August 2026

Welcome Back!

Southern Cayuga Central School District
Southern Cayuga Jr/Sr High School

SCHS mission statement: The mission of Southern Cayuga Jr/Sr High School is to create an environment that is conducive to personal and academic excellence. This will be accomplished by creating a school community that embodies the principles of being: **Safe, Respectful, Responsible, and Kind.**

High School Newsletter

http://www.southerncayuga.org/648

Dear Students and Families,

On behalf of the Jr./Sr. High School staff, welcome to the 2026–27 school year! We are excited to welcome students back on **Tuesday, September 8, 2026**, and look forward to another successful year of learning, growth, and achievement. This year, Mr. Gregg will continue serving as our Athletic Director while also assuming the role of Dean of Students. We are also pleased to welcome a few new staff members to the Jr/Sr High School. A complete staff directory is included on the following page.

A few announcements for the upcoming school year…

2026–27 Instructional Focus

- Strong reading, writing, and critical thinking skills
- Increased opportunities for handwriting and cursive writing
- Reduced reliance on screen time when appropriate
- Hands-on, project-based, and real-world learning experiences
- College, career, and workforce readiness

These priorities reflect our commitment to developing independent thinkers, effective communicators, and lifelong learners.

Student School Visitation Day
Wednesday, September 2 • 2:00–4:00 PM
Students and families are invited to visit the Jr./Sr. High School to: Pick up any revised student schedules, Locate classrooms and lockers, bring in any school supplies. This visit is especially encouraged for students who are new to the Jr./Sr. High School.

First Day of School
Tuesday, September 8, 2026: **Grades 7–8:** Report to Advisory from 7:40–8:20 a.m.
Grades 9–12: Report directly to 1st Period at 7:45 a.m.
During the first week of school, students will receive: Updated class schedule. Student agenda/planner, Starter school supplies (folders, spiral notebook, pen, pencil), Mesh school bag
Students will also complete: Code of Conduct Acknowledgment & Chromebook Use Agreement

Lockers & Backpacks
Each student will be assigned a hallway locker with a combination lock. Lockers should remain locked throughout the school day. For safety and security reasons, students may carry only a **mesh or clear bag** during the school day. Standard backpacks must be stored in student lockers.
In addition, all Jr/Sr High School students will change for Physical Education classes and will receive a locker room locker and lock during the first week of school.

Student Arrival & Dismissal
Student Drop-off: 7:30–7:40 a.m.
School Begins: Grades 7–8: 7:40 a.m. & Grades 9–12: 7:45 a.m.
Dismissal (Grades 7–12): 2:13 p.m.
Bus pick-up times will be communicated by the Transportation Department before the start of school.

School Supplies
A list of recommended supplies is available on the district website. Students will receive starter school supplies on the first day of school.

Communication Tool
SCCS will be transitioning from SchoolMessenger to **ParentSquare** as our primary school-to-home communication platform. ParentSquare https://www.parentsquare.com/, will be used to share important district and school announcements, reminders, and other communications with families and staff. More information on this change will be forthcoming.

We wish all of our students and families a successful and rewarding 2026-27 school year. Together, we will continue to build a culture of learning, respect, and excellence.

Take care. Go Falcons!

Luke Carnicelli, Principal
Southern Cayuga Jr/Sr High School

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Our Mission…

Our mission statement reads… *The mission of Southern Cayuga Jr/Sr High School is to create an environment that is conducive to personal and academic excellence. This will be accomplished by creating a school community that embodies the principles of being:* **Safe**, **Respectful**, **Responsible**, *and* **Kind.** We hope that every student strives for their best. On behalf of the staff at the Jr/Sr High School, we look forward to a year filled with opportunity and success.

Our 2026-27 School Motto: **'Dream Big. Accept Challenges. Achieve Success.'**

We have worked diligently to ensure the best start to the new school year. Always know that you are welcome to email or call the High School or Guidance Office with any questions or concerns. Also, a quick reminder, you can find information and announcements on the Jr/Sr High School homepage **www.southerncayuga.org/648.**

Staff Contact Information (Grades 7-12)

You may leave a voicemail message for a teacher at 315. 364.7111 or email (LastNameFirstInitial@southerncayuga.org). **Bold denotes new staff member.**

Principal
Luke Carnicelli

Dean of Students & Athletic Director
Colton Gregg

Social Studies
Christopher Zappolo
George Murphy
Steve Baumes
Mike VanDoren (Jr HS)

English
Marie Lakie
Breanna Soutar (Jr & Sr HS)
Bill Zimpfer
Meghan Picciano (Jr HS)

Mathematics
Francis (CJ) Calarco
Maggie Van Laere
Emma Koch
Colton Gregg (Jr HS)
Mary Beth Howell (Jr HS)

Science
Michele Shaw
Caitlin Rejman
Penny Paolo
Simone Lanning (Jr HS)

Spanish/ENL
Andrea Gregg (Jr & Sr HS)
Becky Davis
Kathy Perez
Sarah Allen (Jr & Sr HS)

Special Education
Steve Wasileski
Jamie Corey
Amy Bastian (Jr HS)

Music & Art
Jennifer Diana (Chorus)
Lily Vernon (Band)
Tim Amory (Art)
Peter Bakija (Art)

PE/Heath
Greg Otis (Jr & Sr HS)
Danielle Collier (Jr & Sr HS)

AgriScience
Alyssa Roorda
STEM
Heather Snyder (Jr & Sr HS)
Technology
Cami Myers

School Counselors
Lisa Carnicelli (Sr HS)
Nate Van Hall (Jr HS)
TBA (Social Worker/Counselor)

Support Staff
Joanne Cartner (Main Office/Athletics Secretary)
Kim Bergen (Guidance Office Secretary)
Anne Reynolds (Nurse)
TBD (Special Patrol Officer)
Brett Jillson (TA)
Lorna Butts (Sr HS Teacher Aide)
Sarah Pigula (Jr HS Teacher Aide)
Laurie Waldron (Library TA)
Molly Griffin (Librarian)

Sr HS Bell Schedule

Grade 9-12 Schedule	Period 1	HR	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5
Student Arrival 7:30-7:44	7:45-8:29	8:29-8:35	8:38-9:19	9:22-10:04	10:07-10:49	10:52-11:32
	Period 6A	Lunch 11/12	Period 6B	Lunch 9/10	Period 7	Period 8
	11:35-12:15	11:32-12:02	12:05-12:45	12:15-12:45	12:48-1:29	1:32-2:13

Jr HS Bell Schedule

Grade 7 & 8 Schedule	Advisory	Block 1	Block 2	
Student Arrival 7:30-7:39	7:40-7:53	7:55-9:19	9:22-10:49	
	Lunch 7/8	Block 3	Period 7	Period 8
	10:49-11:19	11:22-12:45	12:48-1:29	1:32-2:13

Advisory

Advisory will be scheduled for each student in grades 7 & 8 every day. The purpose behind creating this time is for faculty to take attendance, for students to prepare for the demands of the day, and visit teachers if they were absent to gather their work.

What is Project-Based Learning?

Project-based learning (PBL) is an instructional model that involves students in investigations of 'real-life' problems that culminate in authentic products. Projects that make for stronger classroom learning opportunities can vary widely in subject matter and scope and can be delivered at a wide range of grade levels. The courses offered in Jr High School give students initial experiences that will help guide their elective course decisions in Sr High School.

Project-Based Courses in 7th & 8th grade
Grade 7 Explorations Courses… AgriScience, Art, Writing Lab, Personal Finance/Money Skills
Grade 8 Explorations Courses… Robotics/Programming/STEM, Studio Art

Dress Code

As stated on page 16-17 of the student handbook. We believe that appropriate attire is important in developing worthwhile attitudes about the importance of school. Teachers and all other personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting. Students will wear clothing and carry possessions that are appropriate for the school atmosphere.
Backpacks… It is suggested that students purchase a mesh or see-through backpack, especially if they would like to carry items throughout the school day. A limited number of mesh bags will be available for students to use throughout the school year. Small purses/handbags may also be carried for personal items only. Normal type backpacks are not allowed during the school day for safety precautions. However, a normal backpack may be carried to and from school/ bus to the student's locker and left in the locker until the end of the day. Students are encouraged to use their locker throughout the school day to store their books/belongings and to keep their items secure.

School Safety Protocols

During the school year we will conduct a series of fire and lockdown drills in accordance with NYS school procedures. In addition, should there be an emergency, please review the *SCCS Safety Guide* link found under the 2026-27 Information list on the Jr/Sr HS website: **www.southerncayuga.org/648**

In addition, the SCCS School Safety Plan is located… **www.southerncayuga.org/930**

NYS & SCCS Diploma Requirements

There are changing diploma requirements in NYS, however most students in grades 9-12 will pass five Regents exams with a 65+ (one math, one science, English, global studies, and US history) to attain a *Regents* diploma. Students may also attain an *Advanced Regents* Diploma (65+ on 8 Regents exams: three math, two science, English, global studies, and US history) Also, at this time, all SCCS students are required to attain 26 HS credits to graduate. For more information on upcoming NYS graduation changes, please reference **https://www.nysed.gov/ny-inspires.**

SC Jr/Sr HS Student Planner & Code of Conduct

This year, same as last, we ask students to have their planner with them at all times except when at lunch. A planner will be provided to each student at no charge. Additional planners will be available to students for $1.00 each. We believe that students should keep track of their busy schedule, assignments, events, and goals throughout the year. The planner is an excellent organizational tool that will assist with students' daily demands in and outside the classroom and will be used for hall and classroom passes. Included in the planner is the SCCS code of conduct as well as all the policies and expectations at SC Jr/Sr HS. I ask that you review this document with your child. A copy of the 2026-27 handbook can be found on the Jr/Sr high school webpage: **http://www.southerncayuga.org/648**.

In addition, a copy of the SCCS Code of Conduct may be found using the following link: **https://www.southerncayuga.org/711**

NYS Dignity Act (www.nysed.gov)

The Dignity Act was signed into law on September 13, 2010 and took effect on July 1, 2012. **New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (The Dignity Act) seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function.**

One of the leading causes of bullying and harassment in school is the use of social media. Due to the Dignity Act law, we at Southern Cayuga Jr/Sr High School will be especially strict with any social media issue that may lead to a disruption in any students' school day.

For additional information on DASA please visit: **https://www.southerncayuga.org/820**

Student Drivers

Attention all Southern Cayuga student drivers

All student drivers must have their vehicle registered through the main office with a parking sticker on the vehicle. All vehicles must be registered by September 18, 2026 with Ms. Cartner. Full details outlining the policy and procedure for student drivers is included within the student handbook. Students need to arrive at their designated arrival time and parking location.

Please note: All student's vehicles must be parked in the front lot to the left of the Planetarium as you enter the drive off of Route 34B. Failure to comply with all driving procedures will result in a loss of driving privileges. Students should review page 21-22 in the student handbook for driving regulations. Our school campus speed limit is 10mph.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

Student/family owned cell phones/electronic devices are not allowed during the school day (7:40am-2:13pm) and should be locked in a student's hall locker if brought to school. This applies to student-owned smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, and any device capable of connecting to the internet. It does not apply to devices not capable of internet access or those provided by the school district or BOCES. School Day Definition: Applies during all instructional and non-instructional times, including: Homeroom, Lunch, Recess, Study halls, Hallway passing time. School Grounds Definition: Applies to all areas within the property boundaries of SCCS during the school day.

Students who use their phones during school hours are subject to disciplinary actions including confiscation of the phone to In School Suspension.

Consequence Progression: 1st offense: Collect phone, return to student at the end of the day; 2nd offense: collect phone, return to parent; 3rd offense: Collect phone, return to parent, ISS; 4th offense: Phone must be dropped off in the main office for the remainder of the school year, parent pick up the phone each day, multiple ISS days. *Note: If a student fails to turn the phone over to a staff member, this issue is insubordination and the student will be subject to ISS or OSS.*

Southern Cayuga Jr/Sr High School does not restrict students on the basis of race/ethnicity, religion, physical handicap subject to medical eligibility, and gender. This statement will apply to all academic and extracurricular activities.