

# PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

*St. Michael the Archangel High School*



## MISSION STATEMENT

*Formed in Catholic tradition, the mission of St. Michael High School is to foster the spiritual, intellectual, and personal development of young people as committed disciples of Christ.*

**December 2025**

### FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

*As we enter December, I want to begin by expressing gratitude for the many blessings we have experienced this semester. A highlight of this year has been the community that has surrounded our Volleyball Team as they extended their season all the way to the State Championship, finishing with an incredible 39-3 record. We could not be prouder of their effort and example. Join us in celebrating them, along with our Dance Team, at the Jones Creek Christmas Parade on December 14.*

*Advent begins on November 30, calling us to slow down and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. It is a wonderful time to reflect on how God continues to work through our students, faculty, and families. This month, we recognize several individuals who have embodied that spirit. Congratulations to Jordan Fox, our Student of the Year, and to Mrs. Michelle Smith, our Distinguished Educator of the Year, who has blessed our students with seven years of teaching here at St. Michael. We also honor Mrs. Julie Lechich as our Administrator of the Year for her twenty-six years in Catholic education, twenty-three at SMHS, and tireless work in advancing our school. Finally, we are proud to announce Mr. Jeff Vaccaro, Class of 2015, as our Alumni of the Year. He is a true Warrior who continues to give back through his witness and service.*

*We are also looking ahead to exciting improvements on campus. We recently shared with students our plans to begin transforming the cafeteria into a more student-friendly union space with comfortable seating and gathering areas. Our No Shave/Sweatpants Week fundraiser and iGiveCatholic on December 2 will help launch this project. We have several matching gifts planned with the grade levels competing. Make sure*

*to dedicate donations*

*to your student and*

*their respective grade level. Every donation makes a difference, and we invite everyone to join in supporting this effort. Please spread the word and help us improve your child's experience.*

*December is full of opportunities to celebrate the season together:*

- **Dec 6:** Choir Concert at MBS, this new event will include accompanist Michael McDowell for a unique experience
- **Dec 7:** Cookies with Santa and the Band Christmas Concert on campus
- **Dec 11:** SWORD Christmas Concert
- **Dec 12:** Holly Volleyball followed by "Film on the Field," featuring Elf

*Midterms will take place December 16-19, and students should already have their study guides. Please encourage them to begin preparing now. Finally, Christmas Holidays will be from December 22 through January 2, with a late start when we return on January 5.*

*I am also excited to announce that St. Michael will be hosting a full scale crisis exercise here on campus on January 2. Campus will be closed that morning as we will be running through emergency response along with our first responder and law enforcement partners.*

*Thank you for all the ways you continue to support our mission and community. May this Advent and Christmas season bring peace, joy, and renewal to your families.*

*God Bless You and Go Warriors!*

*Mr. Jared Cavalier, Principal*

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT

*Hello Warrior families,*

*I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving break with loved ones and some downtime before the push for exams and Christmas break.*

*Advent is a period of waiting and preparation for the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and it is also the start of a new year for the Catholic Church. With 25 full days before Christmas this year, I hope you spend some time in silent prayer/meditation and slow down to reflect on the many blessings God has given you this past year. Spend some time in Eucharistic adoration, dive into an Advent prayer reflection book, or join us in the daily Advent reflections on Hallow. God hears us, so all we need to do is speak to Him.*

*I am blessed to work with such an incredible school community with supportive students and our dedicated faculty and staff who make SMHS feel like family. Our parents, grandparents, and community supporters allow us to minister to their children/grandchildren and employees on a daily basis, while our alumni continue to come home and invest in our mission and vision at SMHS.*

*As we move into 2026, we welcome a new freshman class of Warriors who desire a strong family atmosphere, excellent academics and extracurriculars, and a faith-based education to guide them in this world. St. Michael is on the rise because of families like you and the support that you give us. May we all strive together to remember the blessings God has given us and bestow the same blessing of a faith-based education at SMHS to others in our community.*

*May the Christ-light shine in your homes this Advent season, and may 2026 be a year of continued blessings and good graces to all Warriors and their families.*

*Have a Holy Advent and Go Warriors!*

*Mr. Ryan Empson, President*

## UPCOMING DATES AT A GLANCE

- 1-5: No Shave/Sweatpants Week
- 2: iGiveCatholic Giving Day
- 5: Deadline for Half of Service Hours
- 6: Choir Concert at MBS
- 6: Advent Elevate Night
- 6: Incoming 8th Graders Placement Exam
- 7: Christmas Band Concert/Cookies with Santa
- 8-12: Wellness Week
- 8: Mass
- 10: Give Back Night - City Cafe'
- 11: SWORD Christmas Concert
- 12: Holly Volleyball/Film on the Field
- 12: Deadline to Update Grandparents' Information
- 12: Marble Slab on Campus
- 15: Christmas Sweater Day
- 15: Give Back Night - Canes on Market Street
- 16-19: Midterm Exams
- 19: No EBR Bus Service
- 29: Semester Grades posted to PlusPortals
- Dec 22-Jan 2: Christmas Holidays
- Jan 5: Students Return/Late Start

## *Alma Mater*

*All hail to you, St. Michael High,*

*The black and gray and red.*

*Our glory and our honor*

*To thee do we pledge.*

*Years will pass and roads divide;*

*Memories remain.*

*St. Michael, we proudly pledge*

*Our honor, our love, and fame.*



**ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL**  
DIOCESAN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL  
[www.smhsbr.org](http://www.smhsbr.org)

November 25, 2025

Dear Warrior Families:

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing you today to inform you of an important update regarding tuition and fees for the upcoming school year at St. Michael the Archangel High School. After careful consideration and discussion with the Advisory Board, our business office, and a thorough evaluation of the school's financial needs, as well as ongoing efforts to maintain the high standard of education and extracurricular opportunities that our students deserve, tuition for the 2026-2027 academic year will be increasing by approximately 3%.

This decision was not made lightly. Over the past several years, we have worked hard to maintain tuition at a level that is manageable for families while ensuring that our school can continue to offer an exceptional education, top-tier faculty, and a range of programs and services that support the academic, spiritual, and personal growth of our students.

The increase will help cover rising costs in several critical areas, including competitive faculty and staff salaries, maintenance and improvements to our facilities, expanding and enhancing our academic resources and technology, and our continued investment in extracurricular programs as well as student activities and services.

<b>Tuition:</b>	<b>\$11,460 for diploma track and \$16,275 for SWORD</b>
<b>Registration fee: (non-refundable)</b>	<b>\$450 returning students, \$550 <u>new</u> students</b>
<b>Technology fee: (non-refundable)</b>	<b>\$700</b>
<b>Multi-Student discount:</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Activity fee:</b>	<b>\$200</b>
<b>FACTS fee: (annual fee)</b>	<b>\$25 for annual and semi-annual tuition payments</b>
<b>FACTS fee: (annual fee)</b>	<b>\$55 for quarterly and monthly tuition payments</b>

We understand that any increase in tuition can be a challenge, and we want to assure you that we are committed to working with families to make this transition as smooth as possible. If you have concerns about the upcoming change or anticipate difficulty with the new tuition rate, please do not hesitate to reach out to our business office. We have various financial aid opportunities and payment plans available to assist those in need.

At St. Michael, we continue to be inspired by our mission to provide a Christ-centered education that prepares students not only for academic success, but also for a lifetime of service and leadership. We are grateful for the trust you place in our school community, and we remain dedicated to fulfilling the promise of a transformative, faith-based education for your child.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding. We look forward to another year of growth, learning, and faith at St. Michael the Archangel High School.

In Christ,

Ryan L. Empson  
President  
St. Michael the Archangel High School

### No Shave/Sweatpants Week

No Shave/Sweatpants Week is **December 1-5**. Students may still purchase a pass to participate for \$20.00. Cash will only be accepted during no shave/sweatpants week and can be paid for in the commons in the mornings during the week. Students may wear jeans or sweatpants purchased from the Warrior Store, any issued by SMHS, solid black, or solid gray with any SMHS spirit shirt. The funds raised will go toward campus improvements.

### Advent on Hallow

Students and families are invited to take part in the *Advent "Pray 25"* challenge on Hallow. It is filled with reflections, even some from celebrities. You can access it on Hallow or by clicking [here](#). There are also other Advent reflections and beautiful playlists! Advent marks a NEW liturgical year! Start your year with Jesus!



ST. MICHAEL HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS

## COOKIES WITH SANTA

DECEMBER 7, 2025

12:30-2PM

WEAR YOUR FESTIVE HOLIDAY ATTIRE AND  
JOIN US FOR A FUN AFTERNOON WITH SANTA

17521 Monitor Avenue  
Baton Rouge, LA 70817

### Christmas Band Concert

Save the date for St. Michael Annual Christmas Band Concert on **Sunday, December 7 at 2:00 PM**. This is your chance to see our Percussion Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, and Concert Band perform.

### Advent Elevate Night

Join us in the Cafeteria on **Saturday, December 6 at 6:00 PM** for an evening of prayer and fun as we reflect on the Advent Season! Register at the link for head count for food - <https://forms.gle/mtWfcqxisbLWvQGn7>

### Service Hours Deadline

**Friday, December 5** is the first deadline for Service Hours. Half of the total required hours are due for each student. If a student misses the **December 5** deadline, his/her second quarter Religion grade drops one point per day late, up to one letter grade. Those that have not completed the service hour requirement for the first semester will not be allowed to take their midterm exams in any of their classes. See the SMHS Student/Parent Handbook for details.

### Celebration of Mass

In celebration of the *Feast of the Immaculate Conception*, an all-school Mass will be held on **Monday, December 8 at 8:50 AM** in the St. Sebastian Gym. Parents are invited and must check in at the school office prior to the Mass start time. Students must wear their dress uniforms on Mass days.

### Wellness with the Counselors

The Counseling Department and the *Warrior Wellness Club* will be hosting **Wellness Week December 8-12**. There will be wellness activities throughout the week to prepare students for midterm exams, *including a visit from therapy dogs during all lunches on Monday, December 8, Wellness Bingo, and more!* To kick off the week, Jeremiah's Italian Ice truck will be on campus on Friday, December 5 during all lunch periods, cost is \$5.00, **cash only**. Students will receive an email from the Counseling Department with more information.

### Placement Exam

The school will administer the placement exam for admission to St. Michael High School for current eighth grade applicants on **Saturday, December 6 from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM**. *The Warrior Club will be selling spirit items from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.*



## Midterm Exam Information

Readiness for exams begins with daily preparation for class. A reminder that midterm exams count as **20% of the semester grade**. During exam time, it is essential that students get enough sleep and have healthy eating habits so they can do their very best on exams. Students are dismissed after their first exam if the second exam of the day is their lunch period. Those that have study hall or PE do not report for an exam during that period. The dismissal bell will ring each testing day at **11:25 AM**. *Teachers will be available in their classrooms from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM each day to help any student prepare for the next day's exams.* Students will be dismissed for the Christmas holidays at **11:25 AM on Friday, December 19**.

All tuition and fees must be current before midterm exams. Parents will be notified if a student is to remain home on exam days if accounts are not current. Delinquent payments made before exams must be paid by cash, cashier's check, or money order to be deemed received by SMHS so the student can take exams. If you have questions, please contact the SMHS Bookkeeper Mrs. Susan Thibodeaux at 225-753-9782, Ext. 25 or [sthibodeaux@smhsbr.org](mailto:sthibodeaux@smhsbr.org).

**EBR buses will NOT run Friday, December 19.** The SMHS shuttle bus will run all mornings and dismissals during exam week.

## Grades

First semester grades will be posted on PlusPortals by **Monday, December 29**.



## MIDTERM EXAM SCHEDULE

**Tuesday, December 16: 1<sup>st</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> hours**  
**Wednesday, December 17: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> hours**  
**Thursday, December 18: 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> hours**  
**Friday, December 19: 7<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> hours**

\*The first exam of each day will be from 7:14 AM to 9:10 AM;  
the second exam will be from 9:25 AM to 11:25 AM.

## Course Change Requests

Course change requests at the semester will only be considered for extenuating circumstances. Otherwise, students are expected to honor their commitments to their current classes. Students requesting a course change must first meet with their school

counselor to discuss their options. If the counselor believes the request has merit and is possible, students will be instructed to have their parents submit a letter requesting the change with rationale to Mrs. Julie Lechich, Assistant Principal of Academics. **All course change requests must be submitted by Monday, January 5.**

## COLLEGE INFORMATION FOR SENIORS

### College Applications

Now is the time to apply for next fall. Some schools have priority deadlines for scholarship consideration.

### Filing the FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) portal opened October 1. This is for loans, grants, and work study. It is also the application for TOPS, if your student qualifies. Deadline is July 1, 2026

### Application Information

**LSU** - Priority date for undergraduate, scholarship programs (<https://www.commonapp.org/>), and honors college (<https://lsu.edu/honors/student-info/ohc-admissions.php>) is December 15. Please apply as early as possible.

**SLU** - Priority date for full consideration is January 15. Please apply as early as possible. (<https://www.southeastern.edu/apply/freshmen/index.html>)

### College Visits

Seniors will be granted one college visit with administrative approval. The Excused Absence Form can be found on the SMHS website and must be sent to Mr. Kegan Keller ([kkeller@smhsbr.org](mailto:kkeller@smhsbr.org)) at least 5 days prior to the date of the visit. When the student returns, he/she must provide a letter of verification of attendance from the college or university.

### College Acceptance Letters

Please send copies of all college acceptance and scholarship letters to Mrs. Rachel Cart, even if the student does not plan on attending a particular school. We will only publish this information if we have been informed in writing by parents or students.

### ACT Scores and Test Dates

Students may request that his/her scores be sent to a college or university. The first four (4) score reports are FREE and automatically sent if requested during the registration process. ACT dates for seniors to qualify for TOPS: **December 13, February 14, April 11** - last date to qualify for all 8 semesters of TOPS, **June 13** - can be used to upgrade for all 8 semesters or to meet the requirements losing one paid semester, **July 11** - can be used to upgrade a scholarship if they met requirements by the April date.

## Holly Volleyball

The fun begins on **Friday, December 12 at 3:00 PM**. Friends and family are invited to take part in all the festivities. Entrance fee is free for all those who wear their Holly Volleyball shirts. If you do not wear your Holly Volleyball shirt, the entrance fee is \$2.00.

### Film on the Field

Join us for our **1st ever Film on the Field**, a fun-filled fundraiser supporting Prom and Beta Club! The event will take place **Friday, December 12**, immediately following Holly Volleyball and is open to all students, families, and community members. Admission is \$5.00, food and drinks will be sold for an additional cost. There will be plenty of activities including games and raffle drawings for themed gift baskets. When the sun goes down, grab a seat on the field and relax as we watch *Elf*, shown on the scoreboard screen for the perfect outdoor movie experience. Come out, have fun, and help support two great programs! 🎬✨



### Christmas Sweater Day

We will celebrate the Christmas season on **Monday, December 15** with students wearing *ugly* Christmas sweaters and Christmas accessories with uniform pants or skirts. *Seniors may wear appropriate jeans.*

### Christmas Holidays and Students Return

Christmas Holidays are **Monday, December 22, 2025 through Friday, January 2, 2026**. Students return to school on **Monday, January 5, 2026**. *This day is also a late start day; students are to report to school by 8:45 AM.* The library will be open at **6:45 AM** for any student who needs to be dropped off at regular time.

### SMHS Holiday Office Hours

The SMHS office will be open from 7:30 AM until 12:30 PM on the following days during the holiday season: ***Monday and Tuesday, December 22 and 23 AND Monday and Tuesday, December 29 and 30.***

### Senior Gift

Let's help our seniors get the final \$2,800 they need to go toward their gift to SMHS. Their gift is a custom-designed archway entrance to Warrior Field and is a joint gift with the Class of 2025. See below for ways to help our seniors reach their goal.

➤ Give back night at City Café on **Wednesday, December 10**. *(make sure to mention SMHS when ordering)*

➤ Marble Slab will be at all lunches on **Friday, December 12**. *25% of all sales will go back to the Class of 2026.*

➤ Give back night at Canes on Market Street on **Monday, December 15**. *(make sure to mention SMHS when ordering)*

If you would like to contribute to their cause, please send cash or a check in an envelope to Jackie Moseley, clearly labeled "Senior Gift" or online using this link:

<https://forms.diamondmindinc.com/smhsbr/2026sg>

### Pickleball Tournament

Our Student Council is excited to host the 2nd Annual Pickleball Tournament on **January 10–11 at Stacks Pickleball!**

This fun, community-building event will once again raise funds for two meaningful causes: OLOL Children's Hospital and ongoing upgrades to our school cafeteria.

Thanks to your generosity last year, we were able to install brand-new cafeteria flooring—your support truly makes a difference!

If you are interested in playing, please use the registration link below.

If you would like to sponsor the event or sponsor a student team, please contact Jackie Moseley at [jmoseley@smhsbr.org](mailto:jmoseley@smhsbr.org). Whether you are a pickleball pro, brand-new to the game, or simply a spirited spectator, we would love to have you join us!

#### Tournament Divisions

- Women's / Men's / Mixed
- Senior Women's / Senior Men's / Mixed
- Family / Youth (grades 6–8) / Juniors (grades 9–12)

👉 Team Registration Link:

<https://forms.diamondmindinc.com/smhsbr/smhspickle26>

## Winter Dance

Mark your calendar for **Saturday, February 28, 8:00 to 11:00 PM**. Look for more information soon.

## Grandparents Day Information

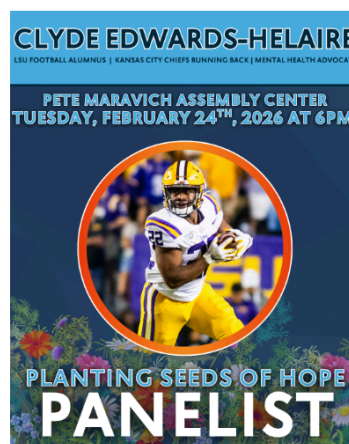
Grandparents Day is Sunday, February 1 and invitations will go out soon! If you would like your child's grandparents to be included in the mailing, please contact **Lori Steib, Registrar**, at [lsteib@smhsbr.org](mailto:lsteib@smhsbr.org) by **Friday, December 12, 2025** with any changes to their status and/or address, or to verify that the information for your child's grandparents is included in our database.



**SUPER BOWL WINNER. LSU ALUMNUS. MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATE.**

**CLYDE EDWARDS-HELAIRE**

**IS JOINING THE CONVERSATION ON MENTAL HEALTH**



*A hometown athlete turned Super Bowl champion, Clyde brings the same focus, humility, and heart that define the mission of Rain Will Bring Flowers.*

Rain Will Bring Flowers is proud to announce that Clyde Edwards-Helaire will take the stage as a first-time panelist for the 3rd Annual *Planting Seeds of Hope*.

A Baton Rouge native and former LSU standout turned Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl Champion, Clyde's journey reflects the power of faith, focus, and mental strength.

Beyond the field, he uses his platform to remind student athletes that real success begins with character, community, and care for their own mental health.

## LET'S GROW TOGETHER AT PLANTING SEEDS OF HOPE

Every conversation, every story, and every act of compassion helps break the stigma surrounding mental health. That's why the Rain Will Bring Flowers Foundation, in partnership with LSU Athletics, the Joe Burrow Foundation, Our Lady of the Lake Health, and the LCLUB, is bringing athletes, families, and our community together once again.

Together, we'll hear powerful stories of resilience, support youth mental wellness, and remind our kids: they are not alone. 🌱 Mark your calendars, RSVP, and learn more by visiting our website!

## Coffee with the Junior Counselor

Junior parents and guardians are invited to attend Coffee with the Counselor to listen to a brief presentation with Mrs. Alise Ashford. Be on the lookout for an email in mid-December to RSVP.

Where: SMHS

When: Wednesday, January 14

Time: 7:30 AM

Topics: SMHS counseling services, college and career readiness, graduation requirements, ACT testing, Senior year scheduling, and more





## ADVANCEMENT NEWS & IMPORTANT EVENTS



We invite you to join us in advancing our mission by considering a personal and meaningful gift to the Fund for St.

Michael. Your tax-deductible donation

allows us to provide qualified families with tuition assistance, strengthen faith formation, and support our extracurricular activities and programs. The St. Michael experience is only possible because of our supportive and generous community. Please use the link below to learn more about our fund and how you can help us attain our goal of **\$150,000** for the 2025-26 school year. Questions? Contact Teri LaRose at

[tlarose@smhsbr.org](mailto:tlarose@smhsbr.org).

[The Fund for St. Michael - St. Michael the Archangel High School \(smhsbr.org\)](https://www.smhsbr.org)

### Sponsorship Opportunities

Formed in Catholic tradition, the mission of St. Michael High School is to foster the spiritual, intellectual, and personal development of young people as committed disciples of Christ. To achieve such a worthy goal, St. Michael gratefully relies on the meaningful involvement of many generous people. If you own a business or know a business, we invite you to discover the numerous ways you can partner with St. Michael High School by visiting our [website](https://www.smhsbr.org) or contacting Director of Communications, Haleigh Gautreaux at [hgautreaux@smhsbr.org](mailto:hgautreaux@smhsbr.org).

### Distinguished Graduate 2025



We are proud to announce Jeffrey Vaccaro Jr. as the St. Michael High School Distinguished Graduate for 2025!

Jeff, a 2015 graduate of St. Michael, is the Founder & CEO of Jeff Vaccaro Companies who continues to live out the values rooted in his Catholic

education. A parishioner of St. Mary Magdalen in Abbeville, he credits his schooling for shaping his faith, his work ethic, and his commitment to serving others.

Since graduating, Jeff has launched and grown multiple successful hospitality businesses. He and his wife, Courtney, strive to lead a life centered on faith, gratitude, and service. Jeff gives back generously through his work with The Luke

Falgoust Foundation, his support of St. Michael High School—where he helps broadcast football games—and his continued involvement in his home parish through ACTS retreats. His leadership and compassion shine in every aspect of his life. Please join us in congratulating Jeffrey Vaccaro Jr. on this well-deserved honor! He will be recognized at a special dinner reception in January.

### iGiveCatholic 2025

Save the date for this year's #iGive Catholic Giving Day which will be held on **Tuesday, December 2**. Since 2015, this national fundraiser has united Catholic communities and donors to express their generosity in support of the organizations that have helped shape our lives of faith: schools, parishes, and ministries. You are invited to invest in Warrior Nation by helping us attain our goal of \$12,000 which will be used to begin transforming our Cafeteria to a Union-Style environment. Through your meaningful gift, soft seating options will be purchased and installed to provide a comfortable area for our students to eat and gather with friends. Last year, through the kindness of our school community, St. Michael raised over \$10,000 that helped to beautify our student courtyard with sun sails providing shade for our students. Continue to follow us on social media for this upcoming exciting day.

[iGiveCatholic Giving Day - St. Michael](https://www.givecatholic.com)

### *St. Michael Prayer*

*St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle;  
be our protection against the wickedness  
and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him,  
we humbly pray; and do Thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host,  
by the divine power of God, cast into hell, Satan  
and all evil spirits, who roam about the world seeking the ruin  
of souls. Amen*





Click [here](#) to reserve your table now.



>> Warrior Club Memberships are still available for our upcoming Winter and Spring sports. We hope you will consider joining the Warrior Club for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year. Details can be found on our [website](#).

Payment link: <https://square.link/u/jrkkTpPJ>. You must be a member to purchase an annual Warrior Club Athletic Season Pass to get into all regular season home games.

>> Congratulations to all of our Summer/Fall athletes who continue to show Warrior Pride and fight with dedication, passion, tenacity, and Warrior spirit. We are Warrior Proud of all of your accomplishments!

>> Shop online, year-round, from our [website](#) and your order will be available for pick up in the front office within 2 weeks.

>> The best way to contact the Warrior Club is via email at [warriorclub@smhsbr.org](mailto:warriorclub@smhsbr.org) or follow the Warrior Club social media accounts.

>> We are currently working with Athletic Director, Rob Smith, on finalizing some fancy artwork for our buses, so we travel with Pride all throughout the region and represent SMHS Warriors with swag and style. Stay tuned for more information.

>> The next Warrior Club Meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 2026.

You do not want to miss the excitement of Trivia Night.

Gather your team and join in on the magic! We would love to see you there!

Doors open at 6:00 PM on February 7.

