

SOUTHERN MIDDLE SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 2016 NEWSLETTER

9615 HG Trueman Road, Lusby, MD 20657
Main Office (410) 535-7877 Guidance (410) 535-7881

<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)

Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success. —Henry Ford

Hello Southern Middle School Community and Families,

We are extremely proud of our school community and appreciate the circle of support. We would like to thank everyone for backing our fall fundraising efforts. The funds raised will help to purchase technology devices to supplement “Future Ready” initiatives. I would also like to thank the school community for supporting the “End Hunger” food drive and the shoe drive efforts that are underway. Please keep the Box Tops coming in. These activities help our students become outstanding citizens by being a part of their community.

We are coming to the end of the first marking period and rolling right into the second quarter. To assist our efforts to maintain high achievement and student academic success, please continue to monitor the Home Access Center for grades. Also, attendance is very important and good attendance supports the learning environment, so please make every effort to get to school on time. Make sure we are washing our hands and dressing for the weather as we enter cold and flu season.

We are committed to providing all students with the opportunity to reach their personal academic excellence as well as fostering their well-being. This means we need to address the needs of the whole child, including social and emotional aspects of the student’s day. Southern is a PBIS school that believes in positive reinforcement. Please help us encourage students to show respect, ownership, and a positive attitude and be ready to learn, as this applies to activities both in and out of school.

We look forward to seeing parents and special visitors during American Education Week. We hope the students are ready for the Glow Dance coming up, and please stay tuned for a community night being planned for early December.

Here are some important upcoming dates on the SMS calendar:

11/8 – No school for students

11/9 – Picture retakes

11/10 – First quarter report cards

11/11 – No school for students, staff development

11/14-18 – American Education Week

11/18 – PTSA Glow Dance 7:00–9:00

11/23-25 – Holiday – Thanksgiving break

As always, if you have a question and/or a concern, please do not hesitate to contact me at 410-535-7877 or at blackmonm@calvertnet.k12.md.us.

Your partner in education,

Mrs. Mandy M. Blackmon, Principal

GO EAGLES!

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 high school courses 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.

Parent Visitation Day

Please mark November 18, 2016 on your calendar for our parent visitation day. More information regarding how to sign up to attend and other logistics will be distributed to students in the near future. We look forward to seeing you.

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 next time. Our first Career Café presenter is an acoustic musician, Dylan Galvin. He is scheduled to present on November 17. Students may either sign up with their first period teacher or in the counseling office.

Suicide Prevention Poster Contest Winners

We thank all of the students who submitted an entry in the Calvert County Suicide Prevention Poster Contest. The following students have been recognized for their entries: 1st place, Victoria Godfrey; 2nd place, Marisa Mozzetta; 3rd place, Terkea Queen. Great Job!!!

Carson Scholarship Nominee Application

We are looking for students to enter for the chance to be recognized as a Carson Scholar. The Carson Scholars Fund awards \$1,000 college scholarships to students in Grades 4 through 11 who excel academically and are dedicated to serving their communities.

If you are interested in the possibility of being nominated by SMS to be able to compete for a Carson Scholarship, please pick up more information in the guidance office. There will be an essay contest and the mini-

mum requirements are a 3.75 GPA and involvement in community service. The deadline for the essay entry will be December 2. Please stop by the guidance office for more information and your chance at a \$1,000 scholarship.

End of Quarter Reminders

As the first quarter comes to an end, please continue to be vigilant in monitoring your student's grades and attendance through HAC and communicating with teachers as needed.

Thank you!

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

frawleyt@calvertnet.k12.md.us or by phone at 410-535-7881

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

goldsteinsj@calvertnet.k12.md.us or by phone at 410-535-7881

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

Middle Years

Working Together for School Success



Short Stops

A+ feedback

When your middle grader gives a classmate feedback (say, on a presentation or a rough draft of a report), encourage him to be positive and honest. First, he could tell what he liked ("Your opening really grabbed my attention"). Then, he should offer suggestions for improvement ("Try adding transition words"). Giving constructive criticism may help your child accept feedback on his work, too.

Just you and me

Carve out one-on-one time with your tween while you tackle your to-do list this holiday season. Write down everything that needs to be done, and let her choose some tasks to work on with you. You might, for example, make table centerpieces and napkin rings or address greeting cards together.

Spatial reasoning

The ability to visualize shapes, sizes, and positions of objects is an important thinking skill. Give your middle schooler practice by having him load the dishwasher, bag groceries at the self-checkout, or pack items in boxes. He'll have to picture what could go where and how everything will fit.

Worth quoting

"Don't count the days, make the days count." *Muhammad Ali*

Just for fun

Q: Where is the ocean the deepest?

A: On the bottom!



Study smart

Good study skills let your tween accomplish more each time she studies—and they prepare her for high school and college. Suggest that she try these different ways to study and stick with the ones that work best.

Rewrite material

After your child reviews notes or completes assigned reading, writing the information in a different format will help her learn and remember it. She might be creative and make up a song about the parts of the nervous system or write a poem using vocabulary terms. Or she could teach the information to a peer by writing key information on a small whiteboard or chalkboard.

Picture it

Suggest that your middle grader think of a way to turn information into something visual. That can help her make sense of it. She may draw a picture with arrows to show steps in the water cycle, a bar graph to display income statistics



for an economics project, or a chart to compare two novels by the same author.

Make your own tests

Testing herself on what she learns will show your student what she knows and what she needs to review. Encourage her to create a test using old worksheets or quizzes and her textbook. She can check her answers and grade herself. Or she could think of and answer essay questions. *Idea:* Suggest that she team up with a friend and make up tests for each other to do. 🙌

Conferences are worth attending

Now that your child is in middle school, parent-teacher conferences may be different from what you're used to. Here's what to expect:

- You'll get an overview of how your tween is doing in each subject. If you meet with one teacher who shares notes from a team, ask about scheduling a follow-up conference with a particular teacher if you'd like more information or have concerns.
- You may discover interests or talents you didn't know your youngster has, and the teacher might recommend electives for next year that let him use and develop these strengths.
- Find out how your child interacts with teachers and peers. For example, you could ask about how he works with classmates. 🙌



How math adds up

Math isn't just for math class. Knowing how to use numbers will benefit your middle grader in his other courses, too. Share these ideas.

Social studies

When your child makes a time line of historical events or uses coordinates to locate a city on a map, he's doing math. Here's a fun way to combine math and social studies at home: Encourage him to watch this month's election-night coverage and figure out which combinations of states would lead to the 270 electoral votes needed to win the presidency. Or have him hold a mock election among friends



and family members, and calculate the percentage of votes each state or local candidate receives.

Science

In science class, your middle grader will measure liquids for experiments, figure out speed and velocity, and graph results.

In fact, most science experiments involve math in some way. Remind him to double-check formulas and calculations on lab reports—just as he would check his work in math class. He will see the connection between what he's learning in algebra, geometry, or regular math class and what he's doing in science. 🍀

Parent to Parent

A jarful of gratitude

Sometimes I feel like my 12-year-old son, Brock, takes things for granted, like the rides I give him or the Internet I pay for. For example, he won't be ready when it's time to leave or he'll complain that a friend has faster Internet. A neighbor shared an idea her family uses to remember what they're thankful for, and I decided to try it.

I had Brock cut colored construction paper into squares and stack them near an empty glass jar. In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving,



I asked everyone to pay attention to small things they appreciated. Each time they noticed something, they could write it on a square and drop it into the jar.

Before our holiday meal, we are going to pass the jar around and have everyone read a square. Then, we're going to start a new jar for each month so Brock learns that being thankful isn't just for Thanksgiving. 🍀

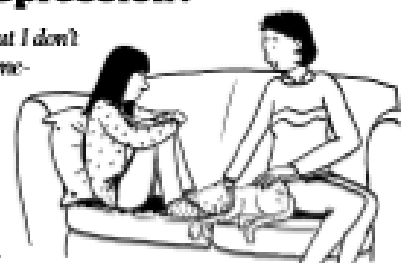
Q&A

Tween blues—or depression?

Q My daughter seems down lately, but I don't know if it's normal mood swings or something more serious. How can I tell?

A Mood swings are a normal part of adolescence. But if your child is sad or irritable for more than a couple of weeks—and if it interferes with her regular activities—she may be depressed. Other clues include withdrawing from friends and family, frequent headaches or stomachaches, or sleeping too much or not enough.

Point out what you've noticed by saying something like, "You seem kind of quiet lately." If she says she feels "angry at the world" or "hopeless," don't try to downplay her feelings by saying "You shouldn't feel that way" or "That's no big deal." Instead, listen and tell her you want to help. Then, contact her pediatrician or the school counselor for guidance. *Note:* If she insists nothing is wrong but symptoms continue, seek help anyway. 🍀



Talking without screens

Face-to-face communication can fall by the wayside if your tween sticks to texting or chatting on screens. By actually talking to people, she will build interpersonal skills and pay attention to the world around her. Consider this advice:

■ Make screens off-limits for everyone—parents included—during meals or while riding in the car. This will get your child talking to the people she's with, rather than those "inside her phone."

■ If your middle grader participates in activities after school, she'll naturally spend more time talking to friends than in texting them. For instance, if she

works for the school newspaper, she will interview classmates or toss around article ideas with fellow staff members. 🍀



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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 128 N. Royal Avenue • Plover, WI 53090
 340-610-4280 • educators@www.cchinc.com
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PTSA News

Thank you to everyone who provided snacks for the October 26 staff meeting; they were much appreciated! The next staff meeting comes early this month: November 15. Please contact Hospitality Chair Mary Serra at ms27742@gmail.com if you can bring in food or drinks to help provide hospitality for the 65 expected staff members at the November meeting, then drop off your food (labeled “Staff Meeting”) at school by 2 on November 15. You don’t need to bring enough for 65 people, but know that a large attendance means that having more people donate food helps ensure the event will be a success. Thank you for your support!

Haven’t joined PTSA yet? No problem! The form is on the next page; fill it out and send it in with the membership fee and you will be a proud 2016/2017 member!

The first dance of the year is almost here! On November 18, students are invited to attend the **Neon Glow Party Dance**, held from 7 to 9 p.m. at SMS. Tickets are \$5 each and will be available at the door as well as ahead of time at lunch from Monday, November 14, through Friday, November 18. There will be a fantastic DJ, and snacks will be available for purchase. Students, don’t miss a good time with your friends! Parents, volunteers are needed to monitor the gym and sell tickets and snacks. Please contact Heather Jackson at rehtaeh45410@yahoo.com ASAP if you can help. THANK YOU!

See the flyer on the following pages for information about our “Once & Done Nothing to Sell & Nothing to Buy Fundraiser” for SMS. Just make a donation of any size to fund PTSA’s work in supporting SMS staff and students and skip the candy, wrapping paper, phone calls to relatives, and order forms left on the counter at work. Your donations to PTSA help support dances; teacher, staff, and bus driver appreciation food and gifts; the eighth grade celebrations; cultural arts activities; PBIS; and much, much more. THANK YOU for your generosity!



SMS PTSA Membership/Direct Donation Form

Helping SMS Soar ~ As Easy as 1 - 2 - 3 - 4!

★ Membership Dues are only \$6.00 per Person



MEMBER INFORMATION

Adult Member #1

Name/Phone		
Address		
Email		

- Parent/Guardian
 SMS Teacher/Staff
 Relative/Family friend

Adult Member #2

Name/Phone		
Address		
Email		

- Parent/Guardian
 SMS Teacher/Staff
 Relative/Family friend

Student Members

Grade

1st Pd Teacher

Name	Grade	1 st Pd Teacher
Name		
Name		

Total # of Memberships _____ X \$6.00 = \$ _____ (individual)
 Family of 4 Membership (\$20.00) = \$ _____ (family)



SMS PTSA DIRECT DONATION APPEAL

Regardless of your membership status, the most HELPFUL way to support SMS students is with a tax deductible DIRECT DONATION which provides 100% direct support!

(\$25 per student suggested, but any amount appreciated) \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES (circle all that apply)

- Dance Chaperone (admission, concessions, etc.) 8th Grade Activities PTSA Board Co-Chair
 Hospitality (providing baked goods) Teacher/Staff Help

You will be contacted at email provided above when volunteers are needed for events!



PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM along with cash or check payable to SMS PTSA to the school office.

Questions? Please contact email our PTSA President at smsptsapresident@yahoo.com
 We greatly appreciate your participation and support of the SMS PTSA!

RETURN by SEPTEMBER 16 to be entered in our EARLY BIRD RAFFLE

You could WIN our EARLY BIRD RAFFLE ~ \$25 Walmart Gift Card

Help us SOAR TO REACH our SMS PTSA Goals:

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| *School Dances | *Staff Appreciation Week | *Welcome Back Staff Luncheon |
| *Box Tops Contest Incentives | *Hospitality at Staff Meetings | *Publish monthly e-newsletter |
| *8 th Grade End of Year Dance/Picnic | *Funds for School Requests & PBIS | *Cultural Arts Support |



SMS PTSA Fundraising Goal:
\$10,000

ANNOUNCING...



The SMS PTSA

“Once & Done Nothing to Sell & Nothing to Buy FUNDRAISER” to support our SMS Eagles!



Let's face it... fundraising is a part of life for sports, church, school, scouts, or other extra-curricular activities! So this year instead of looking through a catalog, we hope you'll join us as we head in a new direction by participating in our 'Once & Done Nothing to Sell & Nothing to Buy Fundraiser'!!

The SMS PTSA needs to raise funds to accomplish our PTSA Mission:

To offer PTSA sponsored activities, programs & events to benefit our SMS Community of students, staff, and families!

Help us SOAR TO REACH our SMS PTSA Goals:

*School Dances & Game Nights

*Staff Appreciation Week

*Welcome Back Staff Breakfast

*Funding Support for PBIS Incentives

*Hospitality at Staff Meetings

*Publish monthly e-newsletter

*8th Grade End of Year Dance/Picnic

*Funds for School Requests

*Cultural Arts Support

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT OF THE SMS PTSA!

- 1) Please select a level (below) of support to help fund our budget.
- 2) Send in cash or check (payable to SMS PTSA) in a sealed envelope marked SMS PTSA Once & Done.
- 3) Return your 'Once & Done' 100% tax-deductible donation before September 30. (So we can determine how much fundraising we still need to do to support our goal to meet our budget)

___ \$25 Thanks, I appreciate NOT having to browse through a catalog to choose 'something' to buy!

___ \$ 50 Thanks, I appreciate NOT having to ask my co-workers, neighbors, and relatives to buy 'something' as well!

___ \$ 75 Thanks, I appreciate ALL that the PTSA Board does to organize activities to support our students & staff (and this donation is easier than having to buy something to make these programs happen!)

___ \$ 100 Thanks, I appreciate a chance to participate in a fundraiser where 100% of my money supports my child's school AND to donate to a 501c3 charity that is 100% tax deductible!!

NAME/Email: _____

Student(s)/Grade: _____



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.