



May 2026

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 enter the final month of the school year, we want to thank our students, families and staff for the support and partnership you have shown throughout the year. It has been a tremendous school year filled with growth, learning and accomplishments.

As we approach the finish line, I want to encourage all students to finish the year strong. The habits, effort and focus students demonstrate in these final weeks help set the foundation for success next school year. Attendance, completing assignments and staying engaged remain as important now as they were on the first day of school.

I also encourage parents and guardians to stay connected with the school during these last few weeks. May is a busy month filled with important deadlines, celebrations, and end-of-year events. Ongoing communication between home and school helps ensure students to stay on track and families remain informed about all that is happening.

A special thank you goes out to our incredible teachers as we celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week, May 4 - May 8. Our teachers invest so much in our students each day, and we are grateful for their dedication, care and commitment to helping every student learn and grow.

We also look forward to celebrating our students during our upcoming awards ceremonies.

- Sixth grade awards: Monday, May 18, at 6:00 p.m.
- Seventh grade awards: Monday, May 18, at 7:00 p.m.
- Eighth grade awards: Tuesday, May 19, at 6:30 p.m.

Additionally, our eighth grade students will visit South High School on Monday, May 18, for orientation as they prepare for an exciting transition to high school next year.

Please note that the last day of school is Thursday, May 21, with classes in session from 7:45 a.m. to 2:55 p.m. For families planning ahead, Summer School will operate from June 1 - June 30 from 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. at South High School.

Thank you again for a wonderful school year and for our families continued partnership.

Dustin Dooley, Principal

Sixth Grade Science

Sixth grade science students have recently wrapped up their unit on minerals and rocks and are now diving into an exciting new unit focused on potential and kinetic energy, Newton's Laws and simple machines.

As students build their understanding of these concepts, they will apply their learning through a variety of hands-on stations. These activities include building with LEGOs, measuring distance with balloon cars, exploring cause-and-effect through the Mousetrap game and designing their own Rube Goldberg-style machines.

To support these projects, we are collecting materials for student use. If you have any extra toilet paper or paper towel rolls at home, we would greatly appreciate your donations. Thank you for your continued support of our students' learning!

Seventh Grade Science

Last month, seventh grade science students completed their unit on ecosystems, exploring topics such as food webs, symbiotic relationships and the roles of producers and consumers. To demonstrate their understanding, students created unique creatures and developed food pyramids and food webs that incorporated key vocabulary and concepts from the unit.

Students are now wrapping up their study of renewable and non-renewable resources, with discussions focused on how these resources impact our daily lives, our state and our country.

As we move toward the end of the school year, students will engage in a short unit on the properties of waves and wave interactions, continuing to build their scientific knowledge through hands-on learning and exploration.

Eighth Grade Science

As the school year comes to a close, eighth grade science students are finishing their unit on evolution and beginning an exciting new study of the history of life on Earth. Building on their understanding of how species change over time, students will explore how life has developed and diversified over millions of years.

During this unit, students will investigate major events in Earth's history, including the emergence of early life forms, mass extinctions and the rise of complex organisms. They will also study geologic time periods and examine the evidence scientists use to understand Earth's past.

This final unit provides a meaningful opportunity for students to connect concepts from throughout the year and deepen their understanding of the story of life on our planet.

Eighth Grade South High School Orientation

On Monday, May 18, 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 Wednesday, May 20, from 10:00 a.m. - 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 Thursday, May 14, 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 outside. Salina Liberty players will also be in attendance and music will be provided by Cash Hollistah.



End of Year Library Dates

All library books are due back to the library by Friday, May 15. 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 8.

Device Collection Schedule:

- Grade 6: Chromebooks and chargers will be collected during English classes on Monday, May 18.
- Grades 7 and 8: Chromebooks and chargers will be collected during English classes on Tuesday, May 19.



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

Yearbook

The 2025-26 school 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 2026-2027 yearbook staff. Students interested in joining the team will fill out an application. 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 team has experienced a season of both highs and challenges. The team opened strong with two convincing dual wins before dropping the next two matchups. They bounced back in impressive fashion with an 18–0 victory over Derby Middle. On the trip home from that match, the team encountered a passing storm and had the unique opportunity to safely capture some memorable photos of a tornado in the distance—an experience the team won't soon forget.

As of April 29, the team holds a 4–3 record. With an upcoming dual against a Newton team that is short on numbers, the team is optimistic about improving to 5–3 heading into the league tournament on Monday, May 4.

We would like to recognize the following players who have earned a spot on the league tournament roster in Hutchinson:

Singles

#1 Singles: Easton Kepley-Anderson, #2 Singles: Locke Michel, #3 Singles: Ridge Morris, #4 Singles: Jase Eustice

Doubles

#1 Doubles: Aiden Nieto / Paul Carpenter, #2 Doubles: Landry Stein / Daxton Tyner, #3 Doubles: Levi Frieson / Maverick Finnell, #4 Doubles: Parker Ingram / Owen Kimmi

We are proud of the team's effort and growth this season and look forward to seeing them compete at the league tournament!



Track and Field

Entering this season, we had high expectations for our athletes. With our full coaching staff returning and a talented group of students, we believed this team had a great opportunity to build on last year's success—and they have delivered.

Our athletes have responded extremely well to coaching, showing a strong commitment to improvement in each of their events. Their hard work, focus and attention to detail have paid off in a big way. So far this season, the team has broken four school records, including two that had stood for over 40 years. We are excited about the possibility of adding even more records before the season concludes.

We look forward to finishing the season strong with our home meet on Thursday, May 7, at Salina Stadium, followed by the league meet in Derby on Monday, May 11.

Thank you to our parents and staff for your continued support as we navigate these final busy weeks of the season. Your encouragement plays a vital role in our athletes' success!

SMS Civics Bee

Congratulations to SMS students Colin Burke (First place) and Zaida Correa-Vasquez (Second place) for their performance at the National Civics Bee regional competition! These students will advance to compete in the state finals in June. Our students showcased strong civic knowledge, thoughtful ideas, and a passion for making a difference in our community.



Spring Sports Physicals

Salina Regional Health Center is offering \$25.00 sports physicals for the 2026-27 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 6, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at South High School. Please come to the lower gym and enter the weight room doors.

Last Day of School Release

On the last day of school, Thursday, May 21, 2026, South Middle School students will attend the entire day, 7:45 a.m. - 2:55 p.m.

Summer School

As we approach the end of the 2025-26 school year, our grade-level counselors will begin identifying students who may benefit from attending summer school.

One summer school session will be offered at South High School, running from June 1 through June 30, 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.

Food Service Accounts

Please review your student's food service account balance regularly to keep your account current and prevent overdue payments. To view your current balance, log into Skyward Family Access and click the Food Service Tile. You may pay in person at your school, district office or online in Skyward.

<https://skystu.usd305.com/StudentSTS>



Summer Food Program

June 1 – June 30, Monday – Friday
(Closed June 19)

- Free to all children
- No signup, eligibility or paperwork required
- All meals eaten on site
- Adult meal cost:
 - Breakfast \$3.50
 - Lunch \$5.75
- Free activities and book giveaways

Visit the district website for more information:



Summer Food Program



Students of the Week

Week 26

Congratulations to Ray Shelton for earning student of the week. Ray is a seventh grader at South Middle School. At school, he is on the track team. His favorite part of school is math class because he finds it to be the most interesting subject. Outside of school, he enjoys playing soccer. After high school, he plans to attend Salina Area Technical College and become an automotive mechanic. Some fun facts about Ray are that he has two dogs, loves playing soccer and enjoys taking trips to Mexico with his family.



Week 27

Nateah is an eighth grader at South Middle School. At school, she is on the cheer team. Her favorite part of school is the social aspect that allows her to make new connections with her classmates. Outside of school, she stays active as a twirler. After high school, she plans to continue her education in college. Some fun facts about Nateah are that she has four cats and one dog.



Week 28

Congratulations to Irelynn Raasch for earning student of the week. Irelynn is a sixth grader at South Middle School. At school, she is involved in Bingo Club. Her favorite class is math because she likes solving problems and working with numbers. Outside of school, she stays active by participating in gymnastics, softball and volleyball. After high school, she plans to attend the University of Nebraska and pursue a career as a doctor or teacher. Some fun facts about Irelynn are that she has been doing gymnastics since she was two, and has three dogs.



Students of the Week Cont.

Week 29

Congratulations to Izabella Trostle for earning student of the week. Izabella is a seventh grader at South Middle School. At school, she is involved in KAY Club. Her favorite part of school is getting to participate in fun activities with her friends. Outside of school, she stays active by playing volleyball. After high school, she plans to attend college and become a veterinarian. Some fun facts about Izabella are that she loves doing diamond art and has one dog and two chinchillas.



Teacher of the Month

Congratulations to Thaine Willer for earning May teacher of the month. Thaine is a social studies teacher at South Middle School. He has been teaching for 12 years, with this being his fifth year at South Middle. Thaine was inspired to become a teacher while in college when he was coaching youth sports. He knew his calling was working with children and wanted to help make an impact on their lives. His favorite part of teaching is connecting and conversing with his students. He enjoys the memories created in the classroom that last a lifetime. A fun fact about Thaine is that he was crowned "Big Man on Campus" at Fort Hay State University in 2005.



SMS Retirees

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

- **Sue Watson** - 28 years of service at South Middle School and 31 years of service total.
- **Kathy Clark** - 18 years of service at South Middle School and 19 years of service total.
- **Scott VanDeCreek** - 29 Years of service at South Middle School and 34 years of service total.



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

Important Dates in May

5 - 5:30 p.m. Fine Arts Night
 5 - 7:00 p.m. Band Concert
 6 - 5:30 p.m. Spring Sports Physicals at South HS
 7 - 2:00 p.m. Track Meet at Salina Stadium
 12 - 7:00 p.m. Orchestra Concert at South HS
 14 - 6:00 p.m. Vocal Concert
 14 - 7:00 p.m. Guitar Concert
 18 - 6:00 p.m. Sixth Grade Awards Night
 18 - 7:00 p.m. Seventh Grade Awards Night
 19 - 6:30 p.m. Eighth Grade Awards Night
 20 - Sixth Grade Park Trip
 21 - Last Day of School

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.

4TH QUARTER PBIS CELEBRATION

Celebrate your achievements with an Ice Cream Sundae Celebration and free time. Will be 8th hour 2:06 pm – 2:55 pm Out Front under the Awning.

MAY 14TH 2026

SCOOP, SWIRL, AND SPRINKLE YOUR WAY

Qualifications: All A's B's & C's
And NO Office Referrals

SALINA SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL



Social Work Newsletter

May 2026



The school year is coming to an end...

Celebrate the progress you have made this year and appreciate what you have gained. The school year may have been difficult at times but we have all grown and learned from those moment.

Mental Health Awareness Month

In May, we observe Mental Health Awareness to help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health conditions, promote understanding of mental illnesses, and encourage all to seek help and support when needed.

1 in 5 people live with a mental health condition. It is likely that you have met or know someone personally that deals with a mental health condition.

This month is about understanding and talking about it. Know that many people you engage with day to day, may be dealing with something you don't understand.

Supporting your mental health

- Recognize how you are feeling
- Utilize coping mechanisms
- Reach out to your support system when possible
- Seek professional help if needed
 - Call/Text 988
 - Visit your local community mental health clinic

Supporting others

- Be calm and listen
- Provide encouragement
- Encourage seeking professional help
- If you don't feel comfortable providing support but you are worried they are suicidal, please connect them to one of the professional resources above.

Dates to Remember:

- May 17- Graduation
- May 21- Last day of school
- May 25- Memorial Day

Contact Info:

Social Worker
Rachel Mudloff 785-309-3854
rachel.mudloff@usd305.com





Program Details:

- June 1 - 30, Monday - Friday
 - (Closed June 19)
- Free to all children
- No signup, eligibility or paperwork required
- Free activities & giveaways (12:15 p.m.)
 - *See activities & giveaway schedule for more information*
- All meals eaten on site
- Adult meal cost:
 - Breakfast \$3.50
 - Lunch \$5.75
- Find menus online at:
www.usd305.com/menus

Breakfast Locations:

South High	730 E. Magnolia Rd.	7:45 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.
Heusner Elementary	1300 Norton St.	7:45 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.
Cottonwood Elementary	215 S. Phillips Ave.	7:45 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.

Lunch Locations:

South High	730 E. Magnolia Rd.	11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Heusner Elementary	1300 Norton St.	12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Cottonwood Elementary	215 S. Phillips Ave.	12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Salina Fieldhouse	140 N. 5 th St.	12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Heartland Early Education	700 Jupiter Ave.	12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Summer Food Program 2026

12:15 p.m. Free Activities & Book Giveaways Schedule

June 2

Friends of the River	South High
Salina Arts & Humanities	Cottonwood
Smoky Hill Museum	Heusner

June 3

Smoky Hill Museum	Cottonwood
RAWR Book Giveaway	Heartland

June 4

RAWR Book Giveaway	Cottonwood
Lakewood Discovery Center	Heusner

June 9

Friends of the River	Cottonwood
Smoky Hill Museum	Heusner

June 10

RAWR Book Giveaway	Heusner
Smoky Hill Museum	Heartland

June 11

RAWR Book Giveaway	South High
Salina Arts & Humanities	Heusner

June 15

Girl Scouts	Heusner
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June 16

Girl Scouts	South High
Rolling Hills Zoo	Cottonwood
Friends of the River	Heusner

June 17

Rolling Hills Zoo	Heusner
RAWR Book Giveaway	Salina Fieldhouse

June 18

RAWR Book Giveaway	Cottonwood
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June 22

Salina Arts & Humanities	Cottonwood
Girl Scouts	Salina Fieldhouse

June 23

Girl Scouts	Cottonwood
Friends of the River	Salina Fieldhouse

June 24

RAWR Book Giveaway	Heusner
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June 25

RAWR Book Giveaway	South High
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June 29

Salina Arts & Humanities	Heusner
Girl Scouts	Heartland

June 30

Friends of the River	Heartland
Center for Theatre Arts	Salina Fieldhouse

Partners

