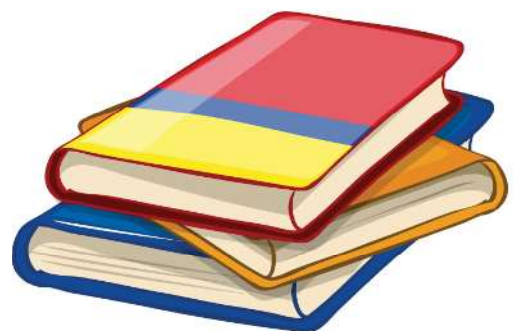
Girls wrestling is one of the fastest growing youth sports in America! We are excited to announce that the ladies at SMS finally get their own season to compete. Practice starts the day we get back from Christmas break on January 7th. We will meet in Gym 3 (wrestling gym) at 3:00 p.m. after school. Practices will be daily from 3:00 - 4:45 p.m. after school. We will have a parent meeting on January 10 at 4:45 p.m. in the commons to help introduce new parents to the sport as well as discuss general items about the season. Athletes will need to bring a form of athletic shorts/sweats, t-shirt, sports bra, and wrestling shoes to compete in daily at practice. If parent/guardians are hesitant to buy wrestling shoes, that's fine. Athletes can practice in socks the first week to be sure they are going to stick with this amazing sport. We encourage everyone to at least come to practice the first week and see what wrestling is all about!

Seventh and Eighth Intensive Reading

Seventh and eighth grade students in Ms. Turner's Intensive Reading classes have been engaged in reading leveled texts, phonics instruction, and using comprehension strategies. A primary focus of the intensive reading class is to ensure that each student follows their own individual pathway for growth as a reader. Each week, we explore current events through Scholastic news articles. Recently, the students were assigned to create a poster that summarized one of the articles they selected.



All students were assessed in December on their reading skills using the i-Ready Reading diagnostic. The assessment covered several areas, including phonics, high-frequency words, vocabulary, and comprehension of both literature and informational texts. These scores are used to help students establish individual reading goals and to guide reading instruction. Please support your child at home by encouraging them to read texts that align with their interests and to complete i-Ready lessons. This will help them become more successful readers!



Sixth Grade Reading

In January, our sixth grade Reading classes will be wrapping up our novel, *Touching Spirit Bear*, as part of our Animal Allies unit. Students will explore themes of forgiveness, healing, and the connection between humans and animals while engaging in meaningful discussions and activities related to the text. Afterward, we will kick off our Technology unit, where students will dive into how innovation shapes our world and explore exciting stories centered around technology.

Teacher of the Month

Congratulations to South Middle School Special Education teacher, Kennedy Elliott for earning January teacher of the month. Kennedy is in her third year of teaching at SMS in the Functional and Adaptive Special Education classes. In addition to teaching, Kennedy also coaches basketball and is the KAY (Kansas Association for Youth) sponsor. Mrs. Elliott fosters an inclusive and supportive classroom environment where all students feel valued and respected. Beyond the classroom, Mrs. Elliott collaborates closely with colleagues, staff and families to create individualized plans that help students reach their full potential. Congratulations Mrs. Elliott!

Students of the Week

Week 13

Congratulations to Angela Ayala-Duran for earning student of the week. Angela is an eighth grader at South Middle School. She enjoys expressing her ideas and creativity through her English class. She is passionate about music and loves being involved in advanced guitar and Sensations. In the future, Angela plans to pursue a career in a music-related pathway or marketing. A fun fact about Angela is that she spends her free-time singing, reading and listening to music.



Students of the Week (Cont.)

Week 14

Congratulations to Salina Ta for earning student of the week. Salina is a sixth grader at South Middle School. Some of her favorite things about SMS include talking with her friends and her social studies class. Describing her social studies teacher as nice, she feels motivated in the class and that it's easy to get help when needed. For the future, Salina is interested in three different types of jobs and building a life that makes her happy. In her free time, Salina enjoys writing and drawing and has been very interested in violin.



Week 15

Week 16

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Important Dates in January

1-6 - No School Winter Break

7 - Students Return from Winter Break

13 - Spelling Bee @ Maize

15 - Site Council Meeting (12:00 p.m.)

17 - No School

20 - No School

Contact Us

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Principal

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Secretary

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#SMSCougars
#305GrowsGreatness



 South Middle

 @USD305

 School Website

 District Website

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