

August 4, 2026

Welcome, Gator Family from Mr. Gus!



I am excited to welcome you all to the 2026-2027 school year. I am looking forward to students returning to our halls and classrooms, and filling the building with laughter and learning. I am honored to be returning to Southgate for my 6th year (my 21st year at Austin Public Schools)! This year I am hoping that all of our students see growth in their academic and social development.

If you ever have any questions or concerns please feel free to call or email me. I know it is going to be a great school year!

Back to School Conference Sign up

Next week on August 12th we will hold Back to School Conferences for Southgate Families. Please use the link below to sign up for conference times (instructions are on the website linked below). If you have any questions, please call the office at 507-460-1300.

PreK-6 Conference Sign Up - Austin Public Schools | Inspire. Empower. Accelerate.

We look forward to seeing you next week!

Strategic Priorities Update

1. Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment.

In our school we believe that our students should strive to be "Respectful, Responsible, Safe and Caring." These are taught during our morning meeting gathering time and are a theme for our grade level assemblies. We are excited to continue our growth in this area!

Southgate Elementary prides itself in celebrating the positive behaviors of individual students, classrooms and the entire school. Staff recognize students in a variety of ways including the use of Gator Tickets. Make sure to ask your student about these tickets in conversations at home!

2. Packer Profile for all learners

The Packer Profile reflects what our students, staff, and families desire each day for our students and supports their preparation to become college, career, and life-ready. Our students, while learning foundations skills will use SeeSaw to start to create an portfolio of students work. Students will also have multiple opportunities for exposure to possible future career and educational choices.

To learn more about the Packer Profile and the district's long-term strategic plan, please visit AccelerateAustin.org.

3. District-wide multi-tiered systems of support.

Southgate focuses special attention of ensuring we are meeting the needs of all students with academic and social emotional support.

We are committed to creating a positive and safe learning environment for all of our students. To support this, our school has developed a clear set of expectations for your child's behavior at school. These expectations will be taught to all students and will apply across all areas of the school, including the playground, lunchroom, classroom, and on the bus. Our focus is on being "Great Gators" which means students are Respectful, Responsible, Safe and Caring.

We believe that by clearly communicating and reinforcing these expectations, we can help all students succeed.

4. Excellence in resource management.

Over the summer, we carefully monitor student enrollment and transfers to ensure that we are staffed appropriately for our student needs. There were changes to our staffing and classes rosters through Monday of this week. Over the summer the district has done work on our kitchens, our security system and floors and hallway areas. We are appreciative of the district and public's willingness to invest in our school!

Know

Important Dates to Remember

August 12th - Conferences (See Below)
August 19 - 8:00 AM - 2:30 PM - First Day of School
September 7th - No School Day: Holiday
September 9th - School Pictures



SOUTHGATE

Back to School

- *Scheduled 1:1 conferences.*

August 12: 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM & 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Fall

- *Scheduled 15 minute individual conferences*

October 20: 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM
October 29: 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

School Safety Drills

Here are the dates for this year's safety drills. If you have a question or concern about the drills, please contact the main office.

- 5 Fire Drills: August 28, Oct. 22, Mar. 11, Apr. 20, May 26
- 5 Lockdown Drills: Aug. 27, Nov. 18, Jan. 14, Feb. 23, May 4

School Bond Referendum November 3

The school board took action Monday night to place a $24.9 million referendum on the November 3 ballot. The funding will allow the District to improve safety, increase accessibility, mitigate water infiltration, update building systems and finishes, and complete needed repairs to keep the pool at Ellis Middle School operational. Information about the referendum can be found on the District's website at www.austin.k12.mn.us.

Food Allergies

Peanuts, peanut products prohibited in classrooms



Creating safe and supportive learning environments is a top priority in Austin Public Schools; foods with peanuts and tree nuts cannot be brought into classrooms. There are many students with life-threatening food allergies, and exposure to a peanut or tree nut product puts many students at risk of anaphylaxis. We need your help to keep everyone safe. Cafeterias have peanut-free tables in every school cafeteria to provide a safe dining experience.

- Do not send snacks that contain peanuts, almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, pistachios, or walnuts.
- Please read labels carefully to make sure that products are peanut- and nut-free. Products with labels that read “May contain traces of peanuts/nuts” or “Manufactured in a plant that processes peanuts/nut products” are not allowed in classrooms.

Foods that cannot be in classrooms

- Peanuts
- Tree nuts: almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios, walnuts, etc. For a list visit: Food Allergy Research
- Peanut butter or any nut butters
- Nut milk – almond milk,
- Nutella
- Pesto or nut-based spreads

** SunButter, a product made with sunflower seeds, is a safe substitute for peanut butter!*

Peanut- and tree-nut-free snack & lunch ideas!

- Fruits & vegetables: canned or fresh
- Fresh fruit: apples, bananas, peaches, pears, grapes, etc.
- Chopped fruit: watermelon, cantaloupe, pineapple, etc.
- Fruit cups: applesauce, pears, peaches, oranges, etc.
- Dried fruit: raisins, dried apricots, etc.
- Fresh vegetables: sliced cucumbers, carrots, sugar snap peas, sliced red pepper, grape tomatoes, etc.
- Cheese: string cheese, cheese slices, etc.
- Yogurt cup
- 100% fruit juice boxes

If you have further questions, please contact your school’s health office. You can view the Austin Student Student Wellness Policy 533 here.

Allergies & Medical Conditions

If your student needs special diet accommodations, please contact:

- Tanner Lange, Food & Nutrition Director, at 507-460-1921 or by email or
- Shaylie Meyer, RN/Licensed School Nurse, Supervisor of Health Services, at 507-460-1915 or by email.

More resources:

Special Diet Request Form

Birthday Treats

Individual classrooms will observe birthdays with special activities planned by teachers, such as allowing children to wear a "Birthday Hat" or by singing to them. If students choose to share a treat with the class on their birthday, food must be an individually wrapped and purchased treat that, in the interest of instructional time, can quickly be consumed. Examples of such treats are fruit snacks, individual packages of cookies or crackers, etc.… **Parents should contact the teacher to**

make them aware that they are sending a treat for the class. Please do not distribute personal party invitations at school.



Do

Attendance

Our school instructional day at Southgate is from 8:00 until 2:30. Our doors open at 7:30 for students. It is so important that students arrive in time to start the instructional day at 8:00 am.

Please take a few minutes to view the video linked below, *Bringing Attendance Home*, a video from Attendance Works.

Bringing Attendance Home

Cell Phone Policy

We value the limited time with have with students during our school day. It is important to us that cell phones do not become a distraction to our instructional time. Please review and discuss with your students before school begins.

Student Handbook

Volunteer Background Check Information

We have been so happy to have more parents and families back in the building for volunteer opportunities. In order for a parent to be a volunteer, they need to have a current background check on file.
If anyone is unsure of whether or not they are current, they can call the office at 507-460-1300.

For people who need to complete a new check, it's done online, very quick and easy from the district website under the "Parents" dropdown menu:

https://www.rhris.com/ApplyNowV3/ApplyNowV3.cfm?SiteID=5039S&PNbr=4&OriginalURL=

Share

Notes from the School Nurse - Vaccinations

Vaccinations strengthen your child's immunity from illnesses such as whooping cough, measles, mumps, and chicken pox. Minnesota law (Statute 121A.15) requires written proof or legal exemption of certain vaccinations for children to remain enrolled in public school. You may access your child's current record on the Infinite Campus Parent Portal or through your healthcare provider. For more information or to obtain an exemption form, contact your school's office. A medical exemption must be signed by a healthcare provider, and a non-medical exemption must be signed by a parent and notarized. If vaccination or exemption information is not up to date, you will be asked to pick your child up and keep them at home until complete. It's not too late! If your child has fallen behind on their vaccinations, talk to your healthcare provider to get them caught up. Appointments fill up fast as school approaches, so call early to ensure your child can remain in school.

Facebook Page

Please feel free to follow us on our Facebook Page! We often post daily events, upcoming activities and general information on this page.

https://www.facebook.com/Southgate492

Southgate Elementary School
https://southgate.austin.k12.mn.us

1601 19th Avenue SW
Austin, MN 55912
507-460-1300

School Hours:
8:00AM - 2:30PM