



September 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

We are off to a fantastic start this school year! Our students and staff have returned with great energy and enthusiasm. It has been exciting to see learning, collaboration and positive routines taking shape across all grade levels. As we move into September, we want to thank our families for their continued support in helping make the transition back to school a smooth and successful one.

Our after-school program will begin Tuesday, September 2, and will run Monday through Thursday from 2:55 - 3:45 p.m. Students are referred to this program by their teachers or counselors, and it serves as an excellent opportunity for additional academic support. We strongly encourage families to help students stay on top of their work from the beginning of the year. Consistently completing homework and staying current with assignments helps prevent small gaps from turning into larger challenges.

It is also essential that students attend school daily and that families stay connected with us throughout the school year. A strong home-to-school partnership is one of the most important factors in ensuring student success.

This year, the Board of Education has implemented a new academic policy in the middle schools: all students must finish the school year with at least a 1.0 grade point average and must pass at least one semester of each core class - Math, Science, English, Reading, and Social Studies.

Students who do not meet this minimum requirement will be required to attend summer school, and failure to attend will result in retention. This is why it is so important for students to stay current with their work and take advantage of the supports available throughout the school year.

Together, we can help each student succeed.

Dustin Dooley, Principal

Sixth Grade Math

Welcome to sixth grade math! We're excited to kick off the school year and begin working with your student.

Our first unit will focus on decimals, where we'll review adding, subtracting, and multiplying while also introducing a few new strategies to strengthen understanding.

From there, we'll move into exploring Data Sets and Distributions (mean, median, mode, etc.) and later, the Area and Surface Area of prisms and cubes. We look forward to a fantastic year of learning and growing together in mathematics!

Seventh Grade Math

In seventh grade math, we are beginning our Operations with Rational Numbers unit.

Students will not use calculators during this unit. Once it is complete, your child will need a scientific calculator for home use.

This unit will conclude during the last week of September, so there is still time to purchase a calculator if needed.

As a seventh grade math team, we encourage students to complete all work on time, utilize Google Classroom under the Classwork tab if they are absent for any reason, and make corrections when the opportunity is provided.

Doing so helps strengthen understanding and can improve assignment grades. We are off to a great start and look forward to working with your students this year!

Eighth Grade Math

Our eighth grade math students are off to a strong start at South Middle School!

We began the year by working on solving equations with variables on both sides of the equal sign, an essential skill that builds a solid foundation for algebra.

In the weeks ahead, students will explore proportional relationships and their connection to linear relationships.

This understanding will help prepare them for graphing, slope, and applying algebra in real-world situations. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

– The 8th Grade Math Team: Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Chrisman, and Mrs. Dohm

Receive Important Alerts

In order to receive text messages (cancellations, emergencies, and other educational communications) from South Middle and USD 305, please make sure your cell phone and contact information is up-to-date in Skyward.



Steps to Success: Communicating with Your Child's School

We strive to be the best place to learn. The only way we can improve is to know about concerns so we are able to address them. Here are some tips for communicating with your child's school when concerns arise. The fastest way to a positive result is to start with the people closest to the situation in the school. Talk with the teacher or coach about your questions and concerns before going to the principal. Parents and guardians are encouraged to reach out to teachers and school staff by:

- Calling the school's phone number. Because they are teaching, you often will need to leave a message for your child's teacher or coach.
- Emailing the teacher or coach directly. All teacher emails are available on our school website.

We want to be responsive to parents' questions and requests for information. Our staff will respond to your call or email as soon as possible, in most cases within two school days. If you have had a conversation with your child's teacher and the principal and are still needing assistance, the director of elementary or secondary programs will be able to provide additional support.

We are excited for this new school year and look forward to partnering with you to support a great school experience for your student.

Greatness Grows When You're Here!

Our district is launching a district wide attendance campaign to reinforce the importance of school attendance and to support families in helping every student achieve their personal best.

Did you know that missing just 2 days a month for any reason, whether excused, unexcused, or due to suspension, can add up to a student being chronically absent?

Chronic absence (missing 10% or more of the school year) can cause students to fall behind academically and feel disconnected from school.

As partners in your child's education, we encourage you to help build strong attendance habits by setting consistent routines, scheduling appointments outside of school hours when possible, and avoiding vacations or trips when school is in session.

If your child will be absent, please communicate with the school, and don't hesitate to reach out to our school counselor or social worker if you have any concerns. They are here to support you and your student. Together, we can help all students grow and succeed because greatness truly grows when you're here!



School Attendance

Do you need to call in your student's attendance or let us know of an upcoming absence or tardy? If so, please call the Attendance Office directly at 785-309-3904 or email southmiddle.attendance@usd305.com.



[Click here to email the office](mailto:southmiddle.attendance@usd305.com)

The attendance office hours are 6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Please communicate with the school if your child will be absent.

After School Program

Our After-School Program will begin on Tuesday, September 2.

- The program runs Monday through Thursday from 2:55–3:45 p.m.
- Please note that school transportation is not provided and families will need to arrange transportation.
- Students may participate in the program only if referred by a classroom teacher or school counselor. Once a referral is made, parents/guardians will be contacted directly.
- While attending, students are expected to behave appropriately and focus on assignments and activities that support academic improvement.

The program is coordinated by Jill Graff. For questions, please contact her at jill.graff@usd305.com



[Email Jill Graff Here!](mailto:jill.graff@usd305.com)

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled for Wednesday, October 15 (3:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.) and Thursday, October 16 (7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.)

- Advisory teachers will be scheduling conferences with students and parents / guardians.
- After visiting with the advisory teacher, parents and guardians will have the opportunity to visit with other teachers on the student's schedule, as long as that teacher is not having a conference.

Parent-teacher conferences provide an invaluable opportunity for adults at home and school to come together and discuss how to help students succeed. This open dialogue is an important support in students' school progress. Conferences provide space for communication with parents in a more personal manner, giving them insight into their student's strengths and weaknesses that they may not otherwise see from test scores or grades alone.

We look forward to visiting with parents and guardians at parent teacher conferences and working together to build a strong foundation that will help student's learn and grown. With continued communication between home and school, we can make sure our students get the support they need to succeed.

Need Health Coverage? Our School 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!

Screen Your Student for Symptoms of Illness

It is important to screen your student for illness every day before coming to school.

Keep your student at home if sick with any illness. By making sure students are healthy when they come to school, we all can help prevent illnesses that disrupt learning.

Thank you for your support!

PTO / Site Council

The South Middle School PTO plays a vital role in supporting both students and staff.

In the past, PTO has provided \$100 staff grants, meals during parent-teacher conferences, student snacks for state testing, banners, mascots, and much more. We invite all parents and guardians who wish to be more involved in their child's education to join us for our monthly PTO and Site Council meetings.

These meetings will alternate each month, with Site Council offering an excellent opportunity to share input on key school initiatives, plans, and programs. Below are the scheduled meeting dates for the 2025–26 school year.

- September 17 - Site Council
- October 22 - PTO
- November 19 - Site Council
- December 17 - PTO
- January 21 - Site Council
- February 18 - PTO
- March 25 - Site Council
- April 22 - PTO



Student Council

As part of our ongoing commitment to developing leadership opportunities at South Middle School, we are excited to announce the continued expansion of Student Council.

Please join us in welcoming our newly elected STUCO members for the 2025–2026 school year!



Eighth Grade

President: Colin Burke

Vice President: Jiarong Wang

Secretary: CJ Orr

Treasurer: Aiden Marshall

Ambassador: Magaly Martinez

Committee Chairs: Leslie Fierro-Cortes, Amelia Morris, Anahy Ruedas, Kendall Tauber, Naneea Calloway

Seventh Grade

President: Ryker Riley

Vice President: Paige Ohlde

Secretary: Giselle Martinez

Treasurer: Tyla Mindrup

Ambassadors: Betsy Blake, Joseph Moreno, Alexa Soto-Mendez

Committee Chairs: Blakely Chamberlain, Alyson Gonzalez, Kennedy Johnson, Carlos Lara, Santiago Pinedo-De La Torre

Sixth Grade Representatives

Charlee Black, Jordan Clouston, Mazie Graham, Harper Nuss, Harper Wood, Dexter McDuffie, Luna Romero, Sebastian Smith

Advisor: Amanda Freeman

The school year kicked off with a Student Council Retreat on August 4, where members met, connected and began planning for the year ahead.

On August 13, our seventh and eighth grade Student Council members assisted with New Student Orientation, welcomed sixth graders on their first day and supported teachers and staff as they prepared for the school year.

We look forward to partnering with our students, staff, and families to make 2025–2026 a successful and memorable school year!

Teacher of the Month

Congratulations to SMS Band teacher Gavin Blehm for earning September teacher of the month!

Mr. Blehm creates a highly structured classroom environment, has a strong work ethic, and communicates well with families. His dedication helps students grow not only as musicians but also as responsible and committed learners.

We are proud to celebrate Mr. Blehm for the positive impact he makes every day at our school!

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

MS Attendance at High School Athletic Events

At Salina Public Schools, we prioritize creating a safe and enjoyable environment for all who attend our high school athletic events. To ensure that this remains the case, we would like to remind our families about our guidelines for middle school students who wish to attend these events. Importantly, all middle school students must be accompanied by an adult in order to enter.

While there is not a specific section for middle school students, we absolutely encourage them to attend - as long as they are under the supervision of a parent or guardian. These events are an excellent opportunity for our community to come together and celebrate the accomplishments of our students, and we want to make sure that everyone enjoys themselves in a positive atmosphere. We truly appreciate your help in ensuring that our events remain a rewarding experience for all.

Student Attendance at South Middle Events

We're excited to share that all South Middle School students will receive free admission to all SMS home events during the 2025–26 school year.

Please note that this offer applies only to SMS hosted events. Admission fees will still apply for parents, family members, and events held at other schools within the district.

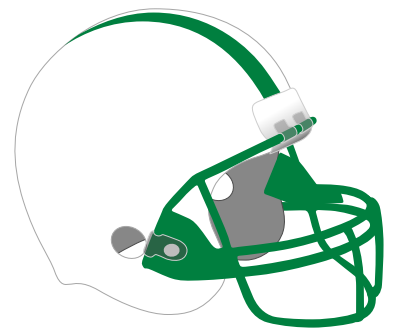
Football

The Salina South Middle School football program is excited to launch a new season!

With 82 athletes participating between the seventh and eighth grade teams, the energy and commitment are stronger than ever.

Our coaches and players are dedicated to working hard, improving each day and building on the success of past seasons.

This year, our focus is on growth, teamwork, and determination as both squads strive for winning records and represent Cougar pride. It's shaping up to be an outstanding year for South Middle School football!



Volleyball

South Middle School is gearing up for an exciting volleyball season! Practices are already underway, and our players and coaches are eager to showcase their skills on the court.

This year's team includes many athletes who dedicated time in the off-season to improve their game. From Club Volleyball in the winter to summer camps and open gyms, their hard work is evident in their energy, determination, and strong work ethic at practice.

The first home game for eighth grade will be on September 8, with seventh grade hosting their opener on September 18. We encourage everyone to come out and cheer on our teams. With a challenging schedule and a motivated group of athletes, this volleyball season is sure to be full of excitement.

Cross Country



Cross Country season is officially underway, and our team is off and running!

Coach Hiser and I are excited for a terrific year ahead. With the weather beginning to cooperate, we're looking forward to getting in some strong training runs to kick off the season.

We have a talented group of young athletes this year, and we are eager to see the amazing things they will accomplish.

Our season opener will be right here in town at Bill Burke on September 9—come out and cheer us on!

Girls Tennis

As we begin another exciting year of Fall Sports at SMS, the ladies tennis team is ready to build on past success and defend their crown at the Hutch Invitational in September.

This season also brings some familiar faces in new roles, as former SMS tennis standout Lakin Soden joins the staff for her first year as assistant coach. Lakin, now a freshman at Bethany College, is eager to contribute to the program she once competed for. The roster even includes siblings of former players, continuing a strong tradition under Coach Pittenger, who enters his fifth season leading the team.

This year's roster includes: Haddi Adam, Hadley Bossemeyer, Charlee Finnell, Alyson Gonzalez, Braylin Siebenneicher, Courtnee Simmons, Lilly De La Rosa Robles (returner), Kynzee Fensom, Leslie Fierro Cortes (returner), Bre Kohman (returner), Cadey Langley, Sophia Li (returner), Irelyn Marshall, Macey Piepho (returner), Nevaeh Ray, Mia Thomas.

Team managers are: Melanie Cabral, Melissa Cruz, Khloe Kindlesparger.

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Important Dates in September

10 - STUCO Conference at Maize

17 - Site Council Meeting

25 - STUCO Conference at Minneapolis

Contact Us

Dustin Dooley

Principal

Tina Akers

Assistant Principal

Stacy Garnett

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.

Social work

September 2025

NEwsletter



School is back in session

As the school year gets started, here are a few things to remember.

SMS has a Student Support Team that consists of school counselors, a school social worker, a school psychologist, a behavioral health liaison, and a behavior interventionist.

- Do you need help with your students schedule/classes or in-school supports? Contact your students grade level counselor.
- Do you need help with community resources such as food, clothing, financial assistance, Medicaid coverage and/or mental health services? Contact the school social worker.

Getting back into a routine

It is easy for students, parents, and teachers to feel overwhelmed as they return to the school day routine. Provide grace for you and others and know that it can take time to get comfortable.

Self-Care is IMPORTANT!

Allow time each day to recharge if you can. It can be as simple as taking a deep breath, taking a short walk/sitting outside, or doing an activity that brings you joy.

Contact:

Social Worker:

Rachel Mudloff

(785) 309-3854

rachel.mudloff@usd305.com

News

Did you know that September is National Suicide Prevention Month?

You can help by

Watching for Warning Signs

- **Sad, hopeless, tearful**
- **Irritable, angry, hostile**
- **Loss of interest, withdrawn**
- **Feeling worthless or restless**

Provide encouragement to seek help

- **Be gentle, non-judgmental**
- **Understand person may be reluctant to open up**
- **Dial 988 to speak to the crisis hotline**

Reach out to the school social worker or counselors if you are worried about someone's safety.

Upcoming dates

September 1st:

Labor Day- no school

September 10th:

World Suicide Prevention Day

September 13th:

Positive Thinking Day

September 18th:

National Cheeseburger Day

September 21st:

International Day of Peace