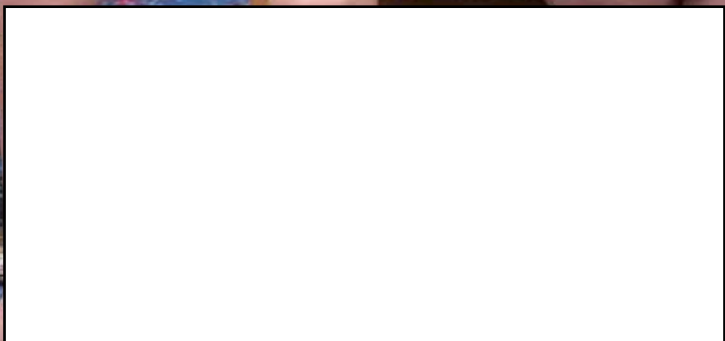
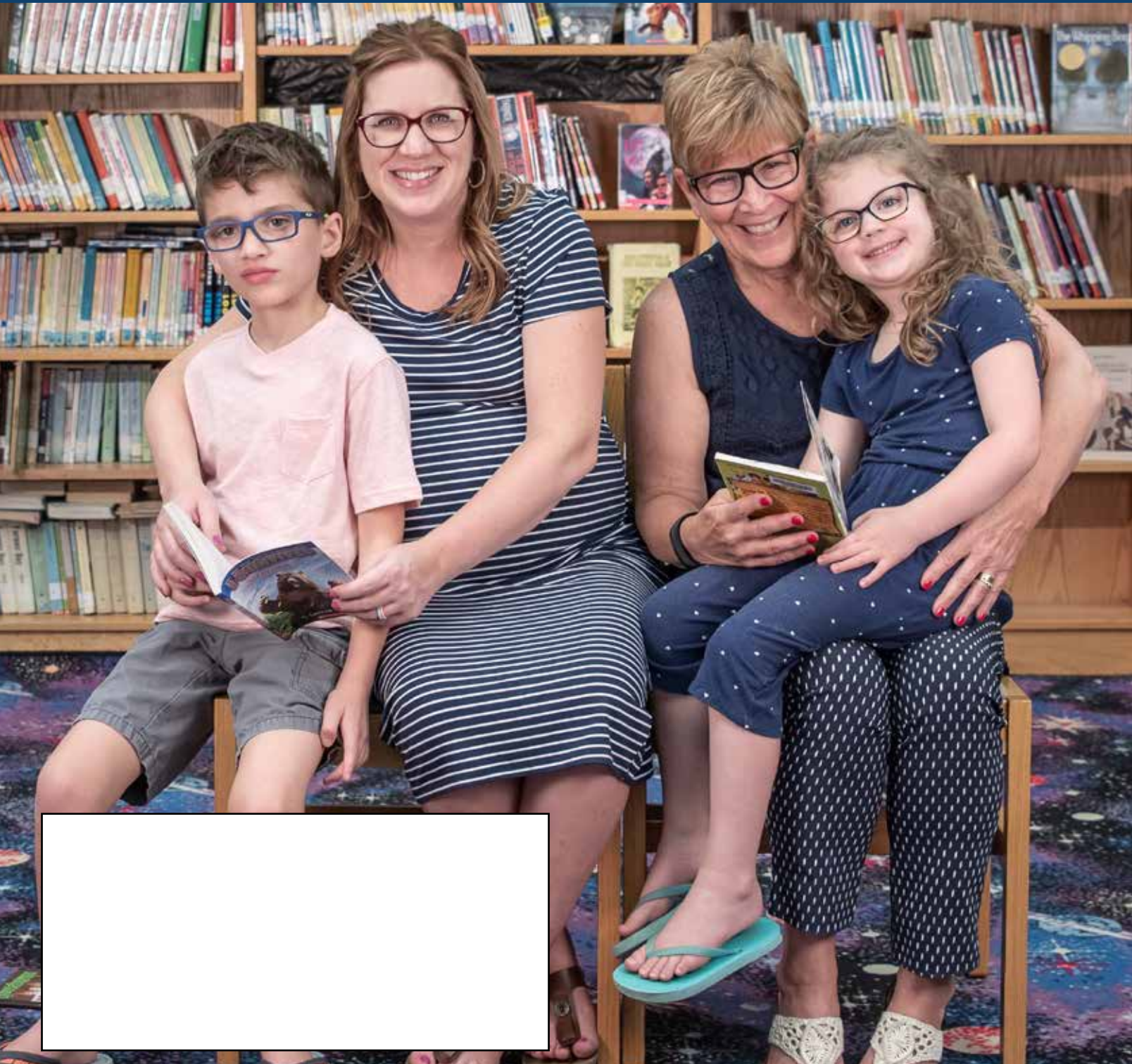


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SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUMMER 2019



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- > Shawnee Mission Education Foundation Developing Future Leaders
- > R&D Forum: An Extravaganza of Student Excellence and Innovation



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ON THE COVER: Three generations in the SMSD celebrating 50 years: The Rasdall/Bommarito families prepare for the new school year.

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INSIDE

Shawnee Mission School District
8200 W. 71st Street
Shawnee Mission, KS 66204

Inside Shawnee Mission School District is published by the Communications Department in the Shawnee Mission School District.

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The Foundation Celebrates Shawnee Mission School District's 50th at the Fall Breakfast

The community will celebrate the school district's legacy of excellence at this year's Shawnee Mission Education Foundation Fall Breakfast. The breakfast is at 7 a.m. on Thursday, September 5, 2019, at the Overland Park Convention Center, 6000 College Boulevard, Overland Park, KS 66211

Shawnee Mission schools hold rich histories, with some schools approaching their centennial or bicentennial year. This fall commemorates the year all schools in Shawnee Mission School District unified in Kansas on July 1, 1969. The school district will celebrate this milestone throughout the 2019-2020 school year. The Foundation's Breakfast is the kick-off to this landmark occasion.

Breakfast attendees will celebrate the district and foundation as they continue to challenge today's learners and inspire tomorrow's leaders.

Community members, corporate partners, and alumni are all invited to attend this special event. For table and ticket reservations, please contact the foundation at www.smef.org. ♦



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Working Together Toward a Bright Future

A Message From the Superintendent

The advent of a new school year brings hope and the promise of new opportunity. It is a time of excitement about the known and sometimes a bit of fear of the unknown. These feelings are normal and part of the back-to-school ritual. What is most important is that our children know they will be met by caring adults who work hard to support every student's success. A kind and caring attitude defines what it means to be part of the Shawnee Mission School District community. It is at the core of who we are, and what makes us a great school district.

We enter this school year with our newly adopted Strategic Plan that is mission-driven and results-focused. The mission statement is:

The mission of the Shawnee Mission School District, the bridge to unlimited possibilities yet to be discovered, is to ensure students construct their own foundation for success in life's endeavors through relevant, personalized learning experiences orchestrated by talented, compassionate educators and distinguished by:

- an inclusive culture
- an engaged community
- robust opportunities that challenge learners to achieve their full potential.

The SMSD's mission is supported by beliefs and parameters that guide us and ensure we are doing our work in ways that align with who we are as a community.

Essential to our plan are three objec-

tives which, simply stated, make a commitment to ensure that every child has a personalized learning plan, graduates high school college and career ready, and has the interpersonal skills necessary for life success.

The notion of having a personalized learning plan is foundational to growth and improvement. Helping children learn how to set goals, measure growth toward those goals and celebrate success through life's inevitable challenges, builds resilience. School is our children's "job," and it is essential they spend their days being inspired to work hard, find hope, discover their strengths and learn what it means to take to control of their own learning. This is their journey, and it is our responsibility as adults to help them along the way.

In the course of their personal journey, every learner needs on-going feedback on the progress they are making toward understanding and applying foundational concepts and skills. Learning should not be a mystery that appears on a test, one that is designed to sort out winners and losers. Instead, it is our responsibility as educators and as a community to ensure that every child has the academic foundation they need for life success. This requires us to have high expectations for all learners, and to work as a community to design our schools in ways that help every child achieve their goals and be a success-ready graduate.

Personalized learning plans with

goal setting and rigorous academic preparation are important. However, they find their full meaning in relationships. How many times in life

have we hit the target in our job or in school, but ruined relationships because of behaviors that we controlled? That is a part of our shared human experience. Helping a child learn about themselves and how to effectively build relationships with others is critical to life success. We take seriously the importance of a child's social-emotional development. That development is done in partnership with parents and guardians. Often there is joy in this process, and sometimes there is heartbreak, yet through it all we learn how to endure, grow and create capacity for working together to create a better world.

The future is bright for the Shawnee Mission School District. Working together as a community, we can help each child create their own personal success. This is the vision of a great school district which is embedded in our mission, and throughout our Strategic Plan. Our direction is clear, and although there are many challenges ahead, I am excited about the work and look forward to sharing our progress with you. ♦



Dr. Mike Fulton

Strategic Plan Approved



Steering Committee members present the Strategic Plan to the Board of Education members.

The Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) has taken the first steps to supporting each student in their journey to life success. Since February, the community has engaged in thoughtful work and conversation, leading to the development of the Shawnee Mission School District Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan, which will govern the district's work through 2023-24, was approved by the Shawnee Mission Board of Education on June 24, 2019.

"Shawnee Mission has a proud tradition of excellence and this plan is designed to build on that past, and create an even better future," Superintendent Dr. Mike Fulton said.

Community Defines What it Wants to Be

The plan reflects the voices and ideas of thousands in the SMSD community who provided input.

In February, a Steering Committee made up of about 30 students, staff, parents, and community members drafted the initial text for the Strategic Plan. They used community input, through ThoughtExchange and climate surveys, to develop a set of beliefs, a mission statement, parameters for the work, objectives, strategies, and action steps.

Shawnee Mission North student Glory Obi said her experience on the Steering Committee reaffirmed her understanding of how much people throughout the community care about the educational experience of each student in Shawnee Mission.

"Not only are teachers working hard every day in our schools, but there is so much planning ahead of time before something ever gets to us," Obi said. "I've learned how much care is put into every single word and detail of strategic planning. It takes time and research to find the best fit and the best of what our district can do."

In the months that followed, five Action Teams, also made up of a broad range of individuals from across the Shawnee Mission School District, developed plans for putting the ideas of the Steering Committee into action.

"We sat as parents, teachers, principals, students, and community members having conversations about what is and isn't working and admitting what needs to change," Claire Winston, Shawnee Mission North student and Action Team member said. "It was amazing seeing everyone coming together and being honest and working toward a system that could be good for everybody."

Throughout the process, it has been very important to hear all voices and use what has been heard to develop

the plans, said Dr. Todd Dain, Shawnee Mission South principal and Action Team leader.

"In many ways we are on the cutting edge of education, but there are some areas we need to keep making sure we are meeting the needs of each student and staff member to be a leader in education," Dain said. "This process helps us create that culture where we have a unified vision, mission, and purpose guiding what we do every day in classrooms."

In early June, the Action Team members presented their work to the Steering Committee. Steering Committee members then talked about and approved each of the action



TOP: Dr. Mike Fulton welcomes Action Team members. BELOW: Members of a Strategic Plan Action Team discuss how to best serve students.





TOP: Action Teams made up of a broad range of individuals from the SMSD formulate their plan. LEFT: Claire Winston, SM North student and Action Team member, addresses the Steering Committee.



plans, finalized the Strategic Plan, and presented it to superintendent Fulton.

After reviewing the work of the Steering Committee, Dr. Fulton prepared the plan to present to the Board of Education.

As Dr. Fulton and several Steering Committee members presented the results of their work to the board, they shared that the plan is not a reflection of who we are, but who we want to be. The plan is meant to help us all move beyond our daily routines and familiar ways of thinking and define an aspirational North Star, he reflected.

“We acknowledge our many strengths while recognizing that if our students are to be prepared for the future we need to build on current practice,” Fulton said. “It is critical we engage as a community to ensure the learning design meets the needs of every student so they can be successful.”

Putting Plans into Action

The community’s statement of who it wants to be is clearly articulated through the following objectives:

- Every student will achieve academic success through a challenging, relevant **personalized learning plan**.

- Every student will develop and utilize personal resilience while mastering essential competencies that lead to **college and career readiness**.
- Every student will develop **interpersonal skills** to be an engaged, empathetic member of the local and global community.

“As we looked at these objectives, with each one stating what will be done for every student, it made all of the Steering Committee student members feel like ‘Yes, this is our district working for us,’” Brenda Garcia, Shawnee Mission West student and Steering Committee member said. “They are laying the groundwork for our upcoming success.”

Work to achieve these objectives is already underway. Some action steps will take longer than others to accomplish. But, as implementation moves forward, district staff will provide regular updates on planning to the community, including qualitative and quantitative data. The Steering Committee will also meet once a year to review the progress of the plan and determine areas for growth.

This fall, Site Councils and school Building Leadership Teams will be trained and begin work to create strategic plans for individual school communities. These teams will focus on achieving the three objectives within the context defined by the district’s Strategic Plan.

“Strong strategic plans do not just sit on the shelf, they live in our hearts,” Fulton said. “Now is the point when we take these plans to heart and bring them to life through the district.” ♦

Strategic Plan Beliefs and Mission Statement Focuses on Students

Steering Committee members provided insight on how elements of the Strategic Plan were developed, formed, and written. They also shared that it was important to honor Shawnee Mission's history and traditions throughout the process.

The first part of the process was developing a set of beliefs that included these guidelines:

- Not buttons or bumper stickers
- Must use absolute words, not wimpy words
- Thing you will never compromise
- Not a prescription, not "should"
- Not education specific
- Succinct, no metaphors
- Moral convictions
- Should be able to be understood by everyone without interpretation

BELIEFS:

- Every individual has inherent worth and deserves to be valued and celebrated
- A community's strength is derived from its diversity
- Respecting a community's diversity and each individual's dignity demands equitable access
- A thriving community meets the basic physical, social, and emotional needs of its members
- Safe and caring relationships are essential for learning and growth
- Acknowledged and appreciated individuals confidently engage and collaborate
- Individuals of all abilities and experiences can achieve personal excellence
- Ownership empowers each person to ignite their future
- Effective communication is truthful, genuine, reciprocal, and respectful

After meeting in small groups to discuss and review the beliefs in two separate sessions, the entire Steering Committee came together to finalize the belief statements.

"We came together seamlessly with the content of these beliefs," Laura Robeson, parent on the Steering Committee said. "These truly and clearly represent our community's values."

The next part of the strategic planning process involved crafting the mission statement. Strategic Plan Facilitator, Dr. Lindsey Gunn, with the Cambrian Group, encouraged the team to set a high bar creating a statement that gives purpose to every student, is inclusive and reflects what we do.

As the Steering Committee began developing the mission statement, Dr. Gunn made these suggestions:

- This is the architecture for the entire plan
- Describes our strategic intent
- Should be realistic
- May need to be explained

"Everyone had an opportunity to contribute and to have their voice heard," Wraye Royle, middle school math teacher and Steering Committee member said.

MISSION:

The mission of the Shawnee Mission School District, the bridge to unlimited possibilities yet to be discovered, is to ensure students construct their own foundation for success in life's endeavors through relevant, personalized learning experiences orchestrated by talented, compassionate educators and distinguished by:

- an inclusive culture
- an engaged community
- and robust opportunities that challenge learners to achieve their full potential.

Brenda Garcia, Shawnee Mission West student and Steering Committee member shared the group was able to achieve consensus with the assistance of the facilitator and provided guidelines. Dr. Gunn reminded the team that everyone has their own views, interpretations and values and everyone's voice is relevant to the conversation.

These guidelines were used as content and language were discussed and written:

- All decisions made based on the best interest of the student
- Decisions reached by agreement
- Full community involvement

"Maybe your priority didn't end up at the top of the list, but it was on the list," Garcia said.

"Everyone agreed on the big themes and we had to reach consensus before we could move forward in the process. I was so proud and honored to be included in this process." ♦



Bijou Muragizi, Shawnee Mission Northwest junior, works with Lenexa Fire Department Captain Mat Logue on First Aid.

Shawnee Mission Education Foundation Developing Future Leaders

The Shawnee Mission Education Foundation has kicked off its second year of Leadership Shawnee Mission, a leadership development program for incoming juniors and seniors. The program combines a 42-hour internship experience with 48 hours of classroom curriculum. Each student gains opportunities for networking, mentorship, and resume-building.

Kimberly Hinkle, executive director for the Shawnee Mission Education Foundation, welcomed 22 students to the Center for Academic Achievement (CAA) in June. Students were nominated by a faculty member to participate in the program.

“We had more than 100 nominations and were able to double our class-size this year, which is very exciting,” Hinkle said. “Our students will be interning at 20 different sites including AdventHealth, McCownGordon Construction, the

Lenexa Fire Department, ACI Boland Architects, and many others.”

The Foundation partnered with William Jewell College’s Tucker Leadership Lab to provide curriculum on leadership.

“It is so rewarding to watch the class become a community to support each other as they learn life and leadership skills during this three-week workshop,” Al Leone, Director of the Tucker Leadership Lab said. She and three other instructors led the curriculum portion of the seminar at the CAA.

Over eight days, students learned about financial literacy, communication and leadership using “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens” by Sean Covey as a resource. The students spent two days at the William Jewell College’s Tucker Leadership Lab, using their outdoor learning lab, which includes ground and tower courses. The Tucker

Leadership Lab is one of the premiere team building and leadership courses in the Midwest.

The remainder of their sessions was spent at onsite internships where they were matched with their career interest including the fields of healthcare, engineering, and animation.

Authentic Research Opportunities

Laylan Hamid and Noah Valverde both from Shawnee Mission West, completed internships at the University of Kansas School of Medicine, working in a research lab managed by Dr. Paige Geiger. Dr. Geiger’s research focuses on the molecular pathways by which diet, exercise and heat therapy provide protection against chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, obesity, and Alzheimer’s Disease.

“I am learning a lot about metabolism

and lab research. This is a great experience in the science field,” Valverde said

There are 75 similar labs on campus where undergraduate and student interns assist with the research. Geiger assigned Hamid and Valverde to an undergraduate student who interned in her lab last year. She enjoys engaging younger students in research and enjoys their talent and curiosity.

“I am always amazed at questions the students pose with fresh eyes,” Geiger said. “They energize our environment and we enjoy engaging them in real research.”

Geiger was particularly impressed when the students interviewed her about her career on their first day, asking about her leadership learning and experience.

“Leadership wasn’t taught when I was going to high school or college. It was something I had to learn on-the-job. It’s fantastic that they are focusing on leadership in this program at this age”

Hamid shared she was grateful KUMC provided future career and academic insight in addition to the skills to work inside a real lab.

“I also learned the valuable lesson that meeting new people is like being interviewed,” she said. “So, you always want to put your best foot forward to make a great first impression.”

Leadership Program Internships Lead to Employment

Zach Mistic, a Leadership Shawnee Mission graduate in 2018, was an intern last summer at SOFTwarfare LLC, a local tech startup. He researched various cyber security products for integration purposes. After graduating high school, a year after his internship, Wyatt Cobb, president and CEO of SOFTwarfare contacted Mistic for a summer position.

“Meeting and talking with the company CEO every day of the internship helped me learn a lot about cyber security and business in general,” Mistic said. “By making connections through my experience as a Leadership Shawnee Mission intern, I was able to secure a job fresh out of high school, forging valuable industry experience. Going into college this fall already having le-

gitimate work experience in my field of study sets me further ahead than most other freshmen.”

Cobb, a Shawnee Mission East graduate, has been in the business of cyber security for 14 years. He launched his company, a cyber security software company, in Prairie Village, with the hope to be a Silicon Valley-style software provider expanding in and enjoying the culture of the Prairie Village neighborhood.

This year, Cobb hosted three interns from the Leadership Shawnee Mission program. “I grew up in the Shawnee Mission School District and I have three children who go to school in the SMSD. Paying it forward is important to me and my company. We learn as much from the interns as they learn from us. I have found the onboarding experience with the interns helps us model how we want to onboard new employees.”

Mysti Allison-Barnes, a Shawnee Mission North student who interned at the company, said she was impressed to begin completing real work on the first day.

“I thought we’d get a tour and then watch someone else do the work, but we have been given projects and responsibilities to contribute to the company,” Allison-Barnes said.

Future Community Leaders

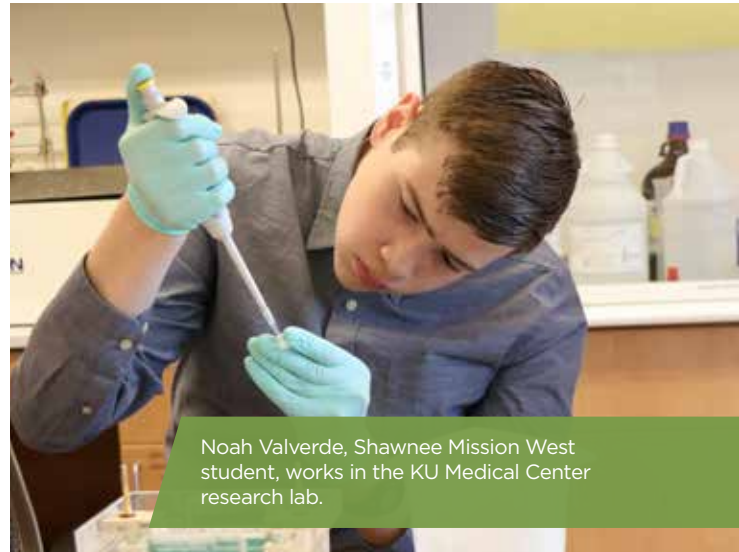
Elvis Ayala, a Shawnee Mission West intern at Newkirk Novak Construction Partners, had the opportunity to see all facets of the business, including accounting, projects in the field, marketing and sales. He worked directly with John Novak, a partner at the two-year-old company. Newkirk Novak is a construction management, general contracting firm which specializes in school construction and the relationship side of construction.

Novak and his partner have more than 40 years of experience in the construction industry in this commu-

nity. Because of that experience, it was important to Novak to give Ayala a complete picture of the business, as there are many support functions that make up a company.

“This experience with Leadership Shawnee Mission may be more rewarding for us than Ayala,” said Novak. “We see this as a long-term investment to help develop the future leaders for our community.”

This well-rounded experience was particularly important to Ayala, who plans to earn a business degree and



Noah Valverde, Shawnee Mission West student, works in the KU Medical Center research lab.

open up a franchise of taco stands after graduation. He said that he enjoyed working with the team and building relationships at Newkirk Novak Construction and developing friendships with the other Leadership Shawnee Mission interns.

The Foundation hosted a celebration lunch with their Corporate Council and internship site partners along with the interns on the final day of Leadership Shawnee Mission. The families of the students were also invited to a graduation ceremony at the conclusion of the program.

“The networks they have developed from their internships and with each other in their leadership class will serve them well in the next school year and in their future career paths,” said Hinkle. “It’s exciting to see how Leadership Shawnee Mission is helping to make them career and college ready leaders.” ♦



ABOVE: Wesley Millard shares his knowledge about Apollo 11. TOP RIGHT: Indian Hills musicians perform at the Forum. BOTTOM RIGHT: A Regnier Award is presented at the ceremony.



R&D Forum: An Extravaganza of Student Excellence and Innovation

Whether it was cancer research conducted in the laboratory, sculptures and paintings created in art rooms, or furniture pieces built in woodworking shops – community members could see it all at this year’s Research and Development (R&D) Forum.

Hundreds of students shared science, technology, engineering, arts, and math projects at the annual event. It’s a Shawnee Mission tradition, one that for nearly 58 years has helped shine a spotlight on student excellence. Teachers and students are encouraged to already start thinking about classroom projects they might want to enter in the forum in May 2020.

“The R&D Forum is a powerful opportunity each year to recognize students for their outstanding achievements, and to help our community have a better understanding of what our students learn throughout the year,” according to Kim Barney, assistant director of curriculum and instruction.

Held in the spring, the forum is an interactive fair. It features the culmination of long-range projects and examples of what students and teachers have learned during the school year. Many students also share musical performances, visual art demonstrations, robotics projects, and hands-on experi-

ments with Forum attendees.

Some students entered school work from a classroom project. Others shared work based on a long-range project, focused on a topic of personal interest.

The event concludes with an award ceremony, recognizing student achievement.

While touring interactive exhibits and seeing the student work, community members often share how impressed they are by the student projects, according to Barney.

“They are amazed at what our students create, and we

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The 2020 R&D Forum will be free and open to the public with interactive exhibits at Shawnee Mission West, 8800 W. 85th Street

hope more community members continue to attend the event and see the results of student work throughout the year,” she said. “It is a wonderful way to see all of the transformative learning that takes place in our classrooms throughout the year.”

58 Years of the Forum

The Forum is able to continue in the district each year, thanks to the ongoing support of the Regnier family.

The event began in 1962, prior to district unification. Vic Regnier,] community leader and businessman, provided inspiration and financial support to create the Forum. A key goal was to feature and celebrate student scientific research and investigation.

As the 50th anniversary was celebrated in 2012, members of the Regnier family reflected on how recognizing student excellence and innovation has always been at the heart of the event.

“That’s what we need are more and better ideas,” noted Bob Regnier. “We’re pleased to give back and feel like we’re having the opportunity to give back to something that gave a lot to us. I think a lot of things that come out of these projects are the sparks that could ignite into something bigger and better.”

A Stepping Stone to Life Success

It is not uncommon for previous Forum participants to make their bigger and better ideas a reality. In fact, some R&D Forum participants have gone on to make headlines for their achievements. Many of these Forum participants credit their Forum experience as having helped them prepare for college and career.

Past Forum participants include Kyle Vogt, a developer of self-driving car technology, who led robotics team presentations at the Forum. He founded Cruise Automation, and was honored in Fortune’s 40 under 40 List. Erin Smith, creator of “Face Print,” a technology to help detect the early stages of Parkinson’s disease, entered her work in R&D Forums. The 2018 graduate earned numerous scholarships and was included on Forbes’ 30 Under 30 list.

In 2013, Eliot Alpert, a Shawnee Mission Northwest student, entered a 16-foot wooden runabout motorboat he constructed for the Forum. Since then, he has studied architecture at the University of Kansas, worked for an architecture firm, and built wooden boats in Australia. Working on the R&D project helped him understand the level of work and maintenance that is required for building an extensive project, he noted.

For many years, top honorees at the Forum have also earned top honors at the Greater Kansas City Science & Engineering Fair (GKCSEF) and at national and international fairs and competitions. This year was no different. Peyton Panovich, a recent Shawnee Mission West graduate, earned the Regnier Award, the highest honor presented at the Forum, for her research related to colon cancer. She also earned a Grand Award at GKCSEF and was one of only 1,800 students worldwide to be invited to enter work



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in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair.

Sam Springer, a 2019 Shawnee Mission Northwest graduate, was another Regnier Award winner in 2018-19. He dedicated a significant amount of time to complete his Project Lead the Way Engineering project: a rocket stabilization system. He said it was a meaningful project as he plans to attend the University of Kansas for aerospace engineering.

“The project taught me how to work on something that could actually have a purpose and apply what I’ve learned not just to get a grade,” he said.

Relevant Opportunities for Each Student

This year, Trailwood fifth-graders shared a Rube Goldberg machine they built in Crystal Williamson’s class. Many of the students met before or after school to dedicate more time to the project. Williamson continues to encourage students to enter projects in the Forum, having been an R&D par-

ticipant as an SMSD student herself.

Wesley Millard, who enters the fourth grade at Mill Creek this fall, shared a presentation about the Apollo 11 Mission at the most recent Forum.

“I think it’s a great experience for students because it helps them with speaking in front of crowds,” Millard said. “You get to practice over and over and over again and it is fun!”

As a new school year begins, teachers and students are invited to think about entering science, technology, engineering, arts, and math projects they’ve completed into the spring event. Many exhibits and art galleries help demonstrate the learning that takes place across the district all year long.



From the exhibits to the award-ceremony conclusion, the event is a great opportunity for students of all ages to gain new ideas and learn from one another, according to Kim Barney, assistant director of curriculum and instruction.

“It’s a great opportunity for everyone to see what is possible,” she said. ♦

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Project Finish: A New Opportunity for Shawnee Mission Residents to Earn a High School Diploma

Project Finish is a new online diploma completion opportunity for residents who live in the Shawnee Mission School District boundaries.

Once Project Finish students have completed all graduation requirements they will be awarded a Shawnee Mission School District diploma. Students will have access to the online program and coursework 24 hours a day, seven days a week as long as they have access to the internet.

“When adults have the opportunity to earn a diploma it not only allows people to achieve their goals but allows them an opportunity for personal and/or professional growth that would otherwise not be possible without a diploma,” Paul Colwell, Horizons and Project Finish principal said. “Personal and professional growth only strengthens our community and district.”

The program is slated to begin September 1, 2019. Information on enrollment is below.

This new program’s home is at Horizons High School, 5900 Lamar Ave. Students may use the Horizons computer lab to complete coursework. The Horizons computer lab will be staffed with an instructor from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. on Monday through Thursday and from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Fridays.

Students have the option to complete their online coursework at Horizons, a Johnson County public library, their workplace, or whenever they can schedule it within their day. Any student needing tutoring or coursework

support may get assistance from the Project Finish teacher during the designated hours at Horizons High School.

To enroll in Project Finish a student must meet or complete the following requirements:

- Must be 19 years of age or older.
- Complete the balance of high school credit requirements in compliance with the Kansas State Department of Education’s 21 credit requirements.
- Provide proof of identity, proof of residency, and official transcripts of any and all previous high school coursework tried and completed.
- Take all online final exams for all courses at Horizons High School under the supervision of the Project Finish teacher. ♦



Enrollment Sessions

9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

August 14, 20, 22, 26 and 29

Horizons High School, 5900 Lamar Ave.

For more information about the online degree completion program, contact Paul Colwell, Horizons High School principal, at 913-993-9505 or e-mail at paulcolwell@smsd.org.

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