



December 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 near the end of the first semester, we want to remind our students and families of some important dates and opportunities to celebrate our students. The Vocal Music concert and Guitar concert will be held December 11, with vocal starting at 6:00 p.m., followed by guitar at 7:15 p.m. Band students will perform on December 16 at 7:00 p.m., and Orchestra students will showcase their talents on December 18 at 7:00 p.m. We hope everyone will join us in supporting our talented students and celebrating their hard work.

With only three weeks left until winter break, it's important for all students to finish the first semester strong. Please encourage your child to stay on top of assignments, check their grades in Skyward and reach out to teachers if they need support. Families are also reminded of our promotion and retention policy: any student who fails a core class for the entire school year will be required to attend summer school or re-take the class the following school year. Staying engaged now can make all the difference in starting the new year successfully.

Finally, I would like to highlight our Student Council's fundraiser, which includes purchasing and wrapping gifts for identified families in our school community. This activity helps ensure that all of our students experience the joy of the holiday season. From our school family to yours, we wish everyone a safe, joyful, and memorable Christmas season filled with peace and time spent with loved ones.

Dustin Dooley, Principal

Seventh / Eighth Grade Art

Dr. Moreland's seventh and eighth grade art classes recently took part in a one class period "Hand Turkey Competition." Students were encouraged to move beyond the traditional hand turkey we all remember from elementary school and think creatively. While some chose classic designs, many rose to the challenge and produced truly impressive work. Congratulations to our winners:

First place: Bailey Rawline

Second place: Eli Carson

Third place: Lauren Derrick

Fourth place: Joseph Moreno



This lighthearted activity provided a fun creative break from the more complex projects students have been focused on this year. Students were allowed to use any previously learned medium, including paint, pastel, colored pencil, marker, or collage. Earlier this year, students also completed projects such as Identity Portraits, Watercolor Starry Night interpretations, Colored Pencil Blended Dragons and Acrylic Pumpkins.

Salina South Middle School is home to many talented young artists, and we look forward to showcasing their work at our May Art Exhibit (more information to come). Additionally, 25 of our students currently have artwork on display at Theatre Salina as part of Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical.

These pieces can be viewed during show weekends, Thursdays through Sundays, from November 21–December 6 and December 19–21, 2025. We are incredibly proud of our students and their outstanding creativity!



Eighth Grade Pre-Enrollment / Parent Meeting

The South High School Counseling Department will host a Parent Night for all South Middle School eighth grade parents and students on Wednesday, December 3 at 6:15 p.m. in the South High School auditorium.

Counselors will present valuable information about student's freshman year and the transition to South High School. All eighth grade students will participate in the pre-enrollment process on Monday, December 1 through their Science class.

Girls Basketball

As the season moves about three quarters of the way toward the finish line, our seventh and eighth grade girls' basketball teams have a lot to be proud of. While the win column shows a handful of victories, the real story of the season has been growth, hard work and teamwork.

From the first practice to now, the girls have shown steady improvement in every part of their game. Practices have become more competitive as the girls learn and develop more skills of the game.

Players from both grades are learning about leadership roles, how to encourage teammates, celebrating small successes, and pushing each other to get better.

As the final stretch of the season approaches, the teams are excited to keep building on their progress. No matter how the remaining games turn out we know they will continue to learn, improve and put forth a great effort.



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

KAY Club (Kansas Association of Youth)

KAY Club has been hard at work finding meaningful ways to serve our school and community this year. So far, members have helped transport our school's recycling, supported our volleyball team's fundraiser for a local community member battling cancer, organized a schoolwide kindness initiative, and attended the regional KAY conference.

Last year, the club received a grant to purchase outdoor seating for classroom use. Our students are now able to enjoy this new learning space and spend more time learning outside.

Looking ahead, KAY members plan to paint nails for residents at a local nursing home, assist with Thanksgiving lunch at our elementary schools, create and deliver holiday cards to nursing home residents, and read to elementary students throughout the holiday season.

In January, 25 KAY members will attend the unit conference in Belleville, and the club will also assemble care packages for individuals experiencing homelessness.

SMS KAY Club now has more than 70 students involved, all committed to making a positive difference in our school and community.



Student Council

Student Council had a busy and exciting month! We kicked off November with our first quarter PBIS celebration at The City on the November 7. On November 11, Student Council helped honor our veterans by delivering pancakes from IHOP as a small gesture of gratitude for their service to our country.

Throughout the month, the Student Council ran several "Woot Wagons" to show appreciation for our amazing teachers. We wrapped up November with a special Welcoming Committee "Woot Wagon," handing out sweet treats to students before Thanksgiving break.

It was a great month of service and celebration for our school community!



Teacher of the Month

Congratulations to SMS English Language Learning teacher Hernan Hernandez for earning December teacher of the month. As an English Language Learner teacher, he consistently goes above and beyond to support the students on his caseload. He is a strong advocate for their academic and social success, regularly pushing into classrooms to collaborate with teachers and provide targeted strategies and interventions. His commitment to creating a welcoming, inclusive and encouraging learning environment ensures that every student feels valued and empowered. We are grateful for his dedication to our school community and to the success of all learners.



Students of the Week

Week 9

Congratulations to Harper Wood for earning student of the week. Harper is a sixth grader at South Middle School. At school, she is involved in Student Council. Her favorite part is having multiple classes a day because it switches things up and gives her variety. Outside of school she plays softball and attends church. After high school, she plans to attend college. In her free time, she enjoys playing sports, hanging out with friends and traveling.



Week 10

Congratulations to Paige Gennette for earning student of the week. Paige is an eighth grader at South Middle School. She is involved in guitar and serves as a student aide in the library. Her favorite classes are history, art, guitar and being a library aide because they allow her to be creative and helpful. She also enjoys her teachers. Outside of school, she likes helping others and doing art. After high school, she plans to attend college to become a baker. Some fun facts about her are that she loves to draw, bake and dye her hair because they allow her to express herself. She also has two brothers and one sister.



Week 11

Congratulations to Marilyn Barajas for earning student of the week. Marilyn is a seventh grader at South Middle School. She is involved in the Student Belonging Committee and orchestra. At school, math is her favorite class because it's the subject she feels most confident in and excels at. Beyond the classroom, she spends her time playing softball. After high school, she plans to attend veterinary school and hopes to earn a scholarship. Some fun facts about her are that she has three dogs, is an only child, moved to Kansas from Texas when she was four and collects Funko Pops.



Week 12

Congratulations to Brenden Hopkins for earning student of the week. Brenden is a seventh grader at South Middle School. At school, he enjoys attending assemblies and celebrations. His favorite part of school is seeing his friends and getting to run around in P.E. Outside of school, he goes on walks, plays on his trampoline and swings with his sister. After high school, he wants to travel the world with his mom. Some fun facts about him are that he is always happy and he loves spending time with his siblings and cousins.



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 December

3 - 6:15 p.m. Eighth Grade Pre-Enrollment

Night at South High School

11 - 6:00 p.m. Vocal Concert

11 - 7:15 p.m. Guitar Concert

16 - 7:00 p.m. Band Concert

18 - 7:00 p.m. Orchestra Concert

18 - End of First Semester

19 - 31 No School/Winter Recess

Jan. 1-2 No School/Winter Recess

Jan. 5 No School/Teacher Inservice

Jan. 6 Classes Resume

Contact Us

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Principal

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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

DECEMBER 2025

Social Media & Mental Health

It is hard to find a teen that does not have a cell phone with one or more social media accounts. It can be a source of enjoyment for many but can also be a stressor for others.

According to the CDC, one in four teens with 4 hours or more of screen time each day have experienced symptoms of anxiety and depression due to online usage. Overstimulation from social media has a direct impact on the brain and can cause problems with emotional regulation, sleep, and mood. Additional studies have shown that excess time spent online can become an addiction and effect the part of the brain that drives impulse control.

With the long winter break upon us, it is crucial to regulate screen time and especially social media time.

Check out *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt for an informative winter time read.

Try a coping skill

Mindfulness:

This skill is about being fully present in the moment and focusing on what you are doing.

Example: Take a drink of a hot beverage like cocoa or tea. As you take a sip, think about how it tastes. Is it sweet or tangy? As you swallow, focus on the warmth as it moves down your throat, and through your whole body. Where do you feel warm? How does it make you feel? Continue with each sip until you finish the drink.

Dates to Remember

- Dec 1: Eat a Red Apple Day
- Dec 10: Human Rights Day
- Dec 16: Chocolate Covered Anything Day
- **Dec 19- 31: No School**

Contact Info

Social Worker:

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