"NEWS YOU CAN USE"

Parent Edition: September 2016

New SMS Daily Schedule:

Dear SMS Parent/Guardian:

As we begin the 2016-2017 school year, I want to remind you all that we will be starting our new daily schedule on Thursday, September 8th. Your student(s) have had a modified schedule for the first two days of school to accommodate for the assignment of lockers and for our annual student fundraising assembly.

The reason we at SMS have chosen to change our daily schedule is that we believe it will help us *improve student learning*. We are committed to delivering a guaranteed, viable curriculum to every student. More importantly, we are committed to building a collaborative culture focused on learning through the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Research shows that when teachers know how to collaborate effectively and structures are in place to support collaboration, student learning and teacher practice improve over time. Our new daily schedule allows us to support teacher collaboration in PLCs, positively reinforce students who make good choices on a weekly basis and increase the amount of instructional time throughout the school year.

It is very important to me that you understand the changes to the daily schedule and how those changes will impact your student(s). Below, I have provided a summary of details regarding our new schedule and its impact on your student's day-to-day routines.

- Your student will have 17 more minutes of contact time with his/her teachers each week than they did in our old schedule.
- Your student will see every one of their teachers each day. This is not a block schedule.
- Your student will have 100 minutes of Seminar & Earned Activity Time available to them each week. (50 minutes of Seminar & 50 minutes of Earned Activity Time)
- Seminar & Earned Activity Time takes place on Tuesday and Thursday.
    - If your student's Seminar teacher is a Math, Science or Encore teacher his/her Seminar will be on Thursday. Their Earned Activity time will be on Tuesday.
    - If your student's Seminar teacher is a Language Arts or Social Studies teacher his/her Seminar will be on Tuesday. Their Earned Activity time will be on Thursday.

- **Earned Activity Time (EAT)** will take place once a week for every student. It will be held in the gymnasium, cafeteria and outdoors. We will have supervised activities for kids to participate in during this time.
    - Eligibility for this time is determined by your student's citizenship and academic need each week. (Please refer to the student handbook HERE)
    - Your student may choose to utilize this time to read, study or work collaboratively with classmates on a project if they choose in the cafeteria. Earned Activity Time can also be used for academic reasons.

- **The Academic Support Center (ASC)** is located in our library.
    - Teachers may assign students who have time-sensitive make-up work or who are in need of academic support each week. Students who are assigned to be in the ASC will report to the library rather than attending their Earned Activity Time.
    - Our NJHS students will be serving as peer tutors in their content areas of expertise. We will also be utilizing cadet teachers from Sparta High School to provide academic support in each content area.
    - Each week, any of your student's teachers may sign them up for additional time and support as needed in the ASC.

- **SMS Snack/Beverage Policy During Class:**
  Due to the differences in lunch times throughout the week, students are allowed to bring a snack to their 3rd or 4th hour class as long as it is not a disruption to the learning environment. Students may also bring clear water to drink as long as it is in a clear container. Clear, unflavored water is the only beverage allowed in class at SMS. Snacks and water are not allowed in the gymnasium, library/media center and computer at anytime.

I appreciate the opportunity to be part of such a supportive and collaborative learning community. I will continue to make it a top priority to be as communicative and organized as I can be so we can work together to provide your student(s) with an excellent middle school experience. Please email me at the address below or call 887-8211 ext. 2205 if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Brad Wood
Principal, Sparta Middle School
brad.wood@spartaschools.org

SPARTA MIDDLE SCHOOL DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE:

Monday/Wednesday/Friday Daily Schedule

6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
1st Hour 7:20-8:20	1st Hour 7:20-8:20	1st Hour 7:20-8:20
2nd Hour 8:25-9:25	2nd Hour 8:25-9:25	2nd Hour 8:25-9:25
3rd Hour 9:30-10:30	3rd Hour 9:30-10:30	3rd Hour 9:30-10:30
4th Hour 10:35-11:35	4th Hour 10:35-11:35	4th Hour 10:35-11:35
5th Hour 11:40-12:05	**Lunch: 11:35-12:05**	5th Hour 11:40- 12:35
Lunch: 12:05-12:35		
5th Hour 12:35-1:05	5th Hour 12:10-1:05	**Lunch: 12:35-1:05**
6th Hour 1:10-2:20	6th Hour 1:10-2:20	6th Hour 1:10-2:20

Tuesday/Thursday Daily Schedule

6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
1st Hour 7:20-8:11	1st Hour 7:20-8:11	1st Hour 7:20-8:11
2nd Hour 8:16-9:07	2nd Hour 8:16-9:07	2nd Hour 8:16-9:07
3rd Hour 9:12-10:03	3rd Hour 9:12-10:03	3rd Hour 9:12-10:03
4th Hour 10:08-10:59	4th Hour 10:08-10:59	4th Hour 10:08-10:59
5th Hour 11:04-11:29	**Lunch 10:59-11:29**	5th Hour: 11:04-11:59
Lunch 11:29-11:59		
5th Hour 11:59-12:29	5th Hour11:34-12:29	**Lunch 11:59-12:29**
6th Hour 12:34-1:25	6th Hour 12:34-1:25	6th Hour 12:34-1:25
Seminar/EAT 1:30-2:20	Seminar/EAT 1:30-2:20	Seminar/EAT 1:30-2:20

***Students who have their Math, Science or Encore teacher for Seminar will have EAT on Tuesday and Seminar on Thursday.**

***Students who have their Language Arts or Social Studies teacher for Seminar will have their Seminar on Tuesday and EAT on Thursday.**

Friendly Reminders:

SMS Technology Policy: (Cell Phones & Personal Electronic Devices)

- Phones and PEDs must be safely stored in a pocket or other secure location out of sight where it cannot cause a distraction between 7:20am and 2:20pm
- Phones and PEDs that are visible in the hallways will be confiscated.
- Phones must be on silent or turned off. Vibrating phones can be confiscated.
- Students may not use their cell phones or PEDs during lunch.
- Student use of PEDs or cell phones in any school bathroom is prohibited.
- Students may not use their cell phones or PEDs during their weekly EAT (Earned Activity Time).
- Students are allowed to use their phones/PEDs with teacher permission in class for academic reasons.
- Students may use their phones/PEDs before school starts at 7:20am and after school releases at 2:20pm.

SMS Beverage Policy:

Students can bring clear water to drink as long as it is in a clear, untinted container. Clear, unflavored water is the only beverage allowed in class at SMS during class time. Snacks and water are not allowed in the gymnasium, library/media center or computer labs at anytime.

Attention, 8th Grade Parents: 8th Grade Recognition Eligibility Policy

- Please take the time to review our eligibility criteria for participation in 8th Grade Recognition. This is a very special tradition & privilege that we want all of our 8th graders to participate in.
- Eligibility Criteria can be found on page 17 of the Student-Parent Handbook. Please click HERE to access our handbook.
- We will be communicating to parents throughout the year in the event that your 8th grade student is in danger of being ineligible.

Parent-Principal Coffee: Come join us for a conversation about all that is happening here at SMS!

- Thursday, September 22nd from 3:00pm-4:00pm
- SMS Library

Important Dates for your Calendar

Student Picture Day:

- Friday, September 23rd
- Retake Day: Thursday, October 27th

Student Count Days:

- Wednesday, October 5th
- Wednesday, February 8th

Homecoming/Spirit Week:

- October 10th through October 14th

Sparta Middle School Unity Games

- Friday, October 14th

Parent-Teacher Conference Dates:

- **Fall Conferences:**
  - Thursday, November 3rd from 5:00pm-8:00pm
  - Thursday, November 10th from 4:00pm-7:00pm

1st Trimester Start and End Dates/Progress Report & Report Card Dates

- **Trimester 1:** September 6th through December 2nd
  - T1 Progress Report: Friday, October 21st
  - T1 Report Card: Friday, December 9th