



# REPORT TO THE PARENTS

## School Improvement Council

### The SMS School Improvement Council

#### Elected Members:

Kati McFadden, Chair, Parent  
 Jessica Peebles, Secretary, Parent  
 Katie Shepard, Parent  
 Casey Espich, Teacher  
 Sarah Rubenstein, Teacher

#### Ex-Officio Members:

Erica Smith, PTO President  
 Kate Brunnelson, NAMI  
 Monica Jones, Teacher of the Year  
 Leigh Reynolds, Oakland Baptist Church  
 Jacqueline Persinski, Principal  
 Brian Hollingsworth, Assistant Principal  
 Gwendolyn Lindsey, Assistant Principal  
 Beau Modia, Assistant Principal

#### *Purpose of the Report*

*"This Report is issued by the Sullivan School Improvement Council in accordance with South Carolina law to share information on the school's progress in meeting various goals and objectives, the work of the SIC, and other accomplishments during the school year." For more information, you may view Sullivan's "S.C. School Report Card" for the previous school year online at [www.ed.sc.gov](http://www.ed.sc.gov).*



## A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Sullivan Middle School's vision is to create a vibrant school culture that fosters academic excellence in a safe and inclusive environment; we strive for all of our students to feel a sense of belonging, engagement and success. We accomplish this through providing inquiry-based, high-quality lessons that are designed based on the International Baccalaureate standards, and our Dual Language Immersion program enables our students to develop proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing skills in either French or Spanish.

As an IB World School, we believe in providing a high-quality education in a safe and inclusive learning environment by acknowledging and embracing students' diverse needs, learning styles, and strengths. We create learning experiences where students can practice and the IB Learner Profile by being inquirers, balanced, principled, knowledgeable, risk takers, communicators, open minded, caring, and reflective; and we celebrate those students and staff who embody the characteristics in monthly spotlight celebrations.

Sullivan Middle School's faculty and staff are enthusiastic about teaching and learning, and we know that through collaborating as a team of faculty, students, parents, and community members that Sullivan Middle School will facilitate academic growth in students and their global mindedness.

Throughout 2024-2025, Sullivan focused on three main goals to help our students thrive. These goals align with the Rock Hill School District's Strategic Plan. The first goal centered on maintaining the safety of the learning environment which allowed our students to free themselves from worry and to focus on academic endeavors. Second, our teachers and staff collaborated in Professional Learning Communities to create learning experiences that are data informed and designed to engage and grow students academically. Our third goal focused on growing our school and community relationships and creating lifelong partnerships with stakeholders that allow us to academically, socially, and emotionally support our students. Sullivan Middle School teachers and staff remain committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and academically challenging learning environment where all students feel pride and achieve success.

Jacqueline Persinski, Ed.D Principal

The School Improvement Council focused on monitoring and supporting two of Sullivan Middle School's goals: Climate and Achievement & Growth. Climate was divided into three areas: students, parents and teachers. Achievement and Growth was measured by MAP growth & SCReady performance.

## GOAL ONE: CLIMATE STUDENT CLIMATE

This school year, the administration and leadership team were proactive in expanding on the climate initiatives launched during 2023–2024 by analyzing existing efforts and developing new opportunities to increase student participation and foster a stronger sense of community. For example, Carlo Dawson, Dean of Student Leadership, expanded the Kappa League by adding new participants and launched a new mentoring and leadership group for female students called LeadHers. Both groups focused on developing personal leadership skills while encouraging students to give back through community service. These initiatives built upon existing clubs such as Ambassadors, Student Council, Junior Civitans, and Beta Club.

Additionally, through the Leader in Me initiative, a new student action team was formed to expand leadership opportunities as part of the Student LightHouse Team, which was established in April 2025. Several school-based action teams aligned with student interests were also created under this program.





Social activities were carefully planned and organized into a yearly social calendar for parents, which was hyperlinked in the weekly parent newsletter. Events included the inaugural PTO Dodgeball Fundraiser, the Second Annual Neon Dance, and both Fall and Spring pep rallies. Cultural events and assemblies took place throughout the year as well, including Hispanic Heritage Week, the Francophone Assembly, and the Black History Program. The Rock Hill Symphony Orchestra performed for Sullivan students, and Kevin Atlas visited to share a motivational message intended to inspire the student body. The Visual and Performing Arts departments showcased student talent during the December and April Night of the Arts events.



To showcase students' academic accomplishments and engage the community Parent Nights were held in October, January and March. In October, community partners participated by sharing information with parents. The January event focused on showcasing student work. In March, the focus was 8th graders sharing their IB projects.



These activities built upon those established in 2023/2024, offering more opportunities for students to come together and become a part of the Falcon Community.

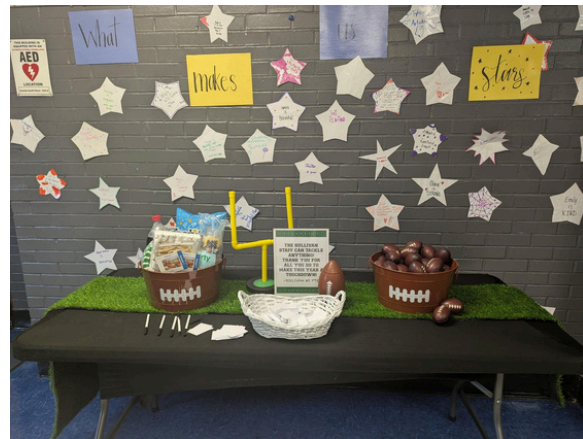
## PARENT CLIMATE

In October, the School Improvement Council launched a program called "Follow a Falcon," inviting parents and community members to shadow teachers or staff members at Sullivan Middle School. Twelve participants took part in the initiative and described it as an eye-opening experience that provided valuable insight into life inside the classroom. Often, parents don't receive detailed answers from their children about what is happening at school or how they are learning, and today's middle school experience differs significantly from what many adults remember. This program offered an opportunity to better understand the classroom environment, empowering participants to support both teachers and students in ways that truly benefit the school.



# TEACHER CLIMATE

This year, the SIC implemented initiatives to strengthen faculty relationships and enhance the school culture. Monthly staff socials were introduced to encourage rapport and fellowship among colleagues. The PTO contributed monthly by providing themed treats, stocking the break room, and organizing lunches such as Soup-er Bowl, "Dia de los Muertos" taco bar, "Lucky to Have You" potato bar. Specific seating at PTO events provided more chances for faculty and staff to interact and engage with one another.



The Sullivan administration organized an annual holiday luncheon, which was attended by two school board members. Themed weeks were created based on teachers' ideas, including an "Underground Teacher Spirit Week" and themed holiday dress days. Other spirit initiatives, such as "Who Has the Grinch" and "Got Snow?" were also introduced to further promote school spirit.



Boxes were placed in the guidance office, allowing faculty to share “shout outs” with one another and provide anonymous feedback to the administration. Department chairs were asked to suggest ways to conduct surveys and CIP rubrics, and these suggestions were implemented this Spring. Additionally, faculty were invited to participate in the final two 30-day District Continuous Improvement Process meetings, offering opportunities for transparency and leadership. (Sullivan was the first school to invite teacher leaders to these meetings!)

## **GOAL 2: ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH**

Although the South Carolina state report card rated Sullivan’s English-Language Arts and Math academic achievement as “average” in 2023/2024, Sullivan’s goal is to elevate student performance above the state average.

To achieve this, the school implemented a variety of strategies aimed at boosting academic achievement, including:

- 1) Enhancing ELA skills throughout core content by assigning non-fiction reading via NewsELA in Science and Social Studies
- 2) Creating individualized student skill plans through IXL
- 3) Assigning math homework via IXL and/or science and ELA and awarding weekly incentives
- 4) Completing goal-setting exercises with each student
- 5) Focusing on remediation and acceleration during Tiered Enrichment/RTI
- 6) Offering a year-long tutoring program
- 7) Celebrating academic growth based on MAP scores

Based on December testing, several students met their MAT and AVT mid-year goals: 159 met MAT in Math/99 AVT; 189 met MAT in ELA/142 AVT. AVT represented a full year of expanded growth.

Through these collaborative efforts, Sullivan aims to increase academic achievement and growth for all students by May. Similar to the state’s goals, the target is to have at least 75% of students achieve “Met” status within the next four years.

# Noteable Extracurricular Activities

LeadHers

Ambassadors

Yearbook

Kappa League

Art Club

Culture Club

Student Council

Falcon Focus

Beta Club

Junior Scholars

Battle of the Books

Junior Civitans

French is Fun Club

Beta Club

Academic Challenge Team

National Junior French Honor Society

## SMS Welcomes Flag Football!

Every school district in York County received a grant from the Carolina Panthers to fund a county-wide girls flag football league. This league provided Sullivan girls with an additional athletic outlet and one that is rapidly expanding across the country! This grant paid for nearly all of the equipment, jerseys, and more as SMS began its inaugural season.



## SMS Sports

Basketball

Cheer

Football

Softball

Step Team

Track & Field

Volleyball

Wrestling

## @ the high schools

Baseball

Cross Country

Golf

Swim

Tennis





This year marks the 3rd annual Night of the Arts, a celebration of student creativity and the importance of the arts in education. Last year, through a successful partnership with the PTO, the Visual and Performing Arts department expanded the event to include a silent auction and sponsorships, raising \$5,000 to support its programs.



Sullivan Middle School hosted its first annual Going Global International Festival. The Cultural Celebration Festival was a vibrant showcase of the diverse backgrounds and talents within our school community. Attendees enjoyed live music and dance performances, theater plays by students, and engaging art and enrichment presentations. Interactive games and cultural exhibits provided hands-on experiences, while international food trucks offered a taste of global cuisine. This event successfully fostered intercultural awareness and brought together students, staff, and families for an afternoon of learning and celebration.



### Going Global: International Cultural Exchange Festival

Saturday, November 2, 2024  
2:00 - 5:30 PM | Sullivan Middle School

Food Trucks | Live Entertainment | Student Showcases | Games | Music | Activities | Fun!  
All are welcome!





# Awards

National History Day Regional Winners

Feria/Foire Winthrop University Foreign Language Competition

District Athletic Academics Award 2024

Teacher's Choice Art Show Winners



## Community Partnerships

- Oakland Baptist Church
- NAMI
- The Foundation – Rock Hill Schools
- Winthrop University
- Publix
- Covenant Presbyterian Church
- ValuTeachers
- Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity
- The Joint-Dr. Joseph Blanchard
- Penn Station Subs
- York County Library
- Rock Hill Police Department



## Outstanding Features and Programs

- MYP-International Baccalaureate Program
- Spanish Dual Language Immersion Program
- French Dual Language Immersion Program
- Spanish and French language classes non-DLI
- Winthrop University Professional Development Partner School
- Leader in Me
- Various mentoring and community service programs





## LOOKING FORWARD

Expansion of Leader in Me in Classroom and Student Lessons  
Lighthouse Committee  
Going Global's second year  
Continuing Night of the Arts  
Busing the tutoring program  
Continuing Winthrop partnership  
Expanding research projects in all 3 grades  
Apply for Palmetto's Finest and PLC Model Schools  
Building on the partnership with Kappa League advisors  
Focused individual student goal-setting

