



May 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 approach the final weeks of the school year, it's hard to believe how quickly the school year has flown by. May is always a busy, exciting, and emotional time as we celebrate growth, reflect on accomplishments and prepare for the transition into summer.

Our students have worked hard academically, and we continue to encourage them to finish strong. Just as important, we're proud of their growth socially and emotionally. The final weeks of school provide valuable time to reinforce positive habits, friendships and reflection on personal growth.

We encourage families to stay in close communication with teachers and the school as we wrap up the year. Whether it's questions about final grades, support for your child's well-being, or interest in summer programs and opportunities, we are here to help. Staying connected ensures that each student has the support they need now and moving forward.

This time of year also brings several important events we hope you'll mark on your calendar:

- **Teacher Appreciation Week** - May 5-9. Please join us in celebrating our dedicated and talented educators who go above and beyond for our students every day.
- **Sixth Grade Awards Night** - May 19 at 6:00 p.m.
- **Seventh Grade Awards Night** - May 19 at 7:00 p.m.
- **Eighth Grade Transition / Visitation Day at South High School** - May 19
- **Eighth Grade Awards Night** - May 20 at 6:30 p.m.
- **Quarter 4 PBIS Celebration** - May 21 at 1:45 p.m.
- **Last Day of School** - May 22 (early dismissal at 1:00 p.m.)

These celebrations give us the opportunity to recognize student achievement, growth, and resilience. We hope to see our families there as we honor our student's hard work.

Thank you for a great school year. Let's finish strong - together.

Dustin Dooley

Principal, SMS

# Eighth Grade Pathway Fair

Eighth graders had the opportunity to explore a variety of careers during the pathway fair, where high school students shared their personal experiences, insights and possibilities based upon their own work within the pathway.

The eighth graders took plenty of notes during the pathway fair, discovering that there is something available for everyone. The pathway fair served as another meaningful step in helping Salina Public Schools students become future-ready.



Check out the video below for more details:



# Civics Essay Competition

South Middle eighth grade students recently reflected on their role in making a difference in their communities. They joined a civics essay contest that highlighted the students' writing skills while emphasizing important social issues and principles that connect us as citizens.

The process began with all eighth grade social studies students writing individual essays as part of the curriculum. Teachers at each school reviewed the submissions, selecting standout essays to progress to local judging. Twenty talented students from across the area were then invited to the live civics bee\* held at Kansas Wesleyan University (KWU) in March.

The contest required students to consider how they could address pressing issues in their communities. "They came up with their own answers, solutions backed up with facts and a plan," shared Mike Rasette, eighth grade social studies teacher at South Middle School (SMS).

Students were tasked with integrating at least one founding principle or demonstrating a Civic Virtue through their proposed actions. "Students had to specifically address how they can make a difference in their community," explained Luke Curry, social studies teacher at SMS.

The civics essay contest showcased knowledge that these students have gained and their ability to apply that knowledge toward real-world problems. Students who were invited to the live competition at KWU each answered 20 multiple-choice questions. Finalists who emerged from that then presented their essay ideas to a panel of judges.

The top three earned cash prizes, a study guide and access to Khanmigo, Khan Academy's AI tutor. They also move on to compete in the state level of the Nation Civics Bee in early June.

**Congratulations to South Middle students Dalayne Pierce who took second place and Alivia Durall who took fifth place!**



*\* The competition was through the National Civics Bee and hosted by the Salina Chamber of Special thanks to the Salina Chamber of Commerce for sharing their pictures.*

## Sixth Grade Science

Be sure to ask your sixth grader what's coming up next in science class! Many students are excited about our upcoming squid dissection. We recently wrapped up our study of cells, the basic units of life, which naturally led us into exploring vertebrates and invertebrates.

After conducting research and gathering key information, students will soon make connections between how cells form various body systems and how these systems help organisms adapt to their environments.

## Seventh Grade Science

Last month, seventh grade science students completed a unit on ecosystems, including food webs, symbiotic relationships, and the roles of producers and consumers. To apply their understanding, students designed a unique creature that incorporated key vocabulary from the unit. We concluded the unit with an owl pellet dissection, which students found both slightly unpleasant and highly engaging.

We have since transitioned into our study of natural resources, focusing on their unequal distribution across the planet. Be sure to ask your student about the ethanol lab activity that Mr. Connor conducted with each class—it sparked some great discussions!

## Eighth Grade Science

Our science students have had an exciting and productive year filled with exploration, discovery, and hands-on learning. Throughout the 2024–2025 school year, they engaged with a wide range of scientific concepts—from the periodic table and earth science to genetics and Newton's Laws of Motion.

This semester, students deepened their understanding of velocity and applied their knowledge in creative ways, including building slow coasters to demonstrate principles of motion and force. As the year comes to a close, our students have met key learning goals and developed a strong foundation in science.

We are proud of their growth and curiosity and look forward to seeing them continue their learning journeys at South High School, where they will explore new concepts and challenges in science.

## Eighth Grade South High School Orientation

On Monday, May 19, eighth grade students from South Middle School will participate in an orientation visit to South High School. During their visit, students will have the opportunity to meet with counselors, staff, and current high school students, tour classrooms, and gain a better understanding of what to expect as they transition to high school next year.

Students will attend in two separate groups:

- Morning session: 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.
- Afternoon session: 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
- All students will be transported to and from South High School by bus from South Middle School.

## Sixth Grade Park Trip

Sixth grade students who meet the eligibility criteria, no disciplinary referrals and grades of A, B, or C, will have the opportunity to attend a field trip to Sunset Park on Tuesday, May 20, from 10:00 - 2:00 p.m.

- Students will walk to the park with their classroom teacher.
- Those attending should plan to bring a lunch for the day.



## Quarter 4 PBIS Celebration

The Quarter 4 PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) celebration will be held on Wednesday, May 21, beginning at 1:45 p.m. To be eligible to participate, students must have no disciplinary referrals during the fourth quarter and must maintain grades of A, B, or C.

Eligible students will enjoy Freddy's Frozen Custard and will have the opportunity to socialize with friends in front of the school or participate in games in the commons.



# End of Year Library Dates

All library books are due back to the library by Friday, May 16. Any unreturned books will be charged to the student's Skyward account.

The final day for students to check out library materials is Friday, May 9.

## Device Collection Schedule:

- Grade 6: Chromebooks and chargers will be collected during English classes on Monday, May 19.
- Grades 7 & 8: Chromebooks and chargers will be collected during English classes on Tuesday, May 20.



Please note that any damages identified during device check-in will result in charges to the student's Skyward account.

# Yearbook

The 2024–2025 yearbook is almost complete! There's still time to purchase a copy for \$35.00—either in the front office or online through Skyward. Yearbooks will be distributed to students when they return in the fall.

We're also beginning the selection process for the 2025–2026 yearbook staff. Students interested in joining the team should attend an upcoming informational meeting. Applications will require two teacher recommendations. Selected students will be notified by the end of the school year.

# 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 Tennis

The boys tennis season is flying by, signaling that the school year is quickly entering its final stretch.

As of this update, our tennis team holds an impressive 4–1 record, with wins over Derby North, Lakewood (twice), and Maize. Our only setback so far came against a strong Valley Center team.



We look to close out the week on a high note as we host Hutch on Thursday, April 17, and are optimistic about securing another win to move to 5–1 heading into the final weeks of competition. To close out the month, we will host Derby on April 24 and Maize South on April 29. We'll travel to Newton on May 1 before wrapping up the season at the League meet on Monday, May 5.

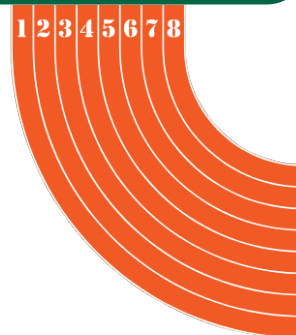
Keep pushing, Cougars! We're proud of your efforts and look forward to a strong finish.

## Track and Field

We're entering the final stretch of the 2025 track season at South Middle School, with our last three meets taking place in Hays, Salina, and Goddard. It has already been a successful season, highlighted by two school records—one in the seventh grade boys' 200m hurdles and another in the 8th grade boys' 3200m run.

In addition to individual accomplishments, the seventh grade boys' team earned a meet victory and consistently placed in the top half at other competitions.

We invite you to come out and support the South Middle School track and field team at Salina Stadium on Thursday, May 8, at 2:00 p.m.



## Spring Sports Physicals

Salina Regional Health Center is offering \$25.00 sports physicals for the 2025-26 school year.

- This includes South Middle students entering the seventh and eighth grade.
- No appointment is needed,
- cash or check only please, checks need to be made out to SRHC.
- KSHSAA sport physical forms must be completed and turned in during the physical.

Physicals will be Wednesday, May 14 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at South High School. Please come to the lower gym and enter the weight room doors.

## School Safety News

Our families and community have expressed a high interest in safety measures at Salina Public Schools. As a result, we are creating a series of videos to share some details and information we know you want to hear about.

SPS continuously prioritizes, improves and implements safety measures. This year, we added the STOPit App and the Run, Hide, Fight response procedure. To learn more, please view the video series on our

website, [www.usd305.com](http://www.usd305.com), or on our YouTube channel, Salina Public Schools.

The information in school safety video series focuses on what we are doing to be proactive about safety. We appreciate your interest and support about this important subject.



## Need Health Coverage? Our Social Workers Can Help!

Did you know our school social workers can now assist families with Presumptive Eligibility (PE) enrollment? PE provides temporary Medicaid coverage for children and pregnant individuals who appear to be eligible, giving access to important health services while the full application is being processed.

If your family is in need of health coverage or you're unsure where to start, our social workers are here to help guide you through the process. It's quick, confidential, and can make a big difference in ensuring your child stays healthy and supported.

To learn more or to schedule an appointment, please contact your school's social worker directly.

We're here for you!

## Skyward Update

Have you heard? We are upgrading to the newest version of Skyward, QMLATIV, for the 2025-2026 school year.

The upgrade will make it easy to view student records, grades and communication tools. Right now, there is nothing you need to do.

Please watch for more details as we get closer to the launch. Thank you!



# Students of the Week

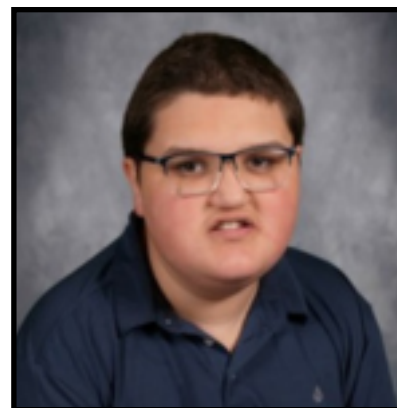
## Week 26

Congratulations to Izayah Tucker for earning student of the week. Izayah is an eighth grader at South Middle School. As a first year student at South Middle, he has been focused on his school work while eagerly looking ahead to high school, where he hopes to explore new opportunities and connect with new people. Izayah appreciates all of the staff at SMS and his favorite class is English. He enjoys his English teacher's style of teaching and straightforward outlook. After high school, he plans to attend culinary arts college to pursue his dream of becoming a chef or baker. Outside of school, Izayah likes going on walks, going to the gym, spending time with his family and listening to music. Some fun facts about him include that he has one cat and two dogs, he lives with his mother, father, grandma, younger sister and brother and he loves spending time outside and exploring the world!



## Week 27

Congratulations to Layden Davidson-Gutierrez for earning student of the week. Layden is an eighth grader at South Middle School. At school, he is involved with PBIS, recycling, the coffee cart and in choir. His favorite subjects are FACS with Mr. Robinett and music with Mr. Dees. His favorite teacher is Mrs. Elliott. Outside of school, Layden likes watching TV, shopping and going through the car wash. In the future, he plans to continue to do the things he enjoys, such as spending time within the community and spending quality time with his family. Some fun facts about him include that he has a dog named Cookie, loves Koo Koo Kanga Roo dance breaks and has several songs and videos memorized word for word.



## Week 28

Congratulations to Levi Friesen for earning student of the week. Levi is a sixth grader at South Middle School. He looks forward to the hands-on learning experiences offered at school and enjoys having a sense of responsibility. His favorite classes are science, reading and P.E. Outside of school, Levi plays basketball and baseball; he is the pitcher and third baseman for his team. After high school, he plans to further his education in the field of technology. Some fun facts about him include that he enjoys playing video games, spending times with his friends and playing sports. He has one younger brother, a cat and seven fish.



# Students of the Week Cont.

## Week 29

Congratulations to Sophia Li for earning student of the week. Sophia is a seventh grader at South Middle School. She enjoys learning new things and making new friends. Sophia is on the tennis team at SMS and spends her free time playing tennis. She is currently ranked No. 8 in the state of Kansas in her age group. After high school, she plans to attend college and pursue entrepreneurship. A fun fact about her is that she can solve a Rubik's Cube.



## Teacher of the Month

We are proud to recognize Eighth grade U.S. History teacher Mike Rasette as our teacher of the month! Mr. Rasette is an outstanding educator, he consistently goes above and beyond to support student learning and growth. His passion for teaching shines through in every lesson, creating a classroom environment that is both engaging and inspiring. Mr. Rasette is dedicated to our school's mission and works tirelessly to ensure all students feel valued and motivated. Whether through hands-on activities, collaborative projects, or creative lesson planning, he brings learning to life and makes a lasting impact on students each day. Congratulations Mr. Rasette!

## SMS Retirees

We would like to congratulate the following SMS employees who are retired at the conclusion of the 2024-25 school year.

- **Darrel Dees**, 12 years of service to South Middle School, 45 years service to public education
- **Curt Exline**, 10 years of service to South Middle School, 30 years service to public education
- **Brian Duncan**, 30 years of service to South Middle School, 36 years service to public education



# Last Day of School Release

On the last day of school, Thursday, May 22, 2025, South Middle School students will be released at 1:00 p.m. Let's finish the school year strong!

## Summer School

As we approach the end of the 2024–25 school year, our grade-level counselors will begin identifying students who may benefit from attending summer school.

**One session will be offered at South High School, running from June 2 through July 2, with classes held Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**

- There is no cost to attend
- Transportation will be provided for participating families
- Breakfast and lunch will be served daily.

The summer program is designed to help students strengthen their skills in math and reading through a blend of direct instruction and project-based learning. Each session will feature a real-world project and include opportunities for students to build executive functioning skills as well as social-emotional competencies. This is a great opportunity for students to grow academically and personally in a supportive and engaging environment.

## Summer Food Program

**June 2 - July 2**

**Monday - Friday (closed June 19)**

- FREE to all children!
- Adult meal cost: Breakfast \$3.25, Lunch \$5.25
- Meals eaten on site
- No signup, eligibility, or paperwork required
- Free Activities and Book Giveaways

Summer Food Program



| 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 May

- 6 - Fine Arts Night and Band Concert
- 13 - Orchestra Concert
- 14 - Sports Physicals at South High School
- 15 - Choir and Guitar Concert
- 16 - Dodge ball tournament
- 19 - Grades 6 & 7 Awards Night
- 20 - Grade 8 Awards Night
- 21 - Quarter 4 PBIS Celebration
- 22 - Last Day of School (Dismiss at 1:00 p.m.)

## 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**



**f** South Middle

**@USD305**

**➔ School Website**

**305 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.



Salina South High School Athletics

# Cougar Speed & Strength



## Details

Cougar Speed & Strength is an intensive 6-week summer training program to develop and enhance athletic development through speed, agility and strength training to prepare all of our athletes for the 2025-2026 sports seasons.

The program is for all South High and South Middle students who will be in 6th through 12th grade in the 2025-26 school year.

Cougar Speed & Strength is every Monday, Wednesday & Thursday beginning June 9th and running through July 23rd, with a KSHSAA mandated week off the week of the 4th of July.

## Registration & Fee

Register Online:



Paper registrations are available in the main office at South High and South Middle as well as the South High Weightroom

COST: \$30

Checks or cash can be turned into the main office at South High or South Middle. If paying with cash please denote that it is for Cougar Speed & Strength

Make checks payable to: South High

Pay online at this link:



## Sessions

Session 1: High School Boys  
Grades 9-12 (2025-26)  
6:30 AM-8:30AM

Session 2: High School Girls  
Grades 9-12 (2025-26)  
8:00AM-9:00AM

Session 3: Middle School Girls  
Grades 6-8 (2025-26)  
9:00AM-10:00AM

Session 4: Middle School Boys  
Grades 6-8 (2025-26)  
10:00AM-11:00AM

## COUGAR SPEED & STRENGTH SUMMER 2025 SIGNUP

Student-Athlete's Name:

Grade Next Fall (please circle):

|    |    |    |   |
|----|----|----|---|
| 12 | 11 | 10 | 9 |
| 8  | 7  | 6  |   |

Student-Athlete's Date of Birth:

Student-Athlete's Gender (please circle):

Male

Female

Student-Athlete's T-Shirt Size (please circle):

|    |    |    |     |
|----|----|----|-----|
| YS | YM | YL | YXL |
| AS | AM | AL | AXL |
|    | 2X | 3X |     |

Parent/Guardian Name:

Parent/Guardian Cell & Email:

I hereby grant permission for my child to participate in this summer camp. My child has not suffered any illnesses or injuries in the past that would make participation in the camp a risk. I further agree to release from any liability, the Cougar Speed & Strength Program, its staff, Salina South High School, and USD 305. The camp staff has explained to me the particulars of this program to my satisfaction and I am hereby authorizing my child to participate in these activities.

Signature of Parent Guardian

Date

FOR MORE INFORMATION or QUESTIONS CONTACT: ryan.stuart@usd305.com

# \$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](http://www.SalinaRegionalSportsMedicine.com)  
785-452-7366



# MAY

## SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER

### WELLNESS TIP:

#### END THE YEAR WITH BOUNDARIES AND SELF-CARE

As the school year draws to a close, it's easy to feel the weight of everything that needs to be done. But it's also important to finish strong by setting healthy boundaries and prioritizing self-care. A lot of us give so much to others, but it's crucial to remember that you can't pour from an empty cup.

### FUN HOLIDAYS

MAY

1

May Day

MAY

5

Cinco De Mayo

MAY

6

National Teachers Day

MAY

23

SUMMER!

MAY

26

Memorial Day

### FOCUS OF THE MONTH:

As we approach the end of the school year, May is a perfect time to celebrate the growth and progress we've made as a school community. This month, let's focus on reflecting on the journey, acknowledging achievements, and creating space for students to recognize their own growth. It's also a great time to wrap up the year with a sense of accomplishment and gratitude, preparing for the transition to summer.

As we finish the year strong, let's take pride in the work we've done and honor the growth we've all experienced. This is a time for both reflection and celebration!

### CONTACT INFO

Rachel Mudloff:  
[rachel.mudloff@usd305.com](mailto:rachel.mudloff@usd305.com)



# **SALINE COUNTY FOOD ASSESSMENT SURVEY**

The Saline County Food Action Community Team (FACT) is asking for your input to help identify needs, gaps, and/or strengths related to the food system in Saline County. The following link and/or QR code will take you to a brief survey regarding your experiences and perceptions about elements of the food system in our area.



**SCAN ME!**

Or visit:  
[bit.ly/SACoFood4All](https://bit.ly/SACoFood4All)



**Learn more about FACT**



[www.eatwellsalinecounty.com](http://www.eatwellsalinecounty.com)