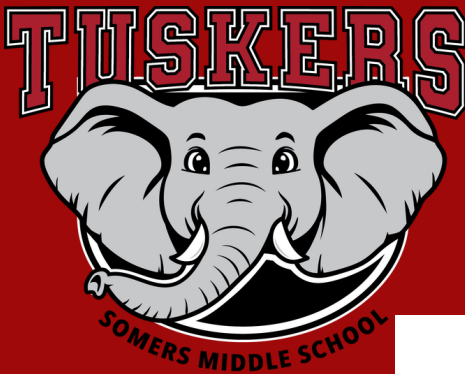




JUNE 2026

COUNSELING CORNER

If you have a question,
please email or call one of us!

By Phone: 914-276-2588

6th Grade: Mrs. Kurchack: skurchack@somersschools.org Ext. 3308

7th Grade: Mr. Fleck: jfleck@somersschools.org Ext. 3307

8th Grade: Mrs. Bieber: ebieber@somersschools.org Ext. 3306

SMS Social Emotional Learning Interventionist: Mrs. Cespedes: wcespedes@somersschools.org Ext. 3305

Mrs. Coogan, Department Secretary: 914- 276-2588

Mr. Phil Kavanagh, Director of Counseling: pkavanagh@somersschools.org 914-248-8585, Ext. 4303

Who will be my child's counselor next year?

SMS school counselors stay with their cohort for all 3 years.

For the 2026-2027 school year, the 7th grade school counselor will be Mrs. Kurchack and the 8th grade school counselor will be Mr. Fleck. Mrs. Bieber will be the school counselor for the new 6th graders. Mrs. Cespedes will continue to work with all three grade levels.

The 9th graders' counselor information will be sent by SHS.

Important Dates:

June 24 - Last day of school for 8th graders

June 25 - 8th grade graduation at SHS

June 26 - Last day of school for 6th and 7th graders

By June 29 - Final Report Cards posted in Infinite Campus

August 19 & 20 - incoming 6th grade orientation at SMS

Late August - Student schedules will be posted in Infinite Campus and school supply lists will be sent via Parent Square

September 1 - 9th grade orientation at SHS

September 2 - First day of school



Mrs. Bieber, Mrs. Kurchack, Mr. Fleck, and Mrs. Cespedes

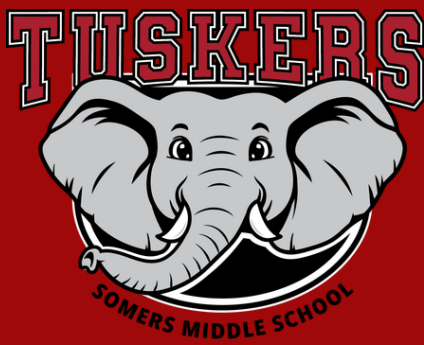
Leaders in Action:

In May, a group of 7th graders assisted the SMS School Counseling Department with supporting the 5th graders' transition to SMS. As part of the orientation process, the 5th graders came to visit SMS. Current 7th graders gave them tours and provided students' perspectives to the 5th graders' questions. Some members from the No Place for Hate club also welcomed the 5th graders, with a message of reassurance and positivity.

We are thankful to our amazing SMS students for exemplifying the MYP Learner Attributes of being caring, knowledgeable, and communicators.



Tech Tip: "Remember, your child's safety is more important than their privacy. As a parent, you aren't being nosy by checking their cell phone on a regular basis; you are being responsible."



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Grade 7:

Two down, one to go! In the blink of an eye, the SMS Class of 2027 comes to the end of their second year as middle school students, and their first year of secondary education. And what a year it has been! The 7th grade crammed a lot into this year, both in and out of the classroom. Between new teachers, harder classes, new relationships forming, while others were tested, sometimes to the breaking point. It has been a year of challenge, for all of them. They have worked hard and fully deserve to relax and rejuvenate after such an exhausting year.

Mr. Fleck was there – to observe, to mediate, to hold accountable, to make them laugh with admittedly bad jokes, and most importantly, to listen as his students began navigating these unfamiliar waters. Through both good and bad experiences, it is clear that they learned, and grew in more ways than one. Mr. Fleck got to observe that once again when he pushed into Health classes to join the Human Growth & Healthy Relationships unit to answer questions students submitted anonymously about becoming teenagers and young adults over the next few years. This is an extension of last year's conversation, but instead of questions surrounding adolescence (they're now living it, and don't want to talk about it) most of the questions demonstrated a greater awareness of the world, and people, around them, and trying to find their place in it. It's been extremely rewarding to see how they are already laying the groundwork for who they will be as young adults. Mr. Fleck also returned to Family and Consumer Science classes to take the students through Xello, and its Matchmaker exercise, tying their interests to possible pathways in life, but yet another opportunity to start looking ahead to their future. It was also a great year for student groups, such as lunch bunch during 7th grade lunch period, and meetings with students individually during WIN throughout the year. A rollercoaster of a year it certainly has been, and Mr. Fleck has been happy to be on the ride with them.

Most importantly, they are now 8th graders! They have successfully climbed the Middle School Mountain, and I know many are already looking forward to 8th grade which brings multiple trips, including to Washington D.C. in the Spring, Lake Compounce in June, just prior to their "moving up ceremony" at the high school. Yes, the specter of Tusker Nation looms large, but that can all wait until the Fall. Mr. Fleck's only request is that they please enjoy the summer, spend time with friends and family, rest and recharge, and in September we'll do it all over again for the last time. Take care and make good decisions!

Grade 8:

Since January, Mrs. Bieber has been working closely with the 8th graders to foster a smooth transition into 9th grade. Each 8th grader has met individually with Mrs. Bieber to discuss and create their 9th-grade course selections. Throughout the spring, SHS counselors and peer leaders have visited SMS during lunch and WIN to meet with students.

On Tuesday, June 16th, during the SMS lunch period, the high school counselors hosted an Ice Cream Social for 8th graders as an opportunity to connect before the start of high school. Additionally, **9th Grade Orientation is scheduled for September 1st** at SHS. Families will receive more details from Somers High School over the summer.

In Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) classes this trimester, Mrs. Bieber co-taught two lessons, providing learning opportunities designed to support students' social-emotional growth and future college and career planning. During the first lesson, students were reintroduced to the DBT-Steps A curriculum, which they first learned about in 6th grade. This lesson focused on one of the core concepts, which is dialectics. Dialectical thinking teaches students that two thoughts and/or feelings can be true at the same time. Through class discussions, students explored how understanding multiple perspectives can lead to healthier communication, stronger relationships, and improved problem-solving skills. Other members of the Wellness Team followed with additional instruction about DBT.

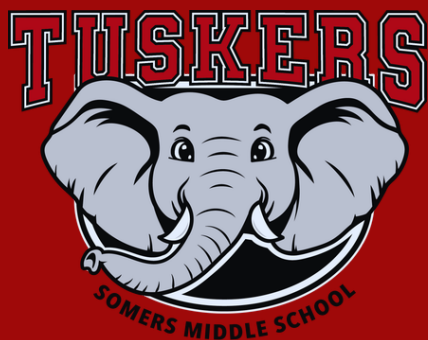
The second lesson centered on career exploration and readiness. Students accessed Xello, the district's college and career planning platform that they have been using since 6th grade. As part of this lesson, students completed the Matchmaker Assessment, which aligns their interests and strengths with careers that may be worth exploring further and various activities that support the transition to HS and understanding one self's interests and strengths. Please ask your child about their Xello results and DBT unit. This can create a pathway for meaningful discussions at home.

Eighth graders have had continued opportunities to work with Mrs. Bieber through lunch groups and WIN time on a variety of topics such as the transition to HS, social skill-building, stress relief, organizational support, and goal-setting.

Mrs. Bieber has truly enjoyed working with this cohort of students and their families over the past three years. It has been an honor. She will miss them. As the Class of 2026 prepares for this exciting next chapter, she wishes each student joy, good health, and continued growth. She looks forward to hearing about all of their future accomplishments and anticipates great things in their future!

Wishing all of our 8th grade families a wonderful summer and the best of luck as you begin your high school journey!





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Grade 6:

Mrs. Kurchack met with each 6th grade student individually to complete and review a short questionnaire known as "About Me." This was a wonderful opportunity for Mrs. Kurchack to get to know each student in the 6th grade better. During this meeting, students shared information about themselves and talked about life inside and outside of SMS. This meeting helped to build a trusting relationship and ensured that students know where and how to meet with their counselor if needed. "About Me" meetings will occur again next year when the students are in grade 7, with similar goals, and will again give Mrs. Kurchack the opportunity to have individual time with each student.

In addition to seeing students both individually and in small groups, Mrs. Kurchack visits the Health classes during each Trimester for classroom lessons two times within the trimester. One visit focuses on building Healthy Relationships. This lesson sets the goal that each student can identify 2-3 trusted adults in their life. Mrs. Kurchack and the health teacher highlight the importance of having trusted adults both inside and outside of school, someone they can turn to with questions or concerns. Mrs. Kurchack reviews the people and places students can go in school when faced with an issue they need support with.

The second lesson is focused on the concept of Dialectics, which is part of the DBT Steps-A curriculum. The lesson on Dialectics teaches students that two different thoughts and/or feelings can be true at the same time and focuses on how to take this concept and apply it towards healthy communication with others. Students participate in an activity to help illuminate the concept that having different perspectives does not mean that one is right and one is wrong. Students are encouraged to apply this concept if they are having a conflict and there is discussion around how this fosters healthier communication.

In early June, Mrs. Kurchack introduced all 6th grade students to the middle school's career exploration platform, Xello. Students set up their accounts and began to explore the resources available to them through the Xello site. Students completed a Learning Styles Inventory where they identified and discussed their primary learning styles. In addition, Mrs. Kurchack explained why it is important to understand how you learn best, and students reviewed strategies to use with various learning styles when it comes to test taking and studying.

Mrs. Kurchack has truly enjoyed getting to know the newest members of SMS and is looking forward to continuing to watch the students grow throughout grade 7. She is wishing all of the students and families a restful summer filled with joy and happiness – see you next year!

Middle School Mentors:

As the school year comes to a close, on behalf of the whole Counseling Department, Mrs. Cespedes would like to extend our sincere appreciation to our 30 Middle School Mentors for their dedication, leadership, and commitment to helping make Somers Middle School a welcoming place for all students. Throughout the year, our mentors served as positive role models, offering friendship, encouragement, and support to younger students during lunch periods, school activities, and mentoring events.

The Middle School Mentors Program is designed to foster leadership, empathy, responsibility, and connection within our school community. This year, mentors participated in a variety of activities aimed at helping sixth grade students feel more comfortable, connected, and supported as they navigated the transition to middle school. Whether they were facilitating conversations, participating in special events, or simply offering a friendly face and listening ear, our mentors made a meaningful impact on the students they served.

We are incredibly proud of the growth our mentors demonstrated this year and grateful for the time and energy they invested in supporting others. Their willingness to lead by example helped strengthen our school culture and promote a sense of belonging throughout the building.

Looking ahead, we would like to congratulate the 7th graders who will be a part of the Middle School Mentors program next year. These students have begun their training and preparation for their roles as they help welcome our incoming sixth graders and continue building a supportive and inclusive school community. We look forward to another successful year of mentorship, leadership, and connection at Somers Middle School.

Congratulations to our current mentors on a job well done, and welcome to our newest group of student leaders!

Summer Reading:

Click here to see the SMS Library webpage for more information

