

# SOUTHERN MIDDLE SCHOOL

OCTOBER 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)

October 2016

Dear Southern Middle School Community,

The hallways are bustling with excitement as the students begin their journey of the 2016–2017 school year. I am so proud of the effort our students put into their studies daily. Many of them are learning how to manage their time as they focus on being students and participants in other activities. Middle school is a transitional period and despite their occasional resistance, the students still need our support and encouragement. I am asking parents to please remain active in monitoring grades on the Home Access Center and keeping open communication with your child’s teacher as needed. The study skills and work habits the students establish for themselves now are imperative for positive future endeavors.

Fall sports, volleyball and soccer, have begun. Games will start the week of October 10th. The band, choir, and orchestra are sounding awesome and preparing for winter concerts that will be here before you know it. We hope you will join us for these events.

Another exciting new educational experience to Southern Middle School this year is that sixth grade students are being equipped with HP Stream 11 laptops. While there will be some troubleshooting involved in this big rollout at first, I anticipate smooth sailing as the students become more comfortable with the device and the teachers begin using them more and more in the classroom. We are very lucky to have this technology and we will keep discovering new and exciting ways to use them as a learning tool. Continue to talk to your students to find out how they are working with their laptop at school.

Many of our students have very busy lives in and outside of school that can play a role in making homework time as well as other school projects stressful. Please encourage your child to participate in academic support groups during their one-hour lunch. We refer to this hour of time as “The Nest.” We have teachers of all academic areas as well as some peer tutoring available. I hope the students will find great use of the time and the benefits it can provide.

Here are some important upcoming dates on the SMS calendar. Soccer and volleyball games are indicated by the school abbreviations:

Oct 7 – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Interims

Oct 10 – 14 SMS End Hunger Drive

Oct 10 – SMS vs. PPMS @ PPMS

Oct 13 – SMS vs. NMS @ SMS

Oct 17 – SMS vs. WHMS@ WHMS

Oct 20 – 2 hr early dismissal for students

Oct 21 – School Closed for students – staff development

Oct 24 – SMS vs. MCMS @ SMS

Oct 26 – SMS vs. CMS @ SMS

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](mailto:blackmonm@calvertnet.k12.md.us).

Your partner in education,

Mrs. Mandy M. Blackmon, Principal

### **A Note From the Dean**

On October 7, students will be sent home with Individual Student Reports for the PARCC assessments taken in Spring 2016. If you have questions about how to read and interpret the reports, please visit and search for “Individual Student Reports” on <http://avocet.pearson.com/PARCC/Home>

Rachel Couchenour, Dean

410-535-7883

[CouchenourR@calvertnet.k12.md.us](mailto:CouchenourR@calvertnet.k12.md.us)

### **SCIENCE EXPO CLUB**

The Science Expo Club will begin meeting on Thursday 10/6 and will meet most Thursdays, except 10/13 and 12/8, in Room 3. Students will be given guidance on how to prepare a traditional science project on a backboard or an expo project for the County Fair at Calvert High on 2/25/17. Attendance is not mandatory and students may come as needed for help. Permission slips are available on the stage. See you there!

# *Counseling Corner*

The counseling department is excited to begin another successful year at Southern Middle School. We look forward to meeting you and working with your students.

The school counselors will continue assisting students in a variety of areas that deal with their academic, career, personal, and social success. It is our first priority to provide an environment in which students learn to make choices that lead to responsible behavior. Therefore, as the year progresses, we will be entering classes to discuss topics such as bullying, career readiness, college knowledge, and suicide prevention, to name a few.

## ***Parent–Teacher Conferences***

Parent–teacher conferences are available should you feel the need to discuss any concerns regarding your student. If you want to meet with one teacher, please contact that teacher directly via e-mail or telephone to arrange a conference. Please contact the counseling department if you would like to meet with all of your child’s core teachers. Team conferences are held after school beginning promptly at 3:15 pm and ending at 3:35 pm. Please plan to arrive a few minutes earlier than that time to allow for parking and checking in at the main office. If you have not arrived by 3:15 pm, please contact the counseling office to discuss rescheduling the conference.

## ***HAC***

Please assist your student with monitoring his or her HAC account. HAC allows you to view valuable information pertinent to your child’s academic success at Southern. Students and parents are able keep track of grades, attendance, and specific assignments. If you are in need of your student’s HAC information (username and password), please contact the counseling department for assistance.

## ***Career Café***

This year, the school counselors will be hosting a monthly Career Café to enhance career exploration opportunities for our students. Career Café is an opportunity for students in 6th–8th grade to meet individuals from the community and learn about their careers. Students are able to sign up to listen to a presenter speak on a career of their interest. Career Café is made up of two 30-minute sessions and serves approximately fifty students in 6th–8th grade each month. Career Café speakers visit SMS on a Friday from 11:40 am–12:50 pm and speak to two separate groups of approximately 25 students to share their career journey.

We are actively seeking presenters to speak to our students. If you are interested in volunteering your time, please complete the attached form and return to the counseling department. Please also feel free to call directly and speak with one of the counselors.

There are great things planned for the upcoming school year, and we are pleased to offer ourselves as a resource to you in whichever way we can.

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

[frawleyt@calvertnet.k12.md.us](mailto: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](mailto: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

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**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?**

\_\_\_\_\_

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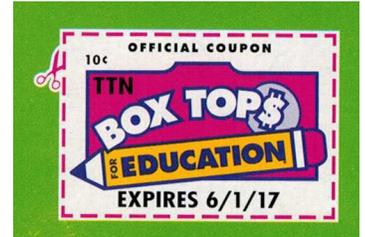
Bottom of Form

# PTSA News

Welcome back to school, everyone! The PTSA board is excited to launch another year of support, rewards, and fun for SMS!

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We hope you'll participate in our first Box Tops contest of the school year! Turn in Box Tops to your first period teacher by **October 25** to help your class win a doughnut breakfast. Thank you so much for clipping, saving, and participating in the Box Tops program throughout the year—your support of the Box Tops program helps earn money for our school.



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Thank you to everyone who provided snacks for the September 28 staff meeting. October 26 is the next staff meeting. Please contact Hospitality Chair Mary Serra at [ms27742@gmail.com](mailto:ms27742@gmail.com) if you can bring in food or drinks for the October meeting, then drop off your food (labeled "Staff Meeting") at school by 2 on October 26. Thank you for your support!

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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!

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The first dance of the year is coming up on October 20! Stay tuned for more details!

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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

	<u>Student Members</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>1<sup>st</sup> Pd Teacher</u>
Name			
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.)  8<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 <sup>th</sup> 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
- \*8<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:smsptsapresident@yahoo.com)

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

7<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.

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**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.