



October 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

October is an exciting and busy month at Salina South Middle School, with several important opportunities and events ahead. On October 8 and 9, students will not be in school as our staff participates in professional learning. During these two days, teachers will collaborate within their Professional Learning Communities, work with high school colleagues by department, and continue developing our Ci3T MTSS processes to better support the academic, behavioral and social-emotional needs of all students.

Parent-Teacher Conferences will take place on Wednesday, October 14, and Thursday, October 15. Advisory teachers will be reaching out to parents and guardians to schedule conferences. These conversations are an important opportunity to learn how your child is progressing, celebrate successes, identify areas that may need additional attention and work together to support continued growth. I strongly encourage parents and guardians to make attending conferences a priority. Open communication between home and school is one of the most important ways we can help students be successful.

As we move through the second quarter, I also want to emphasize the importance of being at school every day and staying engaged in learning. Each school day provides students with instruction, practice, feedback and opportunities to work with their teachers and classmates. Missing school can make it more difficult for students to keep up with new concepts and assignments. Students should also take responsibility for staying on top of homework, preparing for quizzes and tests, checking their assignments and asking for help when they need it. These daily habits will make a significant difference over time.

October will also bring several exciting activities and athletic opportunities. Fall sports will be wrapping up throughout the month, while boys wrestling and girls basketball will begin practices on Monday, October 12. On Wednesday, October 21, our sixth-grade students will participate in the Cultural Crawl in downtown Salina, providing them with an opportunity to learn and engage outside of the traditional classroom setting. Thank you to our students, staff, and families for continuing to make Salina South Middle School a great place to learn and grow.

Dustin Dooley, Principal

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled for:

October 14 (3:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.) and October 15 (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 a 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.

Horizon Teacher Award

Congratulations to Jordyn Cook for being selected as Salina Public Schools' Secondary Horizon Award teacher!

Jordyn is an English language arts teacher at South Middle School. She believes in every student's ability to succeed and approaches challenges with creativity and a problem-solving mindset, adapting her instruction to meet students where they are while helping them build the confidence to take on challenges and keep going.

The SPS Horizon Award recognizes exemplary first-year classroom teachers. We're proud to recognize Jordyn and thankful to have her on our team!



Teacher of the Month

We are excited to recognize Ms. Kraus as our October teacher of the month!

Ms. Kraus brings passion, enthusiasm and a deep knowledge of her content to the classroom each day. She creates engaging learning experiences while helping students develop both their music skills and appreciation for music. Ms. Kraus takes the time to know and support her students, creating a classroom environment where they feel valued, encouraged and confident.

We are grateful for the dedication and passion Ms. Kraus brings to our school and students each day. Congratulations Ms. Kraus!



Students of the Week

Week 1

Congratulations to Journi Hill for earning student of the week. Journi is an eighth grader at South Middle School. At school, she is a member of the basketball and track teams, and her favorite part of each day is spending time with her friends. Outside of school, she stays active by playing softball. After high school, she plans to attend the University of Oklahoma or the University of Florida to major in pre-med and become a doctor. Some fun facts about Journi are that she plays for a national softball team in Kansas City, and she wants to be a professional softball player.



Week 2

Congratulations to Addison Ohlde for earning student of the week. Addison is a sixth grader at South Middle School. At school, she is a member of FCA and is in the gifted program. Her favorite part of school is meeting new people each day. Outside of school, she stays busy playing softball and volleyball and is part of her church's youth group. After high school, she plans to become a cosmetologist. Some fun facts about Addison are that she loves doing diamond art and playing games with her family.



Week 3

Congratulations to Dafne Escobedo for earning student of the week. Dafne is a seventh grader at South Middle School. At school, she is involved in orchestra and Sensations. Her favorite part of school is participating in choir. Outside of school, she stays active playing soccer. After high school, she plans to become a teacher or a nurse. Some fun facts about Dafne are that she likes to shop, bake and hang out with her friends. She also has two brothers and plays the viola.



Week 4

Congratulations to Jonathan Montanez for earning student of the week. Jonathan is an eighth grader at South Middle School. At school, he is involved in advanced guitar. His favorite part of school is being able to socialize with his friends. Outside of school, he stays active playing soccer and baseball. Some fun facts about Jonathan are that he has two older brothers, three dogs and likes to play sports.



Join us at Salina Public Schools!

Want to be more connected with your school community? Whether you have a child, grandchild, family member or friend in Salina Public Schools or are simply looking for an opportunity to make a difference, there's a place for you at SPS!

We're hiring food service, custodial and paraprofessional team members who want to support students and be part of a school community where greatness grows.

Find your place at SPS and make a difference every day!



[Apply Online](#)

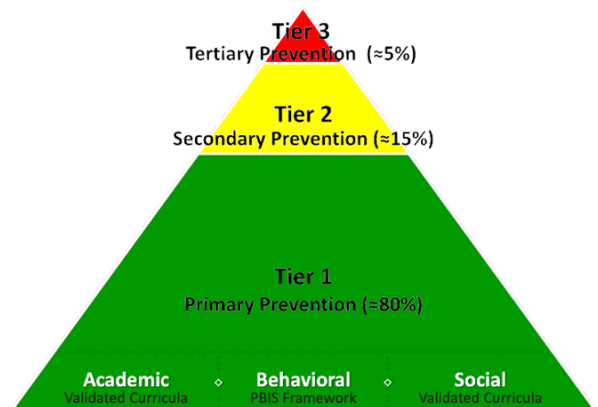
Supporting Every Student Through Ci3T

Ci3T stands for Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tiered model of prevention.

Ci3T provides a coordinated, research-based approach to supporting the academic, behavioral and social-emotional needs of all students. It is not a new curriculum or a one-size-fits-all program. Think of it as a blueprint for student support, helping our schools organize resources and provide support based on the needs of their students.

Ci3T includes three levels of support:

- Tier 1: Provides a strong foundation for all students through high-quality academic instruction, positive behavioral supports and social-emotional learning. The goal is to support student success and prevent academic or behavioral difficulties before they emerge.
- Tier 2: Provides more focused academic, behavioral or social-emotional support for students who need more than Tier 1. Schoolwide data helps identify students who may benefit from these additional supports.
- Tier 3: Provides specialized, intensive interventions for students experiencing greater academic, behavioral or social-emotional needs. Support is individualized based on each student's specific needs.



Rather than addressing academic, behavioral and social-emotional needs separately, Ci3T brings these areas together so they work as one connected system of support. Ci3T also brings together all of us – teachers, administrators, support staff, parents and families – working together to create a safe and caring learning community where every student can grow and succeed.

Watch for more information about Ci3T and how we are working together to support every student throughout the school year.

Greatness Grows When You're Here!



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're 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 Wednesday, October 21, sixth 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.



School Fundraiser

South Middle kicked off our annual school fundraiser on Wednesday, September 16. Once again we will be partnering with World's Finest Chocolates to sell chocolate bars to families. Students began selling on Thursday, September 17 and will sell through Thursday, October 1. 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 40 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.



Halloween

Halloween will be observed Saturday, 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.

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 has gotten 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. – Mr. Gerry

Practice sheets: Practice sheets are due the last day of every school week. They are all found on google classroom. The first part is reviewing what we learned in class for the week. This section of the assignment is worth 5 points. The other section is the practice log. Every day a student practices at home they put an "X" down for that day. Four days of practicing at home are required for full credit - 5 points. A total of 10 points for both.

The practice sheet and log account for 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 (or the last day of the week).

Tests: There are tests every week in guitar class over the skills we are learning in class. Tests have been great this year! Tests are 60% of the student's grade in class.

Don't forget, that students can retake ANY guitar test as many times as they would like by making me a video on google classroom. If you are not happy with your grade in class, please take advantage of retakes to raise your grade. I truly don't care how long it takes a student to learn something – as long as they learn it.

Concert- December 10, 7:00 p.m.

Our winter concert for guitar is December 10 at 7:00 p.m. in GYM #1 at SMS. Five level one guitar classes will perform two songs each, 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. Please put it on your calendar!

Follow Guitar at South Middle on Socials

Follow us on social media - @gerrysguitars on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to get a glimpse of what we do in class every day!

Guitar Class Apparel

We will be selling guitar class shirts and hoodies for anyone who would like to help support our guitar class here at SMS. The store will be open for orders until Oct. 19th at midnight.



Order Apparel Here



Sensations

Sensations is off and running! Our days include many of the same activities found in Vocal classes, along with some exciting upcoming opportunities and events.

On November 14, South Middle School will host League Music, giving some of our Sensations students the opportunity to participate in the league choir. We are also looking ahead to our December concert and elementary/community tour, which are always highlights of the year. For the third time, we will also be bringing back a special song collaboration with Advanced Guitar. Stay tuned—you won't want to miss it!

Across all of our music classes, students have also been learning about dignity, which we define as the inherent value and worth of every person. Each week, we explore one of the ten elements of dignity and discuss how these principles can be applied to our interactions with others both in and outside of the classroom.

Band

The SMS Bands are off to a flying start this school year! Our students are working hard learning their music, working on establishing some key fundamentals and building a foundation that we will build on this year!

We've got some exciting plans in store for this year, some of which are coming up fast. Our eighth grade Band will be performing alongside the South High School Cougar Marching Band on October 9 at their home football game - make sure to come out and support the Salina South Bands and to see one of our most exciting performance opportunities, as well as to cheer on the SHS football team!

As we get started with the year, there are just a couple key things that you can do to make your student's time in band as enjoyable and impactful as possible:

- Ensure that your student has all of their materials for band - and if any of this is an issue, please reach out to us ASAP, and we can do our best to help make the situation right!
- Ask your student about band - this shows your support for what they're doing, and shows that you also value their growth as a musician! You should even ask your student to play some things they're working on for you.
- Encourage your student to practice! Practice is the most important thing your student can do to ensure their continued growth and success. We have to move quick enough in band that things can slip past us - this is where practicing at home can help a student grow! You should be hearing your student practice at least 3-4 times a week for no less than 10 minutes at a time!

We're excited to see what this year has in store for our students, and to see what we can accomplish. With the start we've had so far, there is no telling how far these students will go this year! Go Band!

Sixth Grade General Music

We have been busy building a strong foundation as we explore the many different aspects of music this semester. We began by reviewing rhythm and pitch notation, including both treble and bass clefs, to help students develop their ability to read music. Students have also been learning to play the piano twice a week in the Piano Lab and recently completed a jazz exploration project.

Every other Friday, students participate in Focused Listening, an activity designed to broaden their exposure to different styles and genres of music while developing their ability to actively listen and identify what they hear.

As we begin the second quarter, students will add another instrument to their musical toolbox as we begin learning to play the acoustic guitar. We are excited to continue expanding students' musical skills and experiences throughout the semester!

Vocal

We are already hard at work learning our music for our upcoming December concert! Along with preparing our concert repertoire, students participate in a variety of activities each day to develop their vocal and musical skills.

We begin class by preparing our bodies and voices for singing through stretching, breathing exercises, and vocal warm-ups. Students also practice identifying solfege (do, re, mi, etc.), sight-singing, and rhythm reading. Every other week, we work together as a class to strengthen these important music-reading skills.

Students are also becoming more comfortable reading vocal sheet music and learning how to mark their individual parts. In addition, we listen to a wide variety of choral music and practice thinking critically about what we hear.

It has been a busy and exciting start to the year, and we look forward to sharing the students' hard work with families at our December concert!



Orchestra

SMS orchestra off to a great start! We have had a fantastic start to the school year in orchestra! All of our ensembles have already made great progress, and I am excited to see how much our students continue to grow throughout the year. With continued effort and practice, I know we have many exciting accomplishments ahead!

Helping Your Orchestra Student Succeed: There are several simple ways families can support their student's success in orchestra.

Be Responsible: Students should bring their instrument, music book and all necessary materials to every orchestra class.

Give Their Best Effort: Encourage students to prepare, practice at home and always do their best.

Be Respectful: Students should play and talk at appropriate times, listen to instructions and raise their hand when they need assistance.

Attend Concerts: Concert performances are an important part of the orchestra experience. Students have worked hard to prepare, so please make every effort to attend.

Follow Expectations: Students should follow all school rules and classroom expectations during orchestra.

The Importance of Practice: Regular practice at home is essential to a student's growth and success in orchestra. We recommend approximately 20–30 minutes of practice each day, although students learn at different rates. Some may need more time to master a song or concept, while others may need less. The goal is progress and understanding—not simply the amount of time spent practicing. At a minimum, students should bring their instruments home to practice every weekend. Families can help by:

Establishing a consistent practice time and encouraging students to stick with it.

Providing a well-lit, quiet space with a music stand and minimal distractions.

Creating a practice schedule that works around other activities and responsibilities.

Showing interest in your child's practice, progress, and participation in orchestra.

Offering plenty of praise and encouragement. Remember, learning an instrument takes time and some interesting sounds are part of the process!

Encouraging consistent attendance at orchestra classes and performances.

Upcoming Events:

Monday, November 2 – Orchestra Picture Day (All Grades)

Tuesday, November 3 – String Fling (Grade 7 and 8)

Saturday, November 14 – WSL Honor Orchestra (Select Grade 7 and 8 Students)

Save the Date!

Please come support our SMS orchestra students at our first concert of the year! Our students will share the stage with the South High orchestra on December 17 at 7:00 p.m. in the South High Auditorium.

We are looking forward to sharing the progress our students have made and celebrating their hard work with our families and community. We hope to see you there!

Football

The seventh and eighth grade football teams are off to a competitive start this season! Despite some challenging Kansas weather, our players have continued to work hard, improve and make tremendous strides in their development as football players. The progress we have seen throughout the month of September has been exciting, and our coaches could not be more proud of the effort, determination and growth these young men have demonstrated.

The junior cougars will continue to claw, compete and fight their way through the remainder of the season as they look to finish strong. Cougar football is tough, gritty and hungry for more victories! We would like to extend a special thank-you to our managers, parents and all of the staff at Salina South Middle School for their continued support of our football program. It takes a team both on and off the field to make a successful season possible.

The teams will hit the road to begin October with a matchup at Valley Center, where they will look to start the month with a 2-0 Thursday. They will then take on the other Salina school before wrapping up the season on the road at Hutchinson. We are looking forward to an exciting finish and seeing our Cougars continue to compete, improve and represent Salina South Middle School with pride.

Let's finish the season strong, stay competitive and keep being Cougars!

Go Junior Cougars!

Cross Country

Well, cross country fans, this season has certainly been an interesting one! With the weather we've experienced, it may be the first season where our athletes have spent more time running inside than outside. Despite the challenges, our runners have adapted, stayed positive and continued to put in some great work.

It looks like we may finally have a few weeks of beautiful Kansas weather to finish out the season, and our athletes are taking advantage of it by putting in those final miles and preparing for the finish line. Their hard work and dedication throughout the season have been impressive and we are excited to see them finish strong!

The Cougars will wrap up the season with two final meets in Newton on October 6 and 9. We hope you'll wish our runners luck and cheer them on as they close out a great season!

Girls Tennis

The Salina South lady cougar tennis team is enjoying a fantastic 2026 season, currently holding a 5-2 record with just two events remaining on the schedule.

The Cougars have earned victories over Derby, Lakewood, Hutchinson, Newton and Derby North. Their only two losses this season have come against Maize South and Valley Center, giving the team a strong 5-2 record as they enter the final stretch of the season.

One of the highlights of the season came at the Hutchinson Tennis Tournament, where the lady cougars were crowned tournament champions. Salina South turned in an impressive performance across all six events, capturing championships in three events and finishing second in two others. The outstanding results demonstrated the depth, talent and competitiveness of the cougar lineup.

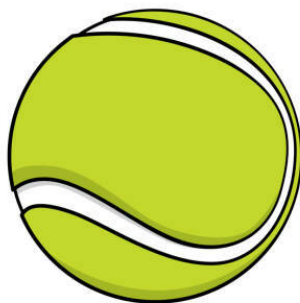
The Cougars have also been led by two consistent performers at the top of the singles lineup. Seventh grader Avery Power and eighth grader Braylin Siebenneicher have yet to lose a singles match this season. Competing at the No. 1 and No. 2 singles positions, respectively, both athletes have provided a strong foundation for the team throughout the season.

Power and Siebenneicher have also teamed up at No. 1 doubles, where they have continued to compete at a high level. The duo has suffered just one loss in doubles this season, adding another impressive accomplishment to an already successful year.

With the regular season winding down, the lady cougars have two events remaining. Salina South will travel to Maize High School on October 1 before wrapping up the season at the league tournament in Valley Center on October 5.

The lady cougars have put together an exciting and successful season, and we look forward to seeing them finish strong as they compete for more victories in their final two events.

Go Cougars!



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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

- 7 - End of Quarter 1
- 8 - Teacher In-Service - No School
- 9 - Teacher In-Service - No School
- 12 - First Day of Practices - BWR, GBB
- 14 - Parent Teacher Conferences
- 15 - Parent Teacher Conferences / No School
- 16 - No School
- 21 - PTO Meeting
- 21 - Sixth Grade Cultural Crawl
- 23 - School Picture Re-Takes

Contact Us

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#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.