



October 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 move from summer to fall, our school has settled into the stride of the new school year. Routines are taking shape, teaching and learning are occurring in classrooms, and many students are finding their stride.

We want to remind all families of the importance of consistent attendance, being present each day has a direct impact on academic growth and success. Along with attendance, it is essential for both students and parents to stay actively engaged with academics by regularly checking Google Classroom and Skyward. Monitoring grades and assignments closely helps students stay on track and prevents small concerns from becoming larger ones down the road.

October also brings Parent-Teacher Conferences, an important opportunity for families to connect with teachers and strengthen the home-to-school partnership. Attending conferences not only provides insight into individual student progress but also allows parents and guardians to collaborate with teachers in setting goals and supporting continued growth. When parents and teachers work together, students are more likely to feel supported, motivated, and confident in their learning. We strongly encourage all families to make time to attend these conferences.

Finally, we are excited to share that our seventh-grade students will be participating in the annual "Cultural Crawl" later this month. During this event, students will explore a variety of fine arts activities in downtown Salina, including exhibitions and presentations hosted by local community organizations. The day will conclude with a performance by Cash Hollistah, providing students with a unique opportunity to engage with the arts right here in our community. Experiences like this help students broaden their perspectives, connect with local culture, and see the many ways the arts enrich our lives.

-Dustin Dooley, Principal

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled for:

October 15 (3:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.) and October 16 (7:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.).

- Advisory teachers will be scheduling conferences with students.
- After visiting with your child's advisory teacher, parents and guardians will have the ability to visit with other teachers on your student's schedule.

Parent-teacher conferences provide an valuable 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 you at parent teacher conferences and working together to build a strong foundation that will help your student learn and grow. With continued communication between home and school, we can make sure our students get the support they need to succeed.

Receive Important Notifications from SPS

Parents and Guardians, to ensure you don't miss important notifications, please review and update your contact information in Skyward.

Log in to Skyward to update your notification preferences by visiting Skyward here: <https://skystu.usd305.com/StudentSTS>.

1. Click on the Skylert Tile, then update your phone, email and text contacts.
 - Be sure to check the box for "General" Messages. The majority of our messages are sent this way. We strongly recommend checking this box.
 - Once your contact information is updated click the 'Save and Back' button.



2. Please note, parents and guardians must personally log in to Skyward to make these updates. SPS staff cannot update this information for you.

Opting in for text notifications:

After updating your phone, email and text contacts you will still need to opt-in via text message to receive text notifications.

To do this, simply text 'Yes' or 'Y' to the number 67587.

- You must opt-in to receive text alerts.
- Texts are often used to draw attention to important emails
- Texts are always sent if school is canceled.

For a step-by-step guide visit the district website here:

<https://www.usd305.com/parents/update-contact-information>.

School Absenteeism



We would like to encourage our students and parents / guardians to reach out to their student(s) teachers, via email, if they are absent or know they will be absent.

- Classwork can be accessed via Google Classroom and paper and pencil copy of assignments can be provided.
- We would also like to remind our parents and guardians to call in their student, if he or she is absent, to avoid truancy notifications.

Each year we track chronic absenteeism in our school, chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of the school year , for any reason. Chronically absent students fall behind their peers in both math computation as well as reading comprehension, sometimes up to a whole year. Please make school attendance a priority! **Greatness grows when you are here!**

Library Policies

Parents have access to the library materials currently checked out by their student(s). For access, parents will have their student log into Destiny, the library card catalog. Library media specialists should be contacted directly if parents would like to provide expressed permission before the student checks out any book. In middle and high school, the student will provide their parent with the title of the book they wish to check out. The parent will contact the library media specialist by email or phone to give permission. Middle school students may check out three books for a three week period.



Cultural Crawl

On Friday, October 24, seventh grade students will take part in the annual Cultural Crawl in downtown Salina. During the event, students will explore several fine arts exhibits presented by local community organizations and end the day with a special concert by Cash Hollistah. Students will travel by bus, and lunch options will include a provided sack lunch from school or one brought from home. Presentations will feature the Rolling Hills Zoo, Friends of the River, Salina Art Center, and many more.



Halloween

Halloween will be observed Friday, October 31. We want to remind all of our students and families that costumes and face painting are not allowed during the school day. We hope all of our students and families have a safe Halloween.

School Fundraiser

South Middle kicked off our annual school fundraiser on Wednesday, September 17. Once again we will be partnering with World's Finest Chocolates to sell chocolate bars to families.

Students began selling on Thursday, September 18 and will sell through Thursday, October 2. For each box of chocolates sold, students will earn prizes.

A parent signature is required to checkout a box of chocolate. Each box of chocolates contain 30 bars and students will sell each bar for \$2.00 a piece.

Students will turn in money and collect their next box when they arrive at school and the check-out process will be in our old concession stand in the commons.

Healthcare on Wheels

Salina Public Schools partners with Salina Family Health Care Center to provide convenient health services for students and families. While the Healthcare on Wheels bus will not be visiting each school this year, families can still access services at community locations throughout Salina.

Visit www.salinahealth.org/healthcare-on-wheels to view the schedule of locations, days and times, and even schedule your own appointment online.

Appointments may also be made by calling the main clinic at 785-825-7251.

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



Guitar

Guitar class is off to a great start this semester! Keep encouraging your student to practice, practice, practice. I would like to remind you about three things – practice sheets, tests, and our concert below.

Practice sheets and logs:

Practice sheets are due every Friday on Google Classroom. The practice sheet is a worksheet reviewing what we learned in class for the week. It's worth 5 points. The practice log is used to record days a student practices at home. They put an "X" down for every day they practice. Four days of practicing at home are required for full credit. 5 points.

The practice sheets and logs account for roughly 10%–15% of the student's overall grade. Nearly every student who ended up with a grade lower than an A was due to practice sheets not being turned in. Remember, they are due every Friday!

Tests:

There are tests every week in guitar class over the skills we are learning in class. Tests have been great this year!

Don't forget that students can retake any guitar test as many times as they would like by making a video on Google Classroom that I will watch and adjust their scores accordingly. If your student is not happy with their grade in class, please encourage them to take advantage of retakes to raise their grade. I truly don't care how long it takes a student to learn – as long as they learn it.

Concert – Dec. 11, 7:15 p.m.

Our winter concert for guitar is Dec. 11 at 7:15 p.m. in Gym 1 at SMS. Four level one guitar classes will perform, and our advanced guitar class will conclude the program. Students are required to attend, with the concert being 25% of their grade. Everyone is invited to come watch! We are excited to show you what we've been working so hard on this semester.

Advanced guitar:

Advanced guitar is a class for eighth grade students only who completed level 1 guitar as seventh graders and excelled. Sixty students (30 each semester) make the cut to be in this advanced class based solely on their grade from level 1. Aside from learning much more difficult material, advanced guitar students perform for various local and civic organizations and conclude each semester with a bus tour taking them back to their elementary schools to play for the elementary school students.

Seventh grade students who are interested in being in Advanced Guitar next year need to do everything they can to get their grade as high as possible, including turning in practice sheets and retaking tests. The students with the 60 highest grades in level one will be in next year's advanced classes.

Social media:

Please follow our guitar classes on social media. "Guitar with Mr. Gerry" on Facebook – @gerrysguitars on Twitter and Instagram. I will post videos and pictures of our adventures in learning guitar.

If you have any questions about guitar class, please contact matt.gerry@usd305.com.

– Mr. Gerry

Orchestra

The Orchestra program is off to a fantastic start this year! All of our ensembles have already made great progress, and we're excited to see the growth and accomplishments still to come. Below are some tips and reminders to help your orchestra student succeed.

Expectations and Responsibilities:

- *Be Responsible* – Bring your instrument, book, and all necessary materials to every Orchestra class.
- *Show Effort* – Prepare and practice at home. Always do your best!
- *Be Respectful* – Play and speak only at the appropriate times. Raise your hand when needed.
- *Attend All Concerts* – Students work hard for these performances, and their presence is essential.
- *Follow School Expectations* – Orchestra is part of the larger school community.

Practicing at Home:

Consistent practice is key to success in Orchestra (20–30 minutes daily is recommended). Every student learns at a different pace—some may need more time to master a skill, others less. The goal is progress and understanding. At the very least, students should bring their instruments home every weekend to practice.

Tips for supporting practice at home:

- Set a regular daily practice time and help your child stick to it.
- Remember, most students need reminders to practice.
- Provide a quiet space with good lighting and a music stand.
- Limit distractions such as siblings, TV, or other activities during practice.
- Show interest in your child's music—attend their "mini-recitals" at home and encourage them.
- Offer plenty of praise and encouragement, even when the sounds are less than perfect.
- Ensure your student remembers their instrument and music on class days.
- Support consistent attendance at both classes and concerts.

Upcoming Concert:

Come support SMS Orchestra students at our first concert of the year as we perform alongside the South High Orchestra!

- December 18
- 7:00 p.m.
- South High Auditorium

We look forward to sharing an evening of great music with you!

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram: @salinasouthorchestra

Band

I am thrilled to begin my second year with the amazing team here at SMS! Our students, faculty, staff, and administration are truly second to none, and the support they provide to our program is outstanding. With some exciting new performance opportunities on the horizon, I can't wait to see what this year brings and to watch our students continue to grow as musicians.

All of our groups are off to a strong start — exploring new material while also reinforcing the good habits that will carry us forward. One of the best ways families can support our program is by encouraging students to bring their instruments home and practice. While we work hard during class, individual practice remains the most important factor in a student's musical progress. In class, we talk often about practice strategies and ideas to help students at home, but your encouragement makes a big difference. Simply asking about band, or inviting your student to play something for you, can go a long way — they love to share their music, and that small gesture helps them take pride in their growth.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out. Thank you for helping us make the SMS Band Family the very best it can be!

-Gavin Blehm, Band Teacher

Girls Tennis

It's hard to believe our Lady Cougars tennis season is already nearing its final stretch! As we head into the Hutchinson Invitational, we are proud to enter as the defending champions. The team currently holds a 2-2 record, with wins over Lakewood and Hutchinson, and competitive matches against Valley Center and Maize.

The growth from the start of the season has been tremendous. Leading the way is our team captain, Sophia Li, an eighth grader, who is undefeated at 4-0 this season and an impressive 22-2 in singles play during her middle school career. At the No. 2 spot, seventh grader Braylin Siebenneicher is also undefeated at 4-0. Braylin's dedication and offseason work, including playing in local high school tournaments, have paid off in a big way.



Cross Country



The season is flying by, and the coaches are extremely proud of the athletes this year. The team tried something new by taking on a four-mile route much earlier than in past seasons, and the runners rose to the challenge. It has been exciting to watch their day-to-day improvement and see that progress translate into success at meets. The season will wrap up in a few weeks with the league meet in Newton. Thank you to everyone for the continued support along the way!

Students of the Week

Week 1

Congratulations to Mya Fulkerson for earning student of the week. Mya is a sixth grader at South Middle School. At school, she is involved in tennis, volleyball, softball, band, and gifted. Her favorite class is history. Outside of school, Mya swims competitively and serves as an altar server at her church. She enjoys spending her free time reading. After high school, she plans to attend college. A fun fact about Mya is that she has a cat named Stan.



Week 2

Congratulations to Keaton Ebert for earning student of the week. Keaton is a seventh grader at South Middle School. He is involved in football, basketball and yearbook. His favorite subject is P.E. because he gets to be active with friends. Outside of school, he plays piano, basketball and soccer for the CKU Pursuit. After high school, he plans to go to college and continue playing soccer.



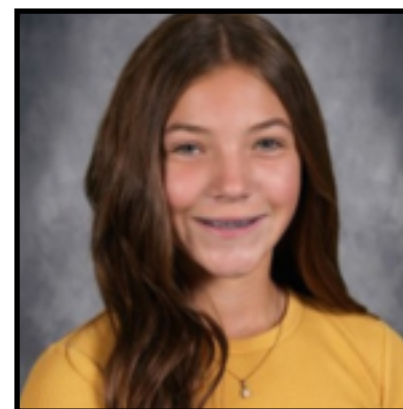
Week 3

Congratulations to Juliette Garcia for earning student of the week. Juliette is an eighth grader at South Middle School. At school, she is involved in advanced guitar. Her favorite part about school is getting to be with her friends, make connections with teachers and learn new things. Outside of school, Juliette plays club soccer and volunteers at her church. After high school, Juliette plans on going to college to become a pediatrician. Some fun facts about Juliette are that she is bilingual, she has one dog and she loves to be social.



Week 4

Congratulations to Anna Gibson for earning student of the week! Annie is a sixth grader at South Middle School. At school, she is involved in KAY Club and the gifted class. Her favorite part of school is having amazing classes with teachers and peers she loves being around. Outside of school, she participates in volleyball, softball, piano, babysitting and art. Annie plans to attend Oklahoma State University and continue her athletic career. Some fun facts about her are that she has a brother named Pierce, a dog, a bunny and her favorite color is green.



Teacher of the Month

Congratulations to SMS Grade 6 Social Studies Teacher, Jessa Herrs for earning October Teacher of the month. Mrs. Herrs does a fantastic job facilitating a structured and organized classroom while making her students feel valued and respected.



Horizon Award

Congratulations to SMS Band teacher, Gavin Blehm for earning the USD 305 Kansas Horizon Award. The Kansas Horizon Awards are given to second year classroom teachers who did an outstanding job their first year of teachers. South Middle is honored to have Mr. Blehm receive this award.



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			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 October

9 - In-Service / No School

10 - In-Service / No School

15 - Parent Teacher Conferences

16 - Parent Teacher Conferences / No School

17 - No School

20 - Boys Wrestling / Girls Basketball Practices Start

22 - PTO Meeting (12:00 p.m.)

24 - Seventh Grade Cultural Crawl

24 - School Picture Re-Takes

31 - Halloween

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.

SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER



OCTOBER
2025

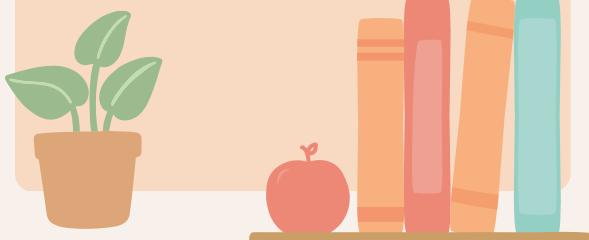
Bullying Prevention Month

October is National Bullying Prevention month.

It is a month dedicated to raising awareness about bullying and its effects, along with promoting kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. This month is focused on recognizing the various forms of bullying, including physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying.

What is Bullying? The repeated act of hostility or aggression where there is a real or perceived imbalance of power and the victim cannot defend themselves.

What is Cyberbullying? Repeated, threatening, or harassing behavior that occurs online via internet or cellphone. This includes sending harassing messages, posting false information or private pictures.



Try a coping skill

5 SENSES EXERCISE

While sitting or standing in one place, observe your surroundings

- 5- What are 5 things that you can see around you? Something you don't normally notice
- 4- What are 4 things you can hear?
- 3- What are 3 things you can feel?
- 2- What are 2 things you can smell?
- 1- What is 1 thing you can taste?

Contact Info for Social Worker:



Rachel Mudloff 785-309-3854
rachel.mudloff@usd305.com
Can help with: Food assistance, Clothing & hygiene resources, Mental Health services, etc.



Upcoming

- Oct 4: National Taco Day
- **Oct 9 & 10: No School**
- Oct 10: World Mental Health Day
- **Oct 15 & 16: P/T Conferences**
- **Oct 16 & 17: No School**

The Students' Right to Know Act

House Bill 2085, passed in the 2021 legislative session, created the Students' Right to Know Act to provide information on postsecondary education options.

Kansas Career Guidance Handbook:

https://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/CSAS/CSAS%20Home/CTE%20Home/Career_Cluster_Pathway/KCCGHandbook2025-2026.pdf?ver=2024-08-30-080951-780

Tuition and earnings data:

<http://ksdegreestats.org>

Employment & Wage Data for CTE Courses:

<https://kansasregents.org/>

Kansas Labor Information:

<https://klic.dol.ks.gov/vosnet/lmi/default.aspx?enc=vLa15KtdCzQQMP6jrcRdlQ==>

Earnings of branches of the armed services:

KBOR Military Veteran Resource:

<https://kansasregents.org/students/military?highlight=WyJtaWxp dGFyeSIsInZldGVyYW4iLCJyZXNvdXJjZXMiXQ==>

Career Onestop:

Careeronestop.org

Military Crosswalk:

onetonline.org