



## September Newsletter

### A Note from the Principal

Dear SMS Families,

We are happily underway and have had a fruitful first week and a half! As I've made my way through the halls and in and out of classrooms, I'm not only observing strong learning partnerships between your students and our teachers, but a mutual admiration as well.

As we inch our way into the new year, I'd like to share our goals, new compliments to the already fantastic education, important dates, our "front office" teacher support team and other news. We are looking forward to finishing out the first month with a strong foundational core and open minds to the endless possibilities learning brings.

Your partner in education and community enhancement,

Ms. Baglien

### School Goals

- Increase student achievement by creating and implementing supports that meet the needs of all learners
- Strengthen community partnerships and engagement with a focus on service learning and civic-mindedness
- Researching, addressing and reducing student barriers to optimal wellness

### New Compliments and Offerings to SMS Education

- AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination): "AVID's mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society." Nearly half of our staff attended professional development on AVID over the

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summer. AVID will be offered as an elective at SMS and the programs practices and strategies will be utilized in all classrooms. More information can be found at [AVID.org](http://AVID.org)

- **PIE (Practice, Intervention & Enrichment):** PIE time is a thirty minute period, four times a week in which students receive additional teachings to further their core content or elective curriculum. Three days a week are focused around a specific content area and one day a week is devoted to SEL-Character Development.
- **SEL (Social Emotional Learning):** Character development and social emotional learning lessons are offered at least once a week. Our guidance counselor also co-teaches guidance lessons with teachers to assist our students with the many changes and challenges that occur during these pivotal adolescent years.
- **Service Learning & Community Reciprocity:** We are making a conscious effort to assess where we can serve the community that has done so much for our district, learn from the examples of community engagement from past practice and programming and continue to build upon the partnerships that we have within our school.

### **Front of the House Staff**

I have the distinct pleasure of working hand in hand with some tremendously talented staff that I'd like to recognize. This small yet mighty group works diligently to support our students and teachers.

#### **Mary Lesowske, Connie Neilson & Trish Roy (Administrative Staff, Nurse)**

Mary Lesowske and Connie Neilson are two of the busiest and most helpful people in our school. You probably see and speak with them very regularly if you need assistance with day to day student needs and questions, they are our main office staff. Trish Roy completes the trifecta of greatness as our shared school nurse. Trish's knowledge and kindness is yet another bright light in our school community. We are thankful for her expertise and care for our students.

#### **Brook Jackson & Michele Hammer (Counselor, Teacher & Dean)**

Also located in the main office are Brook Jackson, our Guidance Counselor and Michele Hammer, our Dean and History teacher. Brook and Michele are heavily involved with the systems and structures that assist with achieving our school-wide goals. While Brook and Michele are always happy to lend a helping hand, please contact them only in their area of focus so they may prioritize time with your students. Feel free to contact me (Ms. Baglien) with any needs. More from Brook and Michele directly....

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My name is Brook Jackson, your middle school counselor. Why does Sisters School District employ a middle school counselor? Here are just a few of the reasons this position is valuable for our students.

Middle school students are characterized by rapid physical growth, curiosity about their world and an emerging self-identity. Middle school counselors have an impact on these years by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program and collaborating with school staff, parents and the community to create a safe, respectful learning environment whereby young adolescents can maximize personal and academic achievement.

Middle school counselors enhance the learning process and promote academic, career and social/emotional development. School counseling programs are essential for students to achieve optimal personal growth, acquire positive social skills and values, set informed career goals and realize full academic potential to become productive, contributing members of the world community.

Middle school counselors hold a master's degree and required state certification in school counseling. Maintaining certification includes ongoing professional development to stay current with education reform and challenges facing today's students. Professional association membership enhances the school counselor's knowledge and effectiveness.

School counselors do not provide therapy or long-term counseling in schools; however, school counselors are prepared to recognize and respond to student mental health needs and to assist students and families seeking resources.

I also engage in crisis response and provide support and assistance to students and families as they navigate crisis and emergency situations.

Thank you for allowing me the honor of supporting your child during this adventurous time in their lives!—Brook Jackson, MA, CADC-I, NCC

### **Michele Hammer**

I am excited to be back in the classroom this year and continuing my role as Dean of Students. I will be teaching 8th grade US History, preparing students to move onto high school next year. In my role as Dean of Students, I will be creating and implementing a PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) school-wide plan to assist students in making positive decisions and to develop alternative choices when problems arise. I will work to create ongoing positive behavioral recognition programs for students, including Outlaw of the Month recognition across all grades. Tracking attendance and working with families when absenteeism begins to effect a student's academic success in school continues to be one of my ongoing roles. New this year will be a program that involves students in making Sisters Middle School a welcoming and supportive environment for all students. Known as the Outlaw Council, students in 6th through 8th grade will develop leadership, mediation and conflict resolution skills to help make Sisters

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Middle School a more involved community. If any questions or concerns regarding these areas please feel free to contact me, I am available to answer any questions or address any concerns.

—Michele Hammer

## Notes & Dates

- Lunchtime: If you wish to join your child for lunch, you must first complete the volunteer packet required by this district.
- Newsletters: Newsletters will come out the first of the month (other than this month).
- Coffee & Conversation: September 19th at 8:30am in the new library-media center.
- Open House: September 24th 5:30-7pm

## Thank you!

- A huge thank you to the Sisters Folk Festival and Brad Tisdell for bringing so many wonderful and varied artists to perform for our students! Students and staff alike enjoyed Kaia Kater, Trevor Green, The Accidentals & Phoebe Hunt and the Gatherers!
- Many thanks to the Sisters Science Club who have reached out to begin early planning to ensure science greatness within and outside of our school.
- Much appreciation to Erin Borla and The Roundhouse Foundation for meeting with several members of our school to see how our goals can align to better the student experience and learning.
- SMS looks forward to the continued partnership with Circle of Friends as we collaborate on meeting the needs of all students.
- A big thank you to the Bruce family who generously donated a Foundations in Financial Literacy course to complement our math program in 8th grade.
- THANK YOU to all families, parents and students for your warm welcomes and encouraging sentiments as I begin my time here at SMS. I look forward to forging long-lasting partnerships with you all.
- I'd be remiss not to thank this thoughtful, dynamic, hard-working faculty and staff I have working alongside me. Thank you for being you and your dedication to our students.

## Community Events *(While not sponsored by SSD, I'd like to share several opportunities for families)*

- Fiesta de Independencia, Sunday, September 16th at Fir Park from 3-7pm

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- Sisters Public Library has several great upcoming events:  
<https://www.deschuteslibrary.org/calendar/>
  - Community Clean Up Day, Saturday, September 29th SPRD 8-12pm
  - Family Resource Center of Oregon is offering several upcoming workshops,  
fronline.org