

SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

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See Me Soar
Family Newsletter



November 2019 Issue

Be on the Lookout:



From the Principal's Desk

Important Dates:

- **Canned Food Drive** - bring donations to the school store. Collecting donations
- Nov. 25: Evening Conferences (4:00pm)
- Nov. 27: Morning Conferences (7:00am)
- Nov. 28-29: Thanksgiving Break

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Dear SMS Families,

Even though the weather is getting cold, and the leaves are changing on us, the academic process here at the SMS is staying constant. The teachers and scholars have established their routines and procedures for class lessons.

November is an important time for us all to reflect on the many blessings and focus on family and gratitude. I am certainly thankful for the many blessings in my life, including working with the amazing scholars, parents/caregivers, teachers, and support staff at South Middle School.

An African proverb goes, "It takes a village to raise a child." Whether you can give an hour, time once a week or once a month, we need you here! If it works to participate in the monthly parent engagement event, Parent Teacher Group meetings, or Staff Leadership Team meetings, we will make sure that your time is well spent. You just need to get involved! Please contact our PTG President Joanne Paretta and she will assist in providing you the details about the meetings.

With the upcoming Parent Teacher Conference on Nov. 25th (evening) or Nov. 27th (morning), we look forward to seeing you and suggest a few questions you may want to consider to discuss with your scholar's teachers:

- How is my child doing socially?
- What are my child's strengths... challenges?
- What can I do at home to support what you're doing in the class?
- What are the best school or district resources that we should consider using as a family to support our child in the classroom?

- How do you measure academic progress?
- What can I do to support literacy in my home?
- What kinds of questions do you suggest that I ask my children on a daily basis about your class?

Have a grateful holiday season!

SEE ME SOAR - HIGHLIGHTS

ATTENDANCE:

- Congratulations! Chronic absenteeism rates are down, as per State Education. Keep doing what you do to motivate students to be here each day!
 - 2018-2019 24% absenteeism
 - 2019-2020 year to 11/2/2019 10.3% absenteeism
 - 2019-2020 year to 11/9/2019 7.6% absenteeism

November's Quality: Gratitude

At the monthly grade level assembly, students were introduced to the monthly theme of gratitude, or feeling thankful. Students and staff at South Middle School are encouraged to think about all the ways in which they are grateful this month. One way to show how we are grateful is to give to others. The Student Government has coordinated a food drive, where items will be collected throughout the month (until November 26) to be donated to Sacred Heart Orphanage. Students will be recognized for showing their appreciation by nominations for Student of the Month.

Instructional Focus

Questioning and Discussion

Questioning and discussion in the classroom help students to gain a deeper understanding of complex concepts and practice logical reasoning skills. These techniques are also used to teach the "soft skills" of collaborating and communicating with others to solve a problem or produce a product, and bring all students into the learning. Beyond the requirements of the Next Generation Standards, these skills are important for students to be successful in life.

Students at South are given opportunities to express themselves through asking questions, generating interest, and participating in discussions in all of their classes. In addition, students are learning important skills of how to interact with others appropriately in safe online environments through apps in the Google Suit, Pear Deck, Flipgrid, and more. The more students interact with one another, the more they develop these important 21st century skills.

[Reading Rockets](#) provides some great suggestions on how parents can help encourage higher order thinking through conversation. Another way you can support this work at home is by asking your child about what they are [reading](#), which will not only engage students in a book of their choice, but also improve their reading comprehension.