



February 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

As we enter February, I want to take a moment to celebrate the incredible work and dedication of our students, families, and staff.

With the school year in full swing, it's crucial for students to stay organized and focused on their assignments and grades. Families, your involvement makes a significant difference in your student's success.

- Regularly check their homework.
- Ask about upcoming projects.
- Encourage them to use tools like planners or Skyward, our online grading portal.

Together, we can help our students maintain strong academic habits and achieve their goals.

This month brings several exciting opportunities for our school community to come together and support our students' growth and success.

- Mark your calendars for Wednesday, February 5, and Thursday, February 6, as we host our Student-Led Parent-Teacher Conferences. These conferences provide a valuable opportunity for students to take ownership of their learning by showcasing their progress, strengths, and areas for growth. We encourage all families to attend and support their child's journey toward academic success. Be on the lookout for information from your student's teachers regarding specific time and details.
- We are also thrilled to announce our upcoming Fine Arts Night and Choir Concert, scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, in the commons at South Middle School. This event will highlight the talents and creativity of our students as they showcase their hard work and passion for the arts. We hope to see you there to celebrate their accomplishments!

As always, we thank you for your continued support and partnership in fostering a positive and enriching learning environment. Let's make February another fantastic month at South Middle School!

Dustin Dooley

Yearbook

What is the best way to remember all of the friends, teachers, sports and events of the school year? Order a yearbook! The South Middle School Yearbook staff is working hard to ensure every student is represented, so please don't miss out. Families can order their 2025 yearbook and activity ticket for \$30 on Skyward or through the office. Please direct any questions to Yearbook sponsor, Brooke Jennings, brooke.jennings@usd305.com or Financial Secretary, Jamie Jackson, jamie.jackson@usd305.com. Thank You!

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences will take place on **Wednesday, February 5**, from **5:00 to 7:30 p.m.**, and **Thursday, February 6**, from **7:15 to 11:15 a.m.**, **12:00 to 3:00 p.m.**, and again from **5:00 to 7:00 p.m.** This winter, conferences will be student-led. During the conferences, students will guide their parent or guardian through a presentation they created during advisory, which will cover their grades, Individual Plans of Study, upcoming coursework, and reflections on the school year. We kindly ask that all students attend their conference with a parent or guardian and bring their Chromebook for the presentation. Conferences will be scheduled through each student's advisory teacher. Sixth grade conferences will be held in the commons, while seventh and eighth grade conferences will take place in Gym #2. We look forward to seeing all our families there!

Visible Learning

Did you know that understanding the Visible Learning strategies being used in your child's classroom can make a difference in their growth as active, curious learners? At South Middle, we are focusing on key learning dispositions like, curiosity, ownership, understanding, growth mindset and self-control to help students thrive.

You can play a big role in this! Try starting a conversation with your child about their learning. Here a few ideas to get you started:

- What have you done today that you're proud of?
- How did you approach something challenging today?
- What new learning are you excited about?

You can also ask, "Why are you learning this?" or "How will you know when you've learned it?" These small chats support your child's learning and strengthen your bond. Together, we can help them grow!

February Teacher of the Month

This month, we are proud to recognize Mrs. Taylor Urban, eighth grade English teacher, as our February teacher of the month! Mrs. Urban's dedication to her students is unmatched, as she consistently goes above and beyond to build meaningful relationships that inspire confidence and a love of learning. Her exceptional work ethic is evident in create, engaging lessons she prepares, always striving to make literature and writing relevant and exciting for students. Whether guiding thoughtful discussions or providing individual support, Mrs. Urban's passion for teaching and commitment to student success shine brightly. Thank you, Mrs. Urban for making such a positive impact on our school community.

Kansas Association for Youth

KAY Club is a newly established club at SMS. KAY Club is a student led service and leadership club. Students have already come up with many ways to serve our community and schools this year! So far, students have visited nursing homes to deliver Christmas cards and paint nails, picked up trash around the school and community, read books to students at each of our coordinating elementary schools. Students also plan to write a grant to benefit all students at SMS! We are so proud of all these students have accomplished in our first year and we look forward to seeing what other great ideas students come up with! Feel free to see our "SMS KAY Club" Facebook page to stay up to date on KAY Club activities.



SMS
KAY
Club

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

Boys Basketball

Boys basketball tends to bring on it's own share of struggles being a winter sport that typically has a high number of kids go out. As a Coach, cuts are never fun. This year added a different twist as our scheduled week of tryouts ended up getting snowed out, which also cost us our Home Opener (will be rescheduled at a later date). Jeff Vogt is the boys eighth grade Coach (in his second year) and this year he added a new Assistant Coach, Devon Cooper. The eighth grade has many returning players from last years seventh grade squad and has added a few new key pieces. This years team has 17 players and one manager.

The seventh grade is led by Head Coach Thaine Willer and his Assistant Coach, Darren Pittenger. This years group might lack size, but they have a group that can flat out shoot the basketball. This squad is led by a solid cast of guards that will be able to get up and down the court and promises to be a fun group of kids to watch. This years team consists of 18 players and two managers. Be sure to come check these boys out and support your classmates and school athletes. Go Cougs!

Counseling Department

2025-2026 Pre Enrollment (Current Sixth and Seventh Grade Students)

- In February counselors will begin Pre-Enrollment for the 2025-2026 school year.
- Students will be given a presentation during a Social Studies or Science class and will pre-enroll on Skyward for the classes they would like to take.
- If a student would like to be taken out of band/orchestra they will need parent/guardian permission by contacting their School Counselor.
- To review the elective courses we offer, please visit our website and go to the "students" tab. Or click [here](#).
- Any questions need to be directed to your child's School Counselor.

Eighth Grade Transition to South High

- If you missed the eighth grade parent night at South High school, please contact the counseling department and they can provide you with the presentation from the evening.

Questions? Please contact your child's School Counselor.

Jasmin Trower

Grade 6 Counselor

Amanda McChesney

Grade 7 Counselor

Amy Lauer

Grade 8 Counselor

Scholars Bowl

The seventh and eighth grade Scholars Bowl team is having an amazing season, especially considering that only one player is returning and there's a new coaching staff. The team has shown impressive growth, determination, and teamwork. With three meets complete, they've come in first at most of their competitions. The seventh grade team was champion in both Newton and Prairie Hills, while the eighth grade team took the top spot in Newton and Mulvane. The South Middle Scholars Bowl Team is excited to see where this momentum takes them and is hoping to finish the season strong. The league meet is coming up on February 4 at Derby North.

Fine Arts Information

February promises to be an eventful month for our Fine Arts Departments. Please note that the Fine Arts Night, originally scheduled for Tuesday, February 18 at 6:00 p.m., has been rescheduled for Tuesday, May 6 at 6:00 p.m. On the same evening, we will host a band concert at South Middle School, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Our next choir performance is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18 at 7:00 p.m. in the South Middle School commons. This event will feature two large group performances by our Sensations select choir and our combined seventh and eighth-grade choir, as well as several small ensembles and soloists. Additionally, our Orchestra and Band students will participate in the Wichita Suburban League Instrumental Festival on Wednesday, February 26 at Maize South. The following week, on Wednesday, March 5, our Choir students will travel to Maize for the Wichita Suburban League Choir Festival. We extend our best wishes to all our students as they showcase their talents during these events.

Track and Field

The 2025 Track and Field season will begin on Monday, March 24, and Mr. Robinett is excited to get his first year started as Head Coach after being an assistant for the last three years.

Aside from his experience as an assistant coach, he also spent nine years working as a Sports Performance Coach and will use that experience to maximize athletic potential in our South Middle School athletes.

Students interested in participating in Track and Field, there'll be an informational meeting at school before Spring Break and a parents meeting following Spring Break. Visit the South Middle School website to find all the required athletic forms needed to participate

<https://www.305southmiddle.com/athletics/athletic-forms>. Final Forms will be used to manage all forms and the resource we use to confirm all forms have been signed and turned in before students can participate. <https://salina-ks.finalforms.com/>

Career and Life Planning

The last few weeks in Career and Life Planning, we have been learning our passions, skills, interests, personality traits and learning styles.

Xello: With the assistance of our district wide program, Xello, students explore different jobs and careers that align with their interests and long term goals. We also explore through high school career pathways, information from instruction, guest speakers, and projects.

This information is combined students' interests and values. Through this process, how and why their school classes, soft skills and hard skills will support them in their chosen field of study or the workforce becomes clear.

Our hope is that eighth graders gain a self-awareness and sense of urgency to become lifelong learners and improve themselves daily. Over time, they will become successful contributors and providers for themselves and their families.

If the students are able to align values and interests with a potential career, they will likely be happy and successful not only monetarily, but mentally and emotionally prepared for the challenges that life presents.

We strive to give them a sense of how grit (sticking to tasks) is the ultimate determiner of success in the real world. Our students need to realize that failures are learning opportunities - simply stepping stones - to improvement. This growth mindset helps them see that failing at something, initially, is always the best teacher. They learn that failing is an opportunity to learn and grow, and is temporary.

Success is what we are currently defining and investigating as it is the intrinsic rewards that students tend to disregard at this age.

Girls Wrestling

The lady Cougar wrestling season is underway! We have a great group of girls to represent South Middle's first ever all female wrestling team. The snow presented a bit of a rocky start to get practices going but we adjusted and have made great progress in the wrestling room. The girls are motivated, willing to learn, and are putting in the hard work each practice. We have a home duel against Lakewood on February 13. Please come out and cheer us on!

Students of the Week

Week 16

Congratulations to Ella Chamberlain for earning student of the week. Ella is an eighth grader at South Middle School. She loves advanced math and guitar, as she enjoys challenging herself while expanding her knowledge. She is a member of student council, serving as student council president, the KAY Club, and the basketball, volleyball and track teams. Ella also enjoys traveling softball and club volleyball. After high school, Ella will attend Kansas State University, followed by medical school, with plans to pursue a career within the medical field. Some fun facts about Ella include that she is a softball pitcher and lives with her family including two dogs.



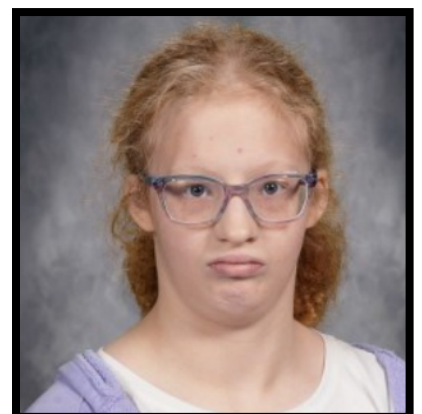
Week 17

Congratulations to Tyla Mindrup for earning student of the week. Tyla is a sixth grader at South Middle School. At school, she is a member of the KAY Club and enjoys learning math and social studies. She also looks forward to seeing her favorite teacher Mr. Allen. Outside of school, Tyla is passionate about gymnastics. Currently, she is in the Xcel Silver (level four) at the YMCA, and is working towards her dream of becoming an Olympic gymnast. A fun fact about Tyla is that she also plays volleyball, and this is her first year playing.



Week 18

Congratulations to Finley Eilts for earning student of the week. Finley is a seventh grader at South Middle School. Each day she looks forward to seeing all of her teachers, they are her favorite part of South Middle. In her freetime, Finley enjoys expressing her imagination and love for animals through playing with her Little Pet Shop and Schleich horses. She is considering two pathways after high school graduation, veterinary medicine or becoming a preschool educator. A fun fact about Finley is that she has one dog named Maple!



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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	

Important Dates in February

- 5 - Parent Teacher Conferences
- 6 - Parent Teacher Conferences
- 7 - No School
- 10 - No School
- 18 - Fine Arts Night / Vocal Concert
- 19 - PTO Meeting (12:00 p.m.)
- 26 - League Instrumental Festival at Maize South
- 27 - Math Relays at Valley Center
- 28 - No School

Contact Us

Dustin Dooley

Principal

Tina Akers

Assistant Principal

Curt Exline

Assistant Principal

Jamie Jackson

Secretary

Main Office Phone Number 785-309-3900

#SMSCougars
#305GrowsGreatness



South Middle



@USD305



School Website



District Website

Unified School District #305 does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Any person having inquiries concerning Unified School District #305 compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, ADA, Title IX, or Section 504 is directed to contact the Unified School District #305 Executive Director of Human Resources, P.O. Box 797, Salina, Kansas 67402, 785-309-4726.



FEBRUARY

SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER

SALINA SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

School social workers are mental health professionals who work within schools to support students' well-being and academic success. Their role bridges the gap between home, school, and the community, providing services to students who may be facing challenges such as emotional distress, behavioral issues, family problems, or social difficulties.

Upcoming Dates

Black History Month

A month dedicated to honoring the history, culture, and contributions of Black individuals in the United States and around the world. It's a time to learn, reflect, and celebrate the impact of Black communities.

International Day of Women and Girls in Science - 11th

A day to celebrate the achievements of women and girls in science and encourage more participation in STEM fields.

Valentines Day - 14th

A day celebrated worldwide to show love and appreciation to loved ones, whether through gifts, cards, or acts of kindness.

Focus of the Month:

Kindness and Relationships

February is a month to celebrate love, kindness, and important history. This month reminds us of the importance of treating everyone with respect, standing up for fairness, and showing care for one another.

Whether it's through small acts of kindness or deep, meaningful connections, our relationships with others are at the heart of what makes our communities stronger and more supportive. This month, we encourage everyone to focus on spreading kindness—whether by reaching out to someone in need, offering a compliment, or simply listening with empathy.

Healthy relationships are built on trust, respect, and understanding, and every act of kindness helps strengthen these bonds. Let's take the time this month to appreciate the people around us and remember that even the smallest gestures of kindness can make a big difference.

Contact Info

Counselors Request
[Student Request to See Counselor](#)

FEBRUARY

SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER

WHAT WE DO

School social workers support students by addressing emotional, behavioral, and social challenges that can impact their learning. Their role is to bridge the gap between home, school, and the community. They provide counseling, offer crisis intervention, and collaborate with teachers and parents to create supportive learning environments.

To support them, we can help by fostering open communication, advocating for resources, and ensuring students have access to mental health services when needed. We create a safe, inclusive space where all students feel supported and ready to succeed.

FUN HOLIDAYS

FEB

2

Groundhog Day

FEB

11

Make a Friend Day

FEB

14

Valentine's Day

FEB

17

Random Acts of Kindness Day

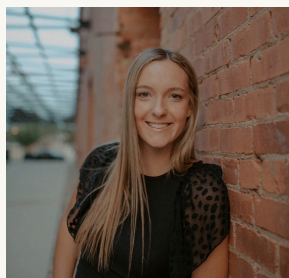
WELLNESS TIP:

Prioritize self-care by setting aside time each day to recharge, even if it's just for a few minutes. By taking a short walk, practicing deep breathing, or enjoying a quiet moment alone, taking time to reset helps manage stress and maintain emotional balance.

MEET YOUR SOCIAL WORKERS



Rachel Mudloff,
LMSW



Karsyn Arnold,
BSW Student

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