

SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

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See Me Soar

Family Newsletter



January 2020

**Be on
the
Lookout:**



From the Principal's Desk

Important Dates:

- SMS Showcase:
Jan. 16 @ 6pm
- Snow Ball: Jan. 30
@ 6pm
- Black History Month
Celebration: Feb. 27
@ 6pm
- Sign up for Cycle 2
for Empire
after-school program
on the district
website.

In this Issue:

- See Me Soar
Highlights
- Principal's Plan
- Instructional Focus

Dear SMS Families,

Happy New Year!!!

The beginning of a new year is the perfect time to refresh, whether you're jumpstarting personal goals, making meaningful decisions, or finding your inner-center. This is the perfect time to stop playing those old messages in your head about what you want to do, and make a bold statement by making it happen!

Unfortunately, during the winter months many schools notice a drop in their attendance average. Parents/caregivers, please continue to reinforce good attendance habits with your child. Attendance and accuracy of attendance is extremely important in school. Excessive absences may result in missing work, which is difficult to make up, losing continuity in school work, and poor grades during the grading period. Beginning this month, students have signed up for student portal as a resource to check their attendance and grades in order to support their academic awareness and increase personal accountability for future success.

It is our desire that the second half of the school year be excellent for all. If you need to meet with the counselor, teachers, or administration, do not hesitate to contact us. We suggest that parents/caregivers call first to schedule appointments before coming in so that you will not experience any delays.

Every step we take in this journey we will do together in order to make our community stronger, wiser, and better for our scholars.

Please check out our school website on a regular basis for the daily announcements.

Have a year filled with Health, Wealth, and Prosperity!

Educationally yours,

Principal Brooks

See Me ... S Safety
O Outstanding
A Accountable
R Respectable

SeeMeSoar
#ShoulderUp

SEE ME SOAR - HIGHLIGHTS

Attendance Policy Reminder:

Students with 3 unexcused absences or tardies this quarter, ISS, OSS or two or more removals will prevent students from participating in this winter's

Snow Ball - January 30th

This dance will be an incentive with the purpose of celebrating good behaviors, character and attendance.

January's Quality: Respect

“Respect for ourselves guides our morals; respect for others guides our manners.”
- Laurence Sterne

This month, South Scholars are focusing on the quality of respect. There are many ways that we show respect in our lives, from self-respect in how we talk, dress, act, and present ourselves, to respect for property, and respect for others. Here are six ways to show respect for others that we can all practice at school and at home:

1. Listen - Everyone wants to know that they are truly listened to. Learning to quiet our own “inner monologue”, or thoughts, while someone else is speaking is a way to show respect for the other's opinions, thoughts, and feelings.
2. Affirm - When we affirm someone, we're letting them know that they are valued, important,

and worthy of respect. This can come in the form of praise or acknowledgment of hard work and progress.

3. Serve - We can show that we respect someone by helping them.
4. Be Kind - Kindness is an expression of respect because it shows that the other is deserving of our support and generosity.
5. Be Polite - Being polite can shift people's perspectives and make a tense situation easier to manage; smiles are contagious.
6. Be Thankful - Even for the little things, it is never bad to say a little thank you in response to another's assistance or cooperation.

We know that when we show respect for others, we are more likely to be given respect in return. Having and showing respect for others helps to build relationships and make for a kinder, happier, more productive environment for learning and growth.

Afternoon Pickup:

If you are picking up your child before the end of the school day, please do so before 1:45pm. After this time, students are finishing the day, moving to their homeroom classes, and staff is preparing for dismissal. This is also the time when busses are arriving and the front parking lot needs to be clear.

If you are picking up your child at or after dismissal, please make prior arrangements with your child so that they are aware, or contact the office so that we can inform the child. Students who are taking the bus will be dismissed at 2:05pm, and once the busses have left the property, students who are being picked up or who walk will be released from the auditorium.

Thank you for your cooperation with our pickup procedures.

Instructional Focus

Questioning & Discussion: Room for Debate

As we all work to prepare our scholars for college, the workforce, and being productive members of society, it is important to recognize the changing demands of 21st century literacy. 21st century literacy is more than reading and writing; it is knowing *how to learn and know*. In other words, we strive to prepare our scholars to seek out answers, evaluate texts of varying styles and opinions, and to form an opinion based on valid reasoning and thinking. Students today need to know how to look at multiple perspectives, evaluate arguments, and seek answers on their own.

One way we help to prepare students to do this is by engaging in debate. There are many benefits to this type of activity, including improved critical thinking skills, increased student retention of information learned, improved listening and note-taking skills, increased self-confidence and self-expression, and improved skills in identifying effective evidence, forming arguments, and structuring thoughts.

Debate doesn't always have to be formal, but it can be a fun way to engage your child in conversation, critical thinking, and expression at home! Choose a topic of the week to discuss, perhaps an ethical dilemma or a political situation, or [something from this list of debate topics](#), and pick a side to argue. You and the family can read about the issue during the week, and have a friendly debate on the weekend, sharing your thoughts and research to try to win the argument. The practice of civil disagreement will help your scholar in this world of information and strong opinion.

It's even great practice to choose a side you don't necessarily agree with; this helps open the mind to different perspectives, build empathy for those we don't always agree with, and even help strengthen your own argument for the side you *do* agree with. Overall, engaging in debate will help your scholar both academically and socially, and is a great way to build self-confidence and develop ownership over ideas.

For more information about why debate is an effective middle school strategy, please explore the [American Debate League's](#) article on the benefits of debate.