

SOUTHERN MIDDLE SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2017 NEWSLETTER

9615 HG Trueman Road, Lusby, MD 20657
Main Office (443) 550-9250

<http://smsweb.calvertnet.k12.md.us/>

Mandy Blackmon, Principal
Travis Mister, Vice Principal
Rachel Couchenour, Dean

Tammy Frawley, Counselor (A-K)
Stephanie Goldstein, Counselor (L-Z)

Dear SMS Families and Community:

The year is quickly progressing. Can you believe we are approaching 3rd quarter interims? Please continue to monitor grades on HAC. There is still time in the quarter to make growth and earn the grades wanted. Please encourage your student to use the supports that we have in place during “Nest” time to help maintain or improve grades. Our goal as a school is to have no student fall below a 70% in any subject area. Never underestimate the “power of a zero” to your overall grade. We need your support in encouraging your student to turn in completed class work, complete homework assignments, and get missing assignments from an absence made up, and don’t forget those physical education uniforms at home to avoid earning zeros.

Another support I am asking for assistance with from our SMS families is to monitor your student’s social media. Middle school can be a difficult as well as a confusing time to establish friendships or to balance out schoolwork and extracurricular activities. Positive postings can be a great way to support each other; however, unnecessary or cruel postings can be detrimental to a person and have a negative impact on the academic day. There is no place for these negative behaviors at SMS.

Thank you to all of you who came out to support our winter sports teams. Spring clinics will start next week. The community also showed great support in our annual Student vs. Staff basketball game sponsored by the PBIS committee. We are looking forward to hosting some other really fun upcoming activities for our students. The PTSA is organizing a dodgeball tournament and SMS staff is working hard to plan the Spring Family and Community Night, so keep an eye out for information to come.

Thank you for helping to make SMS a great place to be,

Mandy M. Blackmon

SMS Principal

Important Upcoming Dates at SMS!

Feb 22nd – Club pictures

Feb 22nd – CTA Open House 6:30

Feb 24th – PTSA Dodgeball Game 3:35-5:30

Feb 24th – 3rd Quarter Interims

Feb 27th – Baseball, Softball and Track clinics will begin

Feb 28th – 5th Grade Night Parent Night at SMS for incoming 6th graders 6:00

March 10th – Step Afrika - PTSA

March 14th – County Spelling Bee @ CHS 7:00

March 29th – End of Third Quarter

March 31st – School closed for students

FREE FLU SHOTS

The CCHD has approximately 300 flu vaccines that they would like to offer to our **STUDENTS** 4-18 years of age. The flu vaccines will be offered at the health department on Tuesday mornings from 8:30-11:00 am (through March 2017). They are walk-in clinics and no appointment is necessary. The parent or guardian must be present with the student to sign for consent.

If you have any questions, please feel free to give Chris Knode a call.

Chris Knode RN BSN NCSN
Supervisor of Student Services/School Health
Calvert County Public Schools
410 535-7484

GO EAGLES!

New Numbers...

Calvert County Public Schools is in the process of implementing a new phone system. When contacting



Southern Middle School

please use the following number...

443-550-9250

(Effective: 2-22-17)

ATTENTION 6TH GRADE PARENTS New Immunization Requirements

The Tdap and Meningococcal vaccines are required before the first day of school for all students entering the 7th grade.

Students without a shot record at school **will not** be allowed in school until it has been received.

Parents/guardians, call your student's doctor to see if they have received the shots. Be sure that the record of those shots is on file with the school.

If you have any questions, please contact the school at (443) 550-9250 and ask for Mrs. Terry Porter, LPN, School Nurse.

What: Calvert County Science and Engineering EXPO

When: February 25, 2017, 11:00am - 3:00pm

Where: Calvert High School, 520 Fox Run Boulevard, Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Why: This family event is designed to be fun and engaging for kids and adults of all ages. Come out to see what CCPS has to offer in the world of Science and Engineering. The EXPO will include robots, science and engineering projects, flight simulators, catapults, and much more for the entire family to enjoy.



The Science and Engineering EXPO is free and open to the public. Families and students from Pre-K through grade twelve are invited to attend the EXPO. The event is designed to get kids excited about STEM with the hopes of increasing participation in STEM classes, clubs, and careers.

We look forward to **seeing** you there!



For additional information, please contact Dr. Yovonda Kolo, Supervisor of Science and STEM at koloy@calvertnet.k12.md.us or Erin Hitchman, CCPS EXPO Coordinator at hitchmane@calvertnet.k12.md.us

Reserve Your Yearbook Today!

Yearbooks are on sale now! Until May 15, the cost is \$38, and after May 15, the price goes up to \$40. Personalization is only available until Feb. 28. Yearbooks can be ordered online at jostensyearbook.com, or students can pick up an order form from the office. Make checks payable to Southern Middle School. Reserve your memories today! Thank you!

Counseling Corner

College and Career Exploration

We will be completing a unit of study with all of our students encouraging them to begin setting goals and planning for their post high school education. Please ask your child to share with you the information that will be distributed during those lessons. Hopefully you have begun to talk about plans for their future careers. We want students to be as focused as possible when they select courses for high school in the spring. Students will also be given access to a career exploration website, Career Cruising, which will allow them to develop a portfolio that will carry on to their high school career.

HAC

We continue to encourage you to monitor your student through the Home Access Center. It takes a very short amount of time and will provide you with important information regarding your child's grades, attendance, and more. If you are experiencing difficulty accessing HAC or navigating the website for HAC please feel free to contact the counseling office during school hours for assistance.

Career Café

Please encourage your student to attend our monthly career café opportunities in which they are able to listen to members of the community present different careers during their nest time. Students may sign up either with their first period teacher or in the counseling office.

Free Online Homework Help

Free online homework help is available (with your library card) through the Calvert County Library. Real, expert tutors are available from your library or home computer in all core subjects (grades 3-12). Tutors are available from 2-11 pm daily. You can access this service at www.calvert.lib.md.us and the COSMOS link.

Thank you!

Mrs. Frawley, counselor for students with last names A–K

frawleyt@calvertnet.k12.md.us or by phone at 443-550-9250

Mrs. Goldstein, counselor for students with last names L–Z

goldsteinsj@calvertnet.k12.md.us or by phone at 443-550-9250

Career Café Volunteer Sign Up

If you are interested in volunteering to present to our students about your career during our 1 hour lunch period, please fill out the form below and return to the counseling department.

Top of Form

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Career Job Title: _____

Company: _____

Email: _____

Phone (Best number to reach you during school hours):

Do you have a child that attends SMS? _____

Do you have any special needs for your presentation?

Bottom of Form

Parent or Guardian-Teacher Conferences

As a parent or guardian, you are your child's first, best and most important teacher. Parents/Guardians and Southern Middle School staff have this in common: We both want your child to grow and succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. Parent/Guardian-Teacher conferences are a great way to start a conversation about your child, his/her progress at SMS, and how you and the SMS staff can work together to benefit your child. If you want to schedule a conference with all of your child's teachers, call SMS at (410)535-7877 and ask for the Guidance Department.

Tips for Successful School Conferences

BEFORE...

- Look through your child's notebooks, tests, and grades. All of your child's grades are on the Home Access Center (HAC). If you do not know how to access HAC, let the Guidance Office know when you call for the conference. HAC information can be given to you at the conference.
- If you are insecure about your ability to communicate, bring someone with you to help you. For example, if English is your second language, you can bring someone who can translate for you. Sometimes, it is helpful to have one person taking notes and the other talking, so you have a reference later.
- Make a list of questions you have about your child. This list may include (but is not limited to) academic strengths and challenges, social growth, and emotional well-being. For ideas, see list



AFTER...

- Start with your plan right away.
- Contact teachers two to three weeks after the conference to see if there have been positive changes.

DURING...

- Stay positive. Remember that we both want your child to grow and succeed!
- Talk and listen. Share what works at home with your child when you are trying to change behaviors. Let the teachers know if there are issues at home that might affect your child's performance/behavior in school. The issues raised in conferences are confidential and will not be shared outside of the conference.
- Write down things you can do at home to help your child succeed in school. Write down what the teachers will do at school to assist your child. Ask about the best way to contact teachers for follow up communication. Leave with a plan!

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Examples of Questions to ask: What are my child's strengths? Is my child performing below/above/at grade level? How is he/she doing as compared to the other students in the class? Do you see any behavioral problems in class that are affecting his/her progress? What programs/services does the school offer that could be of assistance to my child? Is my child working up to his/her ability? What can we do at home to support our child academically? How does my child get along with classmates? How does he/she work in a group? How should I contact you to check on my child's progress after this conference?

PTSA News

Mixed Bag Designs is helping SMS PTSA reach its fundraising goals this year! Check out the catalog that came home with your student to see the fantastic bags, kitchen accessories, and more that they offer! Orders are due by February 28 and can be done online, which makes this a great fundraiser for out-of-town friends and family to support; all they need to do is add SMS's fundraiser ID, 186868, at the checkout on www.mixedbagdesigns.com. As always, thank you for your support!

On Friday, February 24, PTSA will host a dodgeball tournament for the students! Kids can sign up in teams of 6 or sign up individually to be added to a team, with an entry fee of \$5 a player, at lunch all this week. Spectators can also buy tickets for \$5. This tournament will take place after school on Friday, from 3:30 to 6:00. Parent volunteers are also needed; please e-mail Heather Jackson at rehtaeh@yahoo.com if you can help.

The feedback from teachers concerning the last staff meetings has been so happy & thankful! The teachers really appreciate having great snacks for the monthly after-school staff meetings. A big Thank You to all the parents that bring in snacks & goodies—they are much appreciated!! The next staff meeting will be on March 22 and we are calling all volunteers to help!! The staff meeting usually is about 65 people. We are asking for baked goods—cookies, cupcakes, muffins, banana or pumpkin bread—as well as veggie trays & hummus, fruit or fruit trays, cheese platters & crackers, chips & dip, and grab 'n go snacks. Parents who would like to volunteer can contact Nicole Chigounis (smsvolunteer@comcast.net) or Mary Serra at ms27742@gmail.com. We really appreciate all the help with food donations!

On March 10, Step Afrika will perform their dynamic show that "highlights the rhythm, physicality and history of stepping, while emphasizing teamwork, discipline, and commitment." The students will enjoy this high energy performance during the school day in celebration of February's Black History month. This is a PTSA-sponsored event that has been arranged by the Cultural Arts Committee.

Keep sending in your BoxTops! They all help raise money for the school!



SMS SPIRIT MAGNETS

Don't wait, order yours today.

The magnets are in and they look great! Buy one for your car or to use on your fridge or buy multiple magnets. At only \$5 a piece they are a budget friendly way to support SMS PTSA. Email any questions to smsptsapresident@yahoo.com

Please turn this portion in to the office. (Checks payable to SMS PTSA)

Name: _____ Grade: _____

7th Period teacher: _____

Number of Magnets: _____ Total amount due: _____

For internal use:

Date received: _____ Paid with: Cash _____ Check# _____

Date taken to school: _____ By: _____

THE SMART TALK QUICK GUIDE

How to set ground rules for your kids and their devices

Every kid wants a smartphone. And a tablet. And all the other popular technical devices. So, how do you know when it's time to get them one? How do you set ground rules you can actually enforce?

With a few helpful tips, you can figure out if your kid is ready and keep them safe and savvy when they go online.

What's the right age to get a kid a smartphone or other device?

The short answer: there really isn't an exact age that's best. It's different for every kid. One thing parents can do is consider their kid's maturity level. Here are some questions to help determine if your kid is ready:

- Does your kid show a sense of responsibility, such as letting you know when they leave the house? Do they show up when they say they will?
- Does your kid tend to lose things, such as backpacks or homework folders? If so, expect they might lose an expensive(!) phone, too.
- Does your kid need to be in touch for safety reasons?
- Would easy access to friends benefit your kid for social reasons?
- Do you think they'll use cell phones responsibly — for example, not texting during class or disturbing others with their phone conversations?
- Can they adhere to limits you set for minutes talked and apps downloaded?
- Will they use text, photo, and video functions responsibly and not to embarrass or harass others?

DID YOU KNOW?

75%

of children age 8 and under have access to some sort of smart mobile device at home.

How do I set ground rules to make sure my kids use their devices responsibly?

That's where The Smart Talk can help. Go to www.thesmarttalk.org with your kid by your side and we'll ask you a few questions to answer together. Some will help you agree on healthy limits. (Yep. You read that right. We said agree.) Some of the questions are meant to be conversation starting so you can more easily discuss online safety and privacy issues. We even ask a couple extra credit questions to make this a custom experience.

When you're done, you'll have a personalized, official family agreement that you and your kid can feel good about. Just print it out, sign it, and put it on the fridge for everyone to see.

Ground rules are great, but how do I stay on top of technology and this ever-changing subject matter?

Common Sense Media offers articles full of research, insight, and tips that can help you and your family manage all the challenges that come with technology. Here are just a few links to their best information.



Safety & Privacy — Covers how to protect your kid's privacy, how to make sure your kid isn't over-sharing on social media, which are the best privacy settings for your computer and smartphone, and more. Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/privacy-and-internet-safety



Screen Time — Covers how much screen time is ok, how to get kids to put down their devices, what to do if your kid is constantly texting, and more. Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/screen-time



Social Media — Covers social media basics, how to help your kid avoid digital drama, the right age to join Facebook and other sites, and more. Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/social-media



Apps & Downloads — Covers how to tell if an app is good for learning, video games you can say yes to, how to download smarter and cheaper, and more. Visit <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/learning-with-technology>



Texting & Calling — Covers how to balance the need for social interaction with problematic phone use. Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/cell-phone-parenting/my-kid-texts-constantly-what-can-i-do



Reputation & Respect — Covers what you should teach your kid about safe online behavior, cyberbullying prevention, how to report cyberbullying if necessary, and more. Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/cyberbullying



Online Videos & Cameras — Using YouTube as an example, this video explainer covers how kids are not only watching all kinds of online videos, including advertising, they're also putting their own videos on the Internet—for all the world to see. Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/videos/parents-guide-to-youtube

More From Common Sense Media

Parent Concerns in General: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/parent-concerns>

Advice Videos: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/video/advice>

Parent Blog: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog>

Family Guide to Essential Apps: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/guide/best-first-kids-apps>

Healthy Media Habits Infographic: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/pediatricians>

DID YOU KNOW?

68%
of teens text
everyday

DID YOU KNOW?

51%
of teens visit
social networking
sites daily

Calvert County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, ancestry or national origin, familial status, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation or genetic information or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Director of Student Services
Director of Human Resources
1305 Dares Beach Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678
410-535-1700

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit the Office of Civil Rights Complaint Assessment System at: <http://ocrcas.ed.gov> or call 1-800-421-3481.

Anti-sexual, Anti-racial and Anti-disability Harassment Statement

Discrimination can manifest itself in behaviors such as bullying, harassment, or intimidation of individuals.

Calvert County Public Schools does not tolerate any form of harassment including, but not limited to, sexual, racial, or disability. Any individual (student, employee, or community member) who believes that he or she has been subjected to any form of harassment is encouraged to report the allegation of harassment. Students, parents and community members may report allegations of harassment to:

Ms. Kimberly Roof
Director of Student Services
Calvert County Public Schools
1305 Dares Beach Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Employees may report allegations of harassment to:

Dr. Vicky Karol
Director of Human Resources
Calvert County Public Schools
1305 Dares Beach Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Calvert County Public Schools is committed to conducting a prompt investigation for any allegation of harassment. If harassment has occurred, the individual will be disciplined promptly. Disciplinary actions for students found to have engaged in any form of harassment may result in suspension or expulsion. Disciplinary actions for employees found to have engaged in any form of harassment may result in suspension or termination.

Calvert County Public Schools encourages all students, parents, employees, and community members to work together to prevent any form of harassment.