

Principal's Newsletter

December 22, 2023 🎄

'Tis the Season 📌

Hark! the district angels sing
Vacation's here; it's a thing.
Parties in school, the kids were wild
We can't wait till grades are filed.



Message from the Principal

Dear Families,

We wish you a wonderful holiday break with loved ones. Please enjoy and be safe!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Nzeza

Important Dates

Please mark your calendars

12/25 - 1/5 – Winter Break (School Closed)

1/8 – Classes Resume

1/9 - 1/10 - iReady Diagnostics Reading and Math

1/10 - Basketball @ SMS

1/12 - SAC Meeting

1/17 - Basketball @ Oak Park

1/17 - PSAT for 8th Grade Registration DUE - see flier attached

1/21 - SPIRIT Night at Sky Zone - See flier attached
1/23 - SPIN Night and Book Fair
1/24 - MOSI STEM Club begins - See information below
1/25 - SMS History Day Contest

Other Important Dates & Information

- Track & Field Tryouts are 1/23, 1/24, 1/25 from 7:50-9:00am. Meet in the Gym. [Aktivate.com](https://www.aktivite.com) registration is required.
- Weight Training Intramurals is from 1/23-3/21 on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:00-9:00am. Meet in the gym. The required Parent Permission and Hold Harmless Agreement can be accessed on the SMS website. Limit to 30 participants.



Holiday Break Enrichment Activities

This is a great list of simple, no-cost learning-enriched activities that all families can do over the break, no matter what holiday they celebrate!

What's Happening around Campus?

FUN PJ Day and Staff Breakfast

SMS students celebrated a much requested and well-deserved PJ Day on Wednesday of this week. It was the same day as our staff holiday breakfast so we celebrated in comfy attire as well! We played some fun games and enjoyed a holiday tradition at SMS, made-to-order omletes!



6th Grade matching PJs



Staff with The Grinch



More 6th Grade Fun



Looking Dapper



The Grinch Strikes Again



Coach Lundquist at our Guessing Game



**Our "Omlete Guy"
Tradition**



**Rebel and Pirate with The
Grinch**



**Holiday Gift Giving
Packages Ready to Go**

"Winston" is Official

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am thrilled to announce the newest Sarasota Middle School Panther, "Winston" - my professional therapy dog. Winston is a one-year-old Goldendoodle, and he and I have been certified as a Pet Therapy Team through Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD). Winston has also been certified by the American Kennel Club as a Canine Good Citizen. Additionally, I am a Certified Animal-Assisted Intervention Specialist (C-AAIS) through the Association of Animal-Assisted Intervention Professionals (AAAIP).

Research findings suggest that school therapy dogs promote a positive school climate (Sloan-Oberdier, 2018). These programs are used to promote psychological well-being in students (Zents et al., 2017). Therapy dogs serve as a secure base and an internal working model (Zilcha-Mano et al., 2011), providing a new, safe place to explore painful thoughts and emotions. Research studies also support the notion that therapy dogs bring positive regard, empathy, and congruence to the counseling process (Jenkins et al., 2014; Zents et al., 2017). Therapy dogs create conditions for school counselors to enhance therapeutic rapport and promote positive outcomes (Jenkins et al., 2014). Through the effects of human-animal interaction on children's motivation, engagement, self-regulation, and social interactions (Gee et al., 2017), academic outcomes may also improve. As a school counselor, I will be working with students on these skills, while partnering with Winston. Participation in activities/interventions are strictly voluntary. If your student has any aversions or allergies that you would like to bring to my attention, please do not hesitate to contact me by email.

Dr. Carmen Larson, C-AAIS
7th Grade School Counselor
Sarasota Middle School
carmen.larson@sarasotacountyschools.net

References

- Gee, N. R., Griffin, J. A., & McCardle, P. (2017). Human-animal interaction research in school settings: Current knowledge and future directions. *AERA Open*, 3(3), 1-9.
- Jenkins, C. D., Laux, J. M., Ritchie, M. H., & Tucker-Gail, K. (2014). Animal-assisted therapy and Roger's core components among middle school students receiving counseling services: A descriptive study. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 9(2), 174-187.
- Sloan-Oberdier, S. M. (2018). Working alongside a therapy dog: A phenomenological study of school counselor's experiences (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation).
- Zents, C. E., Fisk, A. K., & Lauback, C. W. (2017). Paws for intervention: Perceptions about the use of dogs in schools. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 12(1), 82-98.
- Zilcha-Mano, S., Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2011). Pet in the therapy room: An attachment perspective on animal-assisted therapy. *Attachment and Human Development*, 13(6), 541-561.

Students Advertise Novels

This week in Dr. Segreto's and Mrs. Joiner's classes, students learned about and then applied their knowledge of rhetorical appeals and logical fallacies. They then worked to create posters and commercials that used these appeals and fallacies to advertise their independent reading novels. This was a great activity to round out 2023!





Sarasota STEM MOSI After-school Club Poster (002).pdf

[Download](#)

355.3 KB

PSAT 8.9 Saturday, March 23, 2024 -- Register by Wed Jan 17, 2024.pdf

[Download](#)

202.0 KB



Jennifer Nzeza

Jennifer is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

