



March 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

Parents and Guardians,

As we enter the spring semester, I want to take a moment to emphasize the importance of strong home-to-school communication. When parents, teachers, and students work together, we create the best opportunities for success. One of the key ways to stay informed is by regularly checking Skyward, our student information system, for updates on grades, assignments, and important school announcements.

With state assessments approaching, it is crucial that students are well-prepared. All sixth through eighth-grade students will take assessments in English Language Arts and Math, while eighth-grade students will also be tested in Science, and seventh-grade students in Social Studies. State testing will begin on March 2 and conclude on April 17. Ensuring students get adequate rest, eat a healthy breakfast, and arrive at school on time will help them perform at their best.

Additionally, we ask for your support in encouraging students to complete and submit their assignments on time. Staying on top of coursework now will help ease stress and ensure students are in their best position for success as we approach the end of the school year.

Thank you for your partnership in your child's education. If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Dustin Dooley, Principal

Attendance

We would like to remind all of our families of the importance of regular school attendance for students. In the event that your student is absent please call the school at 785-309-3900, if there is no answer, please leave a message, these get checked hourly. Families can also email southmiddle.attendance@usd305.com or by clicking the button below:



Attendance Email

Boys Tennis

Boys Tennis season is approaching, and Assistant Coach Brian Duncan will be coaching his final season following his announced retirement earlier this year. His contributions to the program will be greatly missed, and we wish him all the best in his next chapter. Coach Pittenger returns for his fourth season at the helm of the Cougars.



We are fortunate to have a strong group of returning players who will provide valuable leadership this season. Key returners include Kade Polland, Jaxson Forrester, Westin Fischer, and Alec Easterday. Tryouts begin on Monday, March 10, with the final roster of 16 players set to be announced on Thursday, March 13.

The season opener is scheduled for March 27 on the road against Derby North. Best of luck this season, gentlemen! Go Cougs!

Digital Literacy

Greetings from Digital Literacy! My name is Kari Keck and I am excited to be part of the South Middle School family. Digital Literacy is a required course for eighth-grade students to prepare them for high school. The students work on their keyboarding skills by learning proper hand and finger placement on keyboards and increasing their keyed words per minute. Our curriculum covers topics such as creating strong passwords, how to utilize privacy settings to protect yourself online, the importance of finding balance between your online and offline life, and how to be good digital citizens. We are also getting an introduction to Microsoft Word, Excel, and Powerpoint.

Teacher of the Month

Congratulations to SMS Digital Literacy teacher, Kari Keck for earning March teacher of the month! Through exceptional planning and preparation, Mrs. Keck creates engaging and meaningful learning experiences that inspire and challenge students. Beyond the classroom, Mrs. Keck builds strong relationships, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where every student feels valued. Her commitment to putting students' needs first truly sets her apart, making a lasting impact on our school community. We are grateful for Mrs. Keck's hard work and passion for education!

Grade 7 Kansas History

Students in Grade 7 have recently begun their Kansas History unit, which will continue through the remainder of the school year. Throughout this unit, students will explore the people, cultures, resources, and significant events that have shaped the Sunflower State, as well as Kansas' impact on the westward expansion of the United States.

Our studies will include the role of Native American tribes and the effects of the Indian Removal Act, followed by the arrival of the Spaniards, the French, and the Lewis and Clark Expedition. We will also examine the Louisiana Purchase and its implications for the region. As we progress, students will learn about the Santa Fe and Oregon-California Trails, which played a crucial role in westward migration and the fulfillment of Manifest Destiny.

To conclude the unit, we will focus on the turbulent period known as Bleeding Kansas and the challenges surrounding Kansas' statehood. Key topics will include the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the multiple state constitutions and the rights they granted, as well as pivotal events such as the burning of Lawrence and Quantrill's Raid.

Teaching Kansas history is essential for helping students develop a deeper understanding of their state's rich past while fostering a sense of civic responsibility. By examining these historical events, students will gain valuable insights into how Kansas' history connects to the broader national narrative and its lasting impact on the United States.

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

Grade 8 History

As we approach the end of quarter 3, it's remarkable to see how much we have accomplished, with still plenty more to explore. We are concluding our unit on the Industrial Revolution and will soon begin examining the causes of the Civil War and the war itself.

Throughout the year, students have been diligently analyzing primary sources, refining their writing skills, and drawing connections between historical events and contemporary issues. Their hard work is evident—not only in the classroom but also in their preparation for future history and social studies courses.

Overall, this year's Grade 8 students have made significant progress in critical thinking, historical analysis, and applying their knowledge to real-world contexts. We look forward to their continued growth in the months ahead!

Spring Activity Meetings

As we move into the spring, coaches from South Middle and South High will be meeting with prospective students interested in various sports and extracurricular activities. These meetings will take place during advisory on Mondays, Tuesdays, or Thursdays from 8:00 to 8:20 a.m.

Students who wish to participate in any activities next school year should pay close attention to morning announcements to ensure they attend their scheduled meeting.

Spring Break

South Middle School and USD 305 will observe spring break, Friday, March 14 through Friday, March 21. Staff will be in the building Friday, March 14, however there will be no staff available during the week of the 17th. We hope all our students have a fantastic Spring Break!

Quarter 3 PBIS Celebration

The quarter 3 PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) celebration will take place at The City on Friday, April 4, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The City is located at 129 N. 7th St.

To qualify for this event, students must have maintained a minimum Grade Point Average of 3.0 during quarter 3 (January 7 – March 13) and must not have received any office referrals during that period. Eligible students will receive an armband during the school day, which they must wear for entry into The City.

Once a student leaves the event, reentry will not be permitted. Activities available include pool, dodgeball, basketball, video games, dancing, and more. SMS looks forward to celebrating our students' positive behavior and achievements at this event!

Quarter 4 Assessment Schedule

As we move into quarter four of the school year, students will take various assessments, to test knowledge gained over the course of the academic year. The Kansas State Assessment will be a primary focus for us again this school year.

- All SMS students will take the English-Language Arts and Math assessment.
- Grade 8 students will take the Science state assessment.
- The Kansas State Assessment, in all subjects, will consist of two parts, each part lasting approximately 45 - 60 minutes.
- Students will take their state assessments in gym #2, similar to the type of testing environment the would experience with the high school ACT or SAT.
- Grade 7 students will take the History and Government assessment. This is a writing assessment, done during regular class time and scored by our staff.
- After state assessments conclude will administer other local assessments to gauge progress over the academic year.
- March 2 - May 7, Grade 7 Kansas History / Government Assessment
- March 25-26, 8th Science State Assessment
- March 25-26, Grade 6 English-Language Arts State Assessment
- March 27-28, Grade 7 English-Language Arts State Assessment
- April 1-2, Grade 8 English-Language Arts State Assessment
- April 3-4, Grade 7 Math State Assessment
- April 8-9, Grade 8 Math State Assessment
- April 10-11, Grad 6 Math State Assessment
- April 14-17, Kansas State Assessment Make-Ups
- April 23-25, i-Ready Reading Assessments
- April 30-May 2, i-Ready Math Assessments

Spring Sports

Boys' tennis tryouts will begin on Monday, March 10, followed by the first track practice of the season on Monday, March 24. The boys' tennis team will open their season with a dual match at Derby North on Thursday, March 27. Meanwhile, the boys' and girls' track and field teams will compete in their first meet of the season in Newton on Thursday, April 10. We wish all our spring sports teams the best of luck as they begin their seasons in March!

Grade 6 Social Studies

This semester, our Grade 6 students engaged in an in-depth exploration of Ancient Africa. They examined the equal value placed on gold and salt in trade, the significance of the Trans-Saharan trade routes, the diverse biomes of Africa, and the location of Timbuktu.

Additionally, we studied the life and impact of Mansa Musa, who referred to himself as Highness Musa during his reign. His legendary pilgrimage across Africa included tens of thousands of men, enslaved individuals, and vast amounts of gold. Many historians consider Mansa Musa to be the wealthiest person in history.

Following our study of Ancient Africa, we have now shifted our focus to Medieval Japan, a unit that will continue through Spring Break. Students will explore the role of samurais, the traditions of sumo wrestling, the significance of Shinto shrines, the art of origami, and other notable aspects of Japanese culture.

We encourage you to ask your student about their favorite ancient civilization from Grade 6 Social Studies and invite them to share some of the fascinating facts they have learned—you might discover something new yourself!

Student Council

February concluded with Student Council contributing to a successful pep rally, an event we always anticipate with enthusiasm.

From February 11–17, we celebrated Spirit Week, featuring themed days such as Jersey Day, Decades Day, Iconic Duos, All About Love Day, and Green and Gold Day.

Additionally, we hosted the Woot Wagon on February 25.

We hope everyone had a fantastic month!

Students of the Week

Week 19

Congratulations to Jimena Torres for earning student of the week. Jimena is an eighth grader at South Middle School. She is a member of the track team, the orchestra and in FACS. For Jimena, the highlight of school is spending time with her friends and enjoying engaging, fun classes. Her friends are always there to brighten her day and bring a smile to her face. Outside of school, she is a member of a Catholic youth group for her confirmation. She spends her free time hanging out with friends, playing soccer and making memories with her family. After high school Jimena plans to pursue anesthesiology and work in that field. A fun fact about Jimena is she enjoys doing puzzles.



Week 20

Congratulations to Fiona Wheeler for earning student of the week. Fiona is a sixth grader at South Middle School. She is a member of the orchestra, and enjoys the challenges it brings. Equally, Fiona enjoys science as she finds the curriculum interesting. Outside of school, she plays volleyball, volunteers at Coronado Elementary, practices her instrument and reads her Bible. Fiona plans to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with the goal of becoming a biochemist for the Army. Fun facts about her include that she has one sister and three dogs.



Week 21

Congratulations to Riley Miller for earning student of the week. Riley is a seventh grader at South Middle School. She admires all of her teachers for their dedication and looks up to them for always giving their best to students. Riley enjoys math, guitar, and vocals. She looks forward to talking with her friends and seeing them at school. Riley spends her free time attending church, riding her scooter, and running. She loves to run and plans to do cross-country next year. After high school, Riley will attend college and become a storm chaser, as she's fascinated with the study of tornadoes. Some fun facts about her include that she has three dogs named Puppy, Luna and Fluffy. Her cat is no longer with us but is held fondly in Riley's heart. Riley also cherishes her family, appreciating their love and all that they do for her.



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	1/ 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 March

5 - League Choral Festival @ Maize

10 - Boys Tennis Begins

13 - Conclusion of Quarter 3

14 - No School / Teacher In-Service

17 - 21 - No School / Spring Break

24 - Track and Field Begins

26 - Site Council Meeting

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.

MARCH

SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER

WELLNESS TIP:

PRIORITIZE SMALL MOMENTS OF MINDFULNESS

As we move through the school year, it's easy to get caught up in the constant hustle. In March, take time to intentionally pause and reset. Incorporate small moments of mindfulness throughout your day, whether it's a quick 3-minute breathing exercise between classes, stepping outside for fresh air, or practicing gratitude by noting one positive thing about your day.

These little acts can help reduce stress, improve focus, and reenergize you, and allow you to show up for those in your life. Remember, taking care of yourself is just as important as taking care of others!

FOCUS OF THE MONTH:

As we head into March, let's focus on fostering resilience and strengthening our connections with the people around you. Resilience isn't just about bouncing back from challenges; it's about building a mindset that allows us to grow from adversity. For each of us, developing resilience helps us navigate stress, setbacks, and change with a sense of hope and perseverance.

ITS SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK MONTH!

HERE IS WHAT YOUR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER CAN DO...

- Engage in and refer to Mental Health Services
- Food and Clothing
- Transportation
- Counseling
- Student Groups
- Support with special education services
- Crisis Intervention
- Suicide Screenings
- Advocating for Students Needs

CONTACT INFO

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FUN HOLIDAYS

MAR

1

World
Compliment Day

MAR

17

St. Patrick's
Day

MAR

14

Pi Day

MAR

20

First Day of
Spring

\$25 SPORT PHYSICALS for South Middle School Students



Salina Regional Health Center is offering \$25 sport physicals for summer sports and the next school year. **This includes Salina South Middle School students entering 7th grade and 8th grade.**

No appointment needed. Cash or check only, please. Make checks out to SRHC.

KSHSAA sport physical forms must be completed and turned in during the physical.

**Wednesday, May 14, 2025
5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
at Salina South High School**

Come to the lower gym; enter weight room gym doors.



Matthew Pyle, DO
Sports Medicine Physician



Kevin Klug, MD
Sports Medicine Physician



**Salina Regional
Sports Medicine**
Salina Regional Health Center

www.SalinaRegionalSportsMedicine.com
785-452-7366

