

Southwest Middle School Career Academy

Home of the Roadrunners

1 Roadrunner Drive
Gastonia, NC 28052
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<https://www.gaston.k12.nc.us/southwest>

**Ms. Melissa Knick,
Principal**

Assistant Principals

Mrs. Antina Avery

Mrs. Stephanie Crump

Mrs. Karen Smith



MORE THAN JUST A SCHOOL

- Multiple winners at the Gaston County Through An Artist Eyes Art Show.
- **3rd Place:** Southwest Math Elite team won 3rd place in the County Championship.
- **1st Place, 2nd Place, and 3rd Place Awards:** Our Technology Students Association (TSA) won 1st place in Coding in the Regional Competition. Students finished 2nd place in the Tech Bowl; 3rd place in Data Science & Analytics in the State competition. Only middle school in the county with an active TSA Club (NC Technology Student Association).
- SWMS is home to the county's ONLY Exploring Family and Consumer Sciences pathway. No other middle school offers the full range of family and consumer sciences mini-courses.
- **National Beta School of Merit-** Southwest is a National Beta School of Merit.
- SUPERIOR Ratings: Southwest Band AND Chorus received **EXCELLENT** and **SUPERIOR** ratings at **State Festivals and the Carowinds Festival of Music**. Participation in Gaston All-County Honors Band & Limestone University Tri-State Honors Band Clinic. Chorus students selected for All County Honor Choir, Wingate Festival and Solo & Small Ensemble.
- **Football County Champions:** 5 Peat County Champions 2018-2023
- **Cheerleaders:** finished 3rd Place in the Cheerleading Showcase 23/24 School Year
- **Wrestling Champions:** 1 County Champion 23/24 School Year



Gaston County Schools

Career Academy

It's never too early for students to begin thinking about the future. At the middle school level, the Career Academy makes it possible for students to explore a variety of career fields so they can get an idea of the job opportunities that await once they graduate from high school and college.

At Southwest, students focus on career exploration in the areas of family and human services (foods, health, and public service) and business and information technology. Through the Career Academy, students learn that their future (regardless of which career they select) will be influenced by technology and involve service to others.

This program provides a pathway for students to participate in the Career Academy at Hunter Huss High School.

School Leadership

Principal: Melissa Knick
mdknick@gaston.k12.nc.us

Assistant Principal (6th Grade):
Stephanie Crump
slcrump@gaston.k12.nc.us

Assistant Principal (7th Grade):
Karen Smith
kesmith@gaston.k12.nc.us

Assistant Principal (8th Grade):
Antina Avery
aaavery@gaston.k12.nc.us

Principal Fellow
Judith Ayala
jlayala@gaston.k12.nc.us

Bell Schedule

8:30-10:05
1st core and homeroom

10:05-11:30
2nd core
(6th grade electives)

11:30-1:40
3rd core
(7th grade electives)

1:45-3:30
4th core
(8th grade electives).

Student Services: Our SW Community is fortunate to have a Support Team of individuals with a heart for the SW students and families. We are here to support our students, never hesitate to reach out.

Counselors:

6th Grade -Nicola Withers nrwithers@gaston.k12.nc.us
7th Grade -Logan Dean ladean@gaston.k12.nc.us
8th Grade -Lisa Brooks lhbrooks@gaston.k12.nc.us

School Nurse:

Students are not allowed to carry medicine with them. Students must give medication and a note from a parent with instructions **directly** to the school nurse upon arrival at school. All medications should be in the original container. Please contact the Nurse with any questions.

Social Worker:

LaTonya Burgess lpburgess@gaston.k12.nc.us

Academics

The Gaston County Schools Grading Scale is:

A: 100-90

B: 89-80

C: 79-70

D: 69-60

F: 59-Below

Report Card Distribution Dates

Parent-Teacher Conferences are October 10 and March 13 from 1:30-7:00

First 9 weeks - October 17, 2024

Second 9 weeks - January 9, 2025

Third 9 weeks - March 20, 2025

Fourth 9 weeks- Mailed at the end of the school year

PowerSchool: Students and parents have access to PowerSchool to check students' grades and attendance. Parents can stay up to date on grades through PowerSchool. Parents can request access to PowerSchool by calling the front office.

Canvas: Students will use Canvas as their learning management system. Parents can be added to their student's account as an observer. Parents can see student assignments and due dates on Canvas.

Attendance

ABSENCES

Great student attendance goes hand-in-hand with great academics; attending school is critical to your child's success. To be considered for an excused absence, within 3 days of your return from an absence, bring a note for the homeroom teacher stating the following: your name, date, days of absence, reason for absence, and parent/guardian signature. Students accumulating **more than 12 absences** during the school year will be referred to the retention/promotion committee to make a determination regarding promotion or retention.

Make-up work- Students will have 3 days to make arrangements regarding their assignments when returning from an absence. **Work scheduled prior to absences is due the day the student returns. Any absence believed to be an educational opportunity must be approved in advance by the principal.**

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Students may begin entering the school at 8:00. Students are able to eat breakfast until 8:15 am. Students will grab breakfast and take it directly to class.

Tardy Bell = 8:30 am. Students are late to class if they are not in the classroom when class begins. Always aim to be at school 10-15 minutes early for traffic. Students who accumulate excessive unexcused tardies and/or are excessively late to class are subject to disciplinary consequences.

Early check-out ends at **2:45 pm**. Parent photo identification is required for early checkout.

SAFETY

All students are subject to metal detection/searches each day. To assist with this process, all students will be **required to carry clear backpacks** this school year. Athletic bags and band instruments will be placed in a secure location upon entry to school.

Cafeteria

The School Nutrition Program operated by Gaston County Schools will provide ALL students enrolled at Southwest Middle School free breakfast and lunch for the 2024-2025 school year.

Checks, Cash, or Money Orders can be accepted in the school cafeterias.

Parents/Guardians may utilize Family Portal Link <https://lingconnect.com> to pay with their credit or debit card.

Electronics

Cell phones: Students are permitted to possess wireless communication devices at school. However, the devices are to be turned off, not used, displayed or visible during the instructional day.

Airpods/Bluetooth Devices: No airpods or bluetooth devices allowed. Only plug in headphones for chromebooks allowed.

Only a parent/guardian can pick up a confiscated cell phone. Other electronic devices are to be left at home.

RESPONSIBLE USE AGREEMENT FOR

COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE: All students will be required to sign a Responsible Use Policy and will not be issued a chromebook until it is signed and returned.

Behavior Expectations

Students are expected to follow the rules, expectations, and procedures of Southwest Middle School and Gaston County Schools. Students who choose to follow these expectations and policies will be rewarded for making good behavior choices. Rewards may include special acknowledgments, classroom privileges, or invitations to special events. Students who choose not to follow these expectations and policies will receive consequences, such as loss of classroom or school privileges, behavior lab, bus suspension, in school suspension, out of school suspension, or alternative placement.

Buses

Bus transportation is provided to middle school students living at least a mile from SWMS. Student safety is a primary concern in all bus procedures. Riding the bus is a privilege not a right. All district and school rules are in effect on the school bus. These are provided for students at enrollment in their beginning of the year paperwork and can be found in the Gaston County Schools Student Information Guide. Students will lose bus privileges if their conduct endangers others or distracts the driver. Bus stop information can be received by calling the front office.

End-of-Grade (EOG) Tests and N.C. Check-ins:

During the school year, students will participate in several assessments required by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction and Gaston County Schools. Dates of testing will be shared through a ParentLink message and on our school Facebook page.

DRESS CODE

As stated in the Gaston County Schools Code of Conduct: *The appearance of any young person is primarily the responsibility of that individual and his/her parents. Each student is expected to maintain an appearance that is neither distracting to other students nor disruptive to the educational environment or the safe and healthy climate of schools.*

Students shall not wear:

Bandannas, hair picks, combs, wide headbands, head scarves, sunglasses in the buildings, masks, distracting wigs, clothing that displays sexually explicit words/drawings, profanity, alcohol, drugs, or gang symbols, clothing that exposes undergarments, clothing with large rips or tears that expose skin from the upper chest to mid-thigh, low cut tops that expose student's cleavage, pajamas, or bedroom shoes. Leggings are not the same as pants or shorts. Therefore, students who wear leggings must wear a shirt that covers all of their backside. **Blankets** are not permitted to be carried around during the school day. **Only clear water bottles may be carried** - No Yetis, Stanley Cups, etc..

Students who choose not to follow the dress code will be allowed to call home for appropriate clothing. Students will be assigned to the Redirect Room until appropriate clothing is brought to school.

ATHLETICS:

Athletic Director: Markeith Redd

maredd@gaston.k12.nc.us

All students may try out for the following teams: softball, cheerleading, golf, basketball (girls and boys), soccer (girls and boys), track (girls and boys), volleyball, football, wrestling, and baseball, **with the exception of** sixth-grade students, who are not permitted to try out for football.

FALL SPORTS	WINTER SPORTS	SPRING SPORTS
Football Softball Golf Volleyball (late Fall) Wrestling (late Fall) Boys Soccer (late Fall)	Boys Basketball Girls Basketball	Baseball Girls Soccer Track
Cheerleading		

Sports Physicals and other important information must be uploaded into Dragonfly to participate.

<https://max.dragonflyathletics.com/maxweb/max-cover/login>

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

- Be a resident/GCS approved transfer student for SWMS AND cannot be 15 years old on or before October 16 of the current school year.
- A student must pass all but one of their courses in the previous semester. 6th graders are automatically eligible during the fall semester of 6th grade. Students can have no more than 13 absences in a semester.
- All athletes are required to have a NCHSAA physical form completed by a doctor before they can try out or participate in any capacity. A physical is good for 395 days. All physicals must be on the NCHSAA form, which can be obtained on the GCS website or from the front office.
- **Meet behavioral and academic expectations of the athletic department and individual teams.**

Student Name_____

Homeroom Teacher_____

By signing this document, you are acknowledging that you have read and agree to follow the Southwest Middle School Student Handbook.

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date