November 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 move into November, there are several exciting opportunities for learning and growth at South Middle School. On November 18, all students will take their i-Ready Reading diagnostic assessment. We look forward to seeing students demonstrate progress from their fall scores as they continue to strengthen their reading skills. The following day, November 19, our eighth-grade students will participate in the CTE Pathway Fair at South High School. Students will explore a variety of career and technical education options, hear presentations from teachers and students, and learn more about the pathways available to them as they prepare for high school and consider future career opportunities. We will also host our monthly Site Council meeting on November 18, featuring Superintendent Hogan, who will share some of the great things happening across USD 305 as well as discuss challenges and opportunities facing our district in the future.

November is also a great time to emphasize the importance of academic responsibility and staying on track. As a reminder, our promotion and retention policy requires students who fail a core subject for the entire school year to complete that course during summer school. To help students get back on track sooner, we will begin offering after-school credit recovery during second semester for students who failed a core class during the first semester. We encourage parents and guardians to regularly check grades, monitor missing assignments, and communicate with teachers when concerns arise. Students should take an active role in keeping up with their assignments, seeking help when needed, and making the most of the support available to them. American Education Week, November 16–20, provides an opportunity to recognize the important role our educators, families, and communities play in supporting student success. At South Middle School, we appreciate the continued partnership between home and school in helping every student reach their potential.

As we approach Thanksgiving, I want to express my sincere gratitude to our students, staff, and families. Our students bring energy, personality, and potential to our school each day. Our staff works hard to create meaningful learning experiences, build positive relationships, and support students academically and socially. Our families provide encouragement, support, and partnership that make a tremendous difference in our school community. Thank you for the many ways you contribute to making South Middle School a great place to learn and grow. I hope everyone enjoys a safe, relaxing, and happy Thanksgiving break!

Dustin Dooley
Principal, South Middle School

Eighth Grade English Language Arts

Eighth-grade ELA students are excited to begin a novel study this quarter featuring Suzanne Collins's modern classic, The Hunger Games!



Throughout the unit, students will use the novel to explore argumentative writing, examine propaganda and symbolism, expand their vocabulary, and analyze characterization. They will also work on strengthening their focus and perseverance as they engage with a longer text. ELA teachers will share a reading schedule to help parents and guardians support students in keeping up with assigned readings at home.

Parents and guardians are welcome to read along with us, too!

Seventh Grade English Language Arts

Seventh-grade English wrapped up the first quarter by writing personal narrative essays about a day they will never forget. Students brought their stories to life by incorporating transition words, sensory details, and dialogue.

As we begin the second quarter, students will focus on grammar skills that strengthen their writing, including prepositions, compound subjects and predicates, and compound and complex sentences. During the first week of November, students will apply these skills by writing an explanatory essay and learning how to accurately cite textual evidence to support a claim.

After Thanksgiving break, we will dive into Charles Dickens's classic story, A Christmas Carol. Students will read, analyze, and write about this timeless tale before ending the semester by comparing and contrasting the written story with its film adaptation. We're looking forward to a festive and engaging second quarter filled with meaningful learning, thoughtful writing, and a little holiday magic!

Sixth Grade English Language Arts

Sixth-grade English is off to a fantastic start! During the first quarter, students explored formal and informal writing, studied denotation and connotation, and wrapped up the quarter by crafting their own personal narratives. As we begin the second quarter, students will explore multiple-meaning words, nuances in word choice, and intensive pronouns. They will apply these skills by writing an informative paper centered on the question, "How Do Animals and People Interact?"

We also have some exciting learning experiences planned for the coming months in partnership with Rolling Hills and Kansas State University–Salina! We look forward to providing students with these unique opportunities to connect classroom learning with the world around them. Stay tuned for more details and some fun surprises ahead!

Technical Education

Technical education students have had a great start to the school year! So far, they have created a Super Clip, toolbox, balsa wood towers, and rockets while developing important skills in measurement, design, problem-solving, and safe tool use. This is my first year teaching technical education and my 10th year in the classroom. Our curriculum aligns with the high school industrial technology pathway, giving students a strong foundation for advanced coursework while allowing them to explore potential career interests.

As we move into the second quarter, students will begin working with the lathe and scroll saw. Through safety instruction, demonstrations, and guided practice, they will learn new woodworking techniques while building patience, precision, and pride in their work. We look forward to seeing their creativity and skills continue to grow!

Girls Basketball

The middle school girls' basketball season is off to an exciting start! Week two brings three games, including two challenging road match-ups and a rivalry game at home. With a strong turnout and plenty of enthusiasm, the girls are ready to hit the court and compete.

Throughout the season, practices will focus on developing skills, building teamwork, and growing confidence. The coaching staff is excited about the potential of this group and looks forward to watching the players grow both on and off the court as the season progresses.

Boys Wrestling

Boys wrestling is off to a great start at South Middle School! Our wrestlers have been working hard during the first couple of weeks of practice, building endurance, developing their skills, and learning the discipline it takes to compete on the mat and grow as young men. Wrestling teaches lessons that go far beyond wins and losses, including confidence, accountability, perseverance, and the importance of setting goals and overcoming challenges.



We are proud of the effort, attitude, and commitment our wrestlers have demonstrated so far. We look forward to watching them continue to grow throughout the season as they represent South Middle School and the Salina South Cougar tradition of grit, hard work, and determination. Go Cougars!

Student Support Services

The Student Support team has started the school year by helping our new sixth-grade students adjust to middle school and feel connected to our school community. This year, the department has also launched a Google Classroom where students can request to meet with their counselor, obtain a replacement lunch card or student ID, and access resources such as hygiene products and school supplies.

In September, we recognized Suicide Awareness Month through school announcements and lunchtime activities designed to promote awareness and support student well-being. Looking ahead, we will celebrate Kindness Week in November with activities that encourage positive connections, strengthen relationships, and continue building a school community where every student feels valued and included.

Student Council

Following a successful first pep assembly of the year, Student Council (StuCo) continued its work by organizing a week of activities for Red Ribbon Week in late October. Students received positive messages and giveaways and participated in a spirit week promoting the importance of making healthy, substance-free choices.

As we move into November, StuCo is preparing to host its second annual Veterans Day Breakfast on November 11. Students and staff are invited to bring a veteran guest to school for a special pancake breakfast honoring those who have served our country.

StuCo is also looking ahead to December, when members will provide Christmas gifts for families in the SMS community. To support this effort, students are currently selling Sonic discount cards and working concession stands to raise funds. We appreciate their continued commitment to serving and supporting our school community!

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

Winter Weather Ahead

There may be days when the start of school is delayed because of weather. This option may be used if snowy roads could be cleared given a few hours or if wind chills are too low during early morning hours but temperatures are expected to warm up within a few hours. The advantage of a delayed start is that we can minimize the loss of instruction while maintaining the safety of students and staff.

Whether a school cancellation or a delayed start is announced, the district will communicate as soon as possible using its rapid notification system. Notifications will be sent to families and staff via phone, email and text.

Details of a delayed start:

- Bus routes: General education and special education bus routes will proceed on a 2-hour delay.
- Pre-K: Morning classes will be cancelled. Afternoon classes will run as normal.
- Foodservice: Breakfast will not be served and there will not be a choice lunch option at elementary schools.
- Elementary Band / Strings: Band / strings at elementary schools will be canceled.
- Heartland: a.m. Pre-K will be canceled. Breakfast will not be served.
- Salina Adult Education Center: All a.m. sessions and any GED testing scheduled for the day will be canceled.

Changes to the school schedule are not taken lightly. While calling cancellation and delayed-start days creates inconveniences for families and impacts instruction time, upholding the safety of students and staff is our top priority.

As always, the final decision about your student's safety is your. If you choose to keep your student at home when inclement weather occurs and school is in session, please contact the school attendance office and follow the procedures to report an absence.

Eighth Grade Parent Pre - Enrollment Night

South High School's eighth grade Parent Night is Wednesday, December 2 at 6:00 p.m at South High School, the meeting will be held in the commons.

This meeting is intended for current eighth grade parents and guardians who will have a student transitioning to South High School for the 2026-27 school year. Counselors and administrators will be covering course options and enrollment procedures.

Building Bridges 2026

Join us for Building Bridges 2026, a community event that brings together local businesses, industry partners, families, students, educators and community members to celebrate Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Salina Public Schools.

Guests will have the opportunity to tour our facilities, meet students, see their projects, hear their stories and enjoy hors d'oeuvres prepared by our talented culinary students.

This event is free and open to everyone. We hope to see you there!

- When: Thursday, November 12, from 3:30-5:00 p.m.
- Where: Central High School Cafeteria, 650 E. Crawford St.

Strong Attendance Supports Student Success



As we approach Thanksgiving Recess and the holiday season, it's a great time to remember how each day at school supports student success.

Did you know that missing just two days of school each month can add up to chronic absenteeism? Every day at school is an opportunity for students to learn, connect and stay on track toward their goals!

As you plan for upcoming holidays and school breaks, take a moment to review our school calendar and schedule appointments, family trips and other activities outside the school day whenever possible. Families can also support strong attendance by tracking attendance in Skyward, watching for patterns and communicating with their school when challenges arise.

By working together, we can make attendance a priority, support student success and help every student attend today and achieve tomorrow!

Thanksgiving Break

Thanksgiving Break will be observed Monday, November 23 through Friday, November 27.

School will not be in session and the offices will be closed.

We wish all our families a safe and eventful holiday.



Sixth Grade Cultural Crawl

On Wednesday, October 21, South Middle School's sixth-grade students spent the day exploring downtown Salina as part of the annual Cultural Crawl.

Students attended a variety of engaging presentations and activities hosted by organizations such as the Salina Public Library, Rolling Hills Zoo, Smoky Hill Museum, Salina Art Center, and many others. The day concluded with an inspiring performance by Cash Hollistah, who shared how he incorporates elements of literature and poetry learned in school into his music.

The Cultural Crawl provided students with a memorable opportunity to connect classroom learning with the arts, culture, and community around them.









Students of the Week

Week 5



Congratulations to Monica Fontenot Monica is an eighth grader at South Middle School. At school, she is on the basketball, volleyball, wrestling and track teams and is in orchestra. Her favorite part of school is being able to make new friends. Outside of school, she is involved in Mime and she stays active playing basketball, volleyball and softball. After high school, she plans to attend college and become a doctor or a professional athlete. Some fun facts about Monica are that she likes to draw, and she has two dogs and multiple fish.

Week 6



Congratulations to Zachariah Davis for earning student of the week. Zachariah is an eighth grader at South Middle School. His favorite part of school is advanced guitar class because he gets to learn new songs. Outside of school, he plays soccer and is involved in his church. After high school, he wants to go to college to play soccer and become a physical therapist or athletic trainer. Some fun facts about Zachariah are that he likes playing soccer, snowboarding, playing disc golf and playing guitar.

Teacher of the Month



Congratulations to Jennifer Boyles, our Teacher of the Month! Jennifer is a math teacher at South Middle School. She has been teaching for 23 years, with this year being her fourth at South Middle. Jennifer was inspired to become a teacher by teachers in her life who taught her to enjoy learning. She wanted to help students discover their own unique skills and abilities like her teachers did for her. Jennifer's favorite part of teaching is seeing the excitement of her students when a concept finally clicks for them. A fun fact about Jennifer is that she has danced since she was four years old, and she now teaches dance with her daughter

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 November

11 - Student Council Veteran's Day Breakfast
14 - League Honors Music Festival at Webster Conference Center
18 - Site Council Meeting
19 - Eighth Grade CTE Pathway Fair at SMS
23 - 27 - No School - Thanksgiving Break

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.

South Middle School

MARTINELLI'S LITTLE ITALY

APPETITE FOR SUCCCESS

Monday Nov 16th – Saturday Nov 21st

20% RETURNS TO SMS PTO

DINE IN OR CARRY OUT

MAKE SURE TO MENTION SMS

Family Pack Deal

Your choice of chopped salad AND
red or white pasta for
$44.99
pick up only for family deal

MARTINELLI'S
Little Italy

2ND QUARTER

PBIS

Celebration

SALINA FIELDHOUSE

DATE:
Friday, January 8th

TIME:
Students Attend
5:30 - 7:00pm

Students will have time to socialize and play games as we celebrate 2nd Quarter Accomplishments.





CONCESSIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE!

IN ORDER TO QUALIFY,

students must have all A's, B's and C's and No Office Referrals for all of 2nd Quarter.