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SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT



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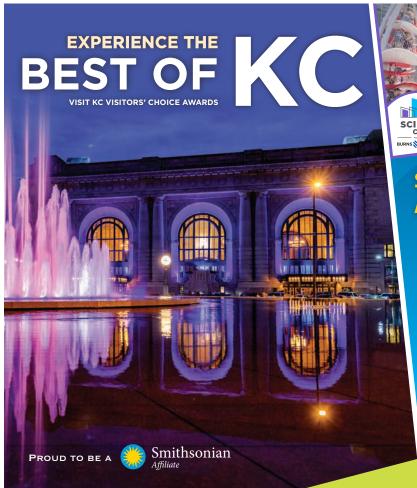
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ON THE COVER: JT Hawthorne, who is enrolled in Shawnee Mission's Post-High Transitions Program, works at the SMSD Aquatic Center.

#### @theSMSD f E

Help us share the good news from our district on social media.

#### 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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## Census 2020: Every Person Counts!

he 2020 Census counts every single person in the country. The information gathered in the Census is used to make sure that our community gets its fair share of federal funding for education, health care, housing, and nutrition programs. And, it makes sure that you are fairly and adequately represented in government.

Responding to the 2020 Census is an easy, safe, and important way to help provide resources for children in the Shawnee Mission community for the next ten years. This includes programs that directly support children in the Shawnee Mission School District, such as healthcare, childcare, food assistance, early childhood development and programs for at-risk children.

Census forms are being mailed to every household, beginning in mid-March. Every household will have the option to respond online, using the internet or a smartphone; over the telephone, by calling the census call center listed on the

census letter, using a paper form, or by responding to a census worker who comes to the door.

Taking part in the census is part of the civic duty of every person living in the country. It is a way for everyone to participate in our democracy and say: "I COUNT!" And



importantly, it is private and secure. It's against the law for the Census Bureau to release your responses in a way that could identify you or anyone in your household, and by law, your responses can't be used against you.

Look for your Census 2020 information in the mail, and take the time to fill it out. Doing this makes sure that every voice counts!

### Pre-Kindergarten in the Shawnee Mission School District



re-Kindergarten students are actively learning about the world around them in Shawnee Mission schools. The Pre-Kindergarten program is educationally and developmentally appropriate for students and emphasizes their need for active learning. Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) teachers provide a stimulating environment of challenging materials and engaging activities essential to the growth and development of each child. Research suggests a Pre-Kindergarten program structured around these components best serves children.

The SMSD offers Pre-Kindergarten for 4-year-olds living within the Shawnee Mission School District boundaries. Pre-Kindergarten will be offered for students at 18 sites in the SMSD in the 2020-2021 school year. There are no-fee options for qualifying families and a fee-based program option offered at five sites.

SMSD Pre-K students must be 4 years old by August 31, meet state immunization requirements, and be independent with toileting. Students are enrolled in either the morning or afternoon session and access is on a first-come, first-served basis. Sessions are from 8:15-11 a.m. and 12:15-3 p.m. Students may participate in either the school breakfast or lunch program. Parents are responsible for transportation.

For more information about Pre-Kindergarten, please visit www.smsd.org/academics/early-childhood.

# The Remainder of the 2019-2020 School Year

A Message From the Superintendent

n Tuesday, March 17, 2020, Governor Laura Kelly issued an order, closing school buildings in Kansas for the remainder of the school year. Since that announcement, we have been hard at work, planning and adapting to this new reality. Our goal is to keep our students, staff, and the community safe. The statewide closure of school facilities is only effective if we all adhere to social distancing rules, wash hands regularly, and take other precautions as directed by health professionals.

This news certainly raises the question: What does learning and the school experience look like going forward?

The answer is that learning will continue, with a shift to digital solutions and other strategies which will be shared through different platforms and updates.



Dr. Mike Fulton

The planning process, which started as soon as we understood that school might be disrupted, has the following phases:

#### PHASE 1: CONTINGENCY PLANNING

We began working to address "What if?" scenarios. This behavior is consistent with our "Study, Plan, Act" approach to problem-solving. That preparation allowed us to gear up quickly for implementation of an SMSD plan. District leaders conducted multiple daily virtual planning meetings to formulate and finalize action steps.

#### PHASE 2: DEEP CLEAN BUILDINGS

Custodial and maintenance staff deep cleaned buildings. We want to thank them for the great work they are doing to keep us safe.

#### PHASE 3: MEET BASIC NEEDS

- Free breakfast and lunches is being provided to all children ages 1-18 at four school sites (locations on page 14).
- School nurses are staffing the Johnson County Community COVID-19 Hotline to answer questions. The hotline number is 913-715-2819, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday Friday.

#### PHASE 4: PLANNING FOR LEARNING AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS

- Learning has been designed by certified staff. The Leadership and Learning team, with support from all other departments, worked to provide a framework from which to start. The framework includes guidance to all staff as they virtually returned to work.
- Social/emotional supports will be provided as conditions allow.
- Community needs will be addressed in collaboration with public and private partners when possible.

#### PHASE 5: IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION

Implementation will be subject to adjustments as we learn how to best support our students in a distance-learning environment. We will keep our end goal to provide a safe, secure learning and work environment in mind.

Moving forward, we will provide our community with regular updates on our plans as they develop. We must use our many talents and strengths to support one another. Now, more than ever, we must work together for the benefit of our children and our community.

• Please note, this publication went to press in March. For updated information on the district's COVID-19 response, as well as any changes in scheduled events announced in this magazine, visit www.smsd.org.

## Strategic Plan Update: Focus on Real World Learning



ork on the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan began in January, 2019. The community's 2019-2024 Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Education in June 2019 and includes five strategies:

- Strategy 1: We will reimagine teaching and learning to guarantee relevant opportunities for personalized learning experiences.
- Strategy 2: We will relentlessly create a fully unified, equitable, and inclusive culture.
- Strategy 3: We will create the climate to cultivate quality educators, so they flourish in pursuit of our mission.
- Strategy 4: We will design systems that support our mission and beliefs.
- Strategy 5: We will strategically focus resources to support state-ofthe-art facilities to accomplish our beliefs, mission and objectives.

Work began on each strategy once the Strategic Plan was approved. Action teams, curriculum cadres, and task forces were formed to support the different initiatives included in each strategy. Updates from different teams

were collected and may be found on the SMSD website www.smsd.org under the Strategic Plan tab in the About section. Action items are noted as follows: scheduled implementation, in progress, ongoing, complete, or TBD.

#### **Real World Learning Goals**

One of the initiatives from Strategy 1 was the formation of the Real World Learning Task Force, created with a goal to reimagine college and career readiness for high school students.

Task Force members include staff, parents, administrators, community members, business leaders, and college and university representatives. Real World Learning is supported by a grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. This initiative includes six counties: Cass, Clay, Jackson, Johnson, Platte, and Wyandotte. In this region there are 100,000 high school students and 42 school districts in rural, urban and suburban areas.

Currently 15 school districts, 60 percent of the region, are participating in Real World Learning. The common thread that connects the districts in



this work is that each district includes college and career readiness in their strategic plan.

Dr. Michelle Hubbard, associate superintendent of leadership and learning, Dr. Ryan Flurry, principal of career education campuses and Dr. Darren Dennis, director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment are the facilitators for the Task Force. Goals of the Real World Learning Task Force in the Strategic Plan are:

- Formalize a shared definition and common language for personalized learning.
- Create a framework including an intentional feedback loop to fully support personalized learning from Pre-K through 12th grade.
- Expand and integrate Career and Technical Education pathways.
- Develop on-going job-embedded professional learning around personalized learning to address student voice, choice, pace and place.
- Define research-based best practices in community, industry, citizenship partnerships/experiences and what they look like from Pre-K through 12th grade.
- Identify current partnerships within the district, evaluate for relevance and effectiveness, and establish new partnerships.

• Analyze ways that other districts are currently collaborating with the community and businesses in our area. What is already working locally?

#### Market Value Assets for College and Career Readiness

The objective of the Kauffman Real World Learning Initiative is the expansion of student access to opportunities which give them more value in the job market. Market Value Assets (MVAs) are key high school student outcomes that signal career and college readiness. The Kauffman Foundation defines MVAs as industry-valued, recognized skills acquired in high school that create a more frictionless transition from school to postsecondary education and/or the workplace. MVAs make further education, training, and ultimately, a job more affordable and attainable.

These MVAs include internships, client-connected projects, entrepreneurial experiences, industry-recognized credentials (IRCs), and nine or more hours of college credit earned while in high school.

In the Shawnee Mission School District, high school students have access to MVAs in several different courses and pathways. In the Engineering Signature program, students have the opportunity to receive industry recognized certification in Autodesk software such as Fusion 360 and REVIT used in architecture, engineering and construction.

"This is a certified-user accreditation," clarified Greg Thiel, Project Lead the Way and engineering instructor at the Center for Academic Achievement (CAA). "Students who have become a certified-user have the potential to continue and become certified as a professional-user, but that is a much more challenging certification."

Thiel said he is enthusiastic about the potential expansion of IRCs in engineering that the Real World Learning task force is exploring. He hopes to see Advanced Manufacturing added to the curriculum where innovative technology improves products or processes and certification is associated with the course.

Students in the Digital Electronics course offered in the Engineering Signature Program at the CAA are earning dual credit, another MVA, with Wichita State University. "The course they complete in our Engineering Signature Program is comparable to the first engineering course required at the college level," Jessica Tickle, engineering instructor, noted.

In the Digital Electronics course, students









keep an engineering notebook of the real work they conduct on projects. The notebooks include evidence of their learning, practicing, and application.

"I received an email from a graduate who is attending college telling me he is light years ahead of his classmates because of the Digital Electronics class," Tickle said.

Tickle is also enthusiastic about the first semester of the Cybersecurity course she is teaching. Students in this course could have the opportunity to earn industry certificates like Security+, Networking 101 and A+.

The Shawnee Mission Education Foundation has taken the lead in offering juniors and seniors internships through their Leadership Shawnee Mission program, in order to provide more real-world learning opportunities. Nominated juniors and seniors are enrolled in the three-week program, which includes leadership curriculum and internships. Some of the internship opportunities have translated into summer jobs and then full-time employment.

"The Foundation is committed to expanding internship opportunities and keeping the opportunity financially sustainable," Kimberly Hinkle, executive director for the Foundation shared. Hinkle noted that Leadership Shawnee Mission has provided a beneficial template for growing an internship program in the district.

#### Real World Task Force Update

At the February Task Force meeting, Dr. Mike Fulton, superintendent, welcomed task force members and spoke about the progress of the school district and the Real World Learning task force. "Real World Learning provides a foundation for students to find meaning in their learning," Fulton said. "In Shawnee Mission we have a strong belief in equity and strength in our diversity." He shared that currently, 25 percent of Shawnee Mission high school students graduate with one or more MVAs. He encouraged task force members to "think big" and "plan well."

Much of the work of the task force is done by smaller sub-committees and administrators. Drew Lane, executive director of Information and Communications Technologies and Dr. Dan Gruman, director of assessment and research, presented information on different platforms for collecting and analyzing student data related to IRCs.

Dr. Christy Ziegler, assistant superintendent/chief of support services is working with KC Rising, a metro organization formed in 2014 to achieve a shared vision of regional prosperity for all by aligning and accelerating community efforts for greatest impact. Their work is focusing on recognized and approved credentials in Kansas and Missouri in the fields of Life Sciences, Information Technology, Finance and Insurance, Advanced Manufacturing, Architecture and Engineering, and Supply Chain Logistics.

The group also reviewed three presentations on a student internship app, student career guidance software and a report from "Getting Smart," a learning design firm who conducted analysis on ways to accelerate Real World Learning in the school district.

Dr. Fulton and members of the Real World Learning team will present a proposal to the Kauffman Foundation. The goal of the presentation is to be awarded a three-year grant to help implement and expand Real World Learning and Market Value Assets for Shawnee Mission students and educators.

## A Note from the Shawnee Mission **Education Foundation**

A Message From the Executive Director

he COVID-19 pandemic continues to circle the globe, the economy tumbles and all of us are feeling the fear and uncertainty that comes with the unknown. And yet, I've had so many emails and calls from the community asking, "How can I help?"

In times like these, I often go back to the words of one of my heroes, Fred Rogers. He said:

"Always look for the helpers," my mother would tell me. "There's always someone who is trying to help." I did, and I came to see that the world is full of doctors and nurses, police and firemen, volunteers, neighbors and friends who are ready to jump in to help when things go wrong.



Kimberly Hinkle

In this unprecedented situation we find ourselves in, I am taking the advice of Mr. Rogers and looking for the helpers. And here at the Foundation, we're trying to be helpers, too.

With our buildings closed, many of our kids won't be able to access critical services they get at school. The Shawnee Mission School District has a plan for distributing food so that our students who rely on school breakfast and lunch will still get meals. I'm grateful the Governor of Kansas has temporarily halted evictions, foreclosures and utility shut-offs but we know our families will still have countless needs.

Our Shawnee Mission families are coping with an uncertain financial future, and we are anticipating a great increase in requests to our Cares Fund over the coming weeks and months. We will be assisting with food, hygiene, transportation, and medical and dental services, just to name a few.

The physical offices of the Foundation are currently closed, but we are working closely with our school social workers, nurses and administrators to identify families who need immediate assistance.

Our community has stepped up in the past to make sure the Cares Fund can provide the critical assistance that some of our families so desperately need. I hope you will step up again.

If you are looking for ways to be a helper, please consider making a donation to our Cares Fund.

Please make your donation online at www.smef.org or call 913-993-9360 and one of us will call you back very quickly.

Thank you for the trust you place in us during these times of crisis and thank you for being a helper.

My best to you and yours,

Kim Hinkle **Executive Director** Shawnee Mission Education Foundation











he Shawnee Mission School District, Unified School District #512, has been celebrating its 50th year since unification. In January 1969, the Kansas Legislature passed Senate Bill Number 58 "providing for the establishment of one unified school district to include all of the territory of any rural high school district in which there are located at least two cities of the first class."

As a result of SB #58, effective July 1, 1969, 12 elementary school districts and the Shawnee Mission High School District were unified into what became the Shawnee Mission School District #512. As USD 512, SMSD is the final unified school district in Kansas.

When Shawnee Mission East High School, opened, some community members advocated for the school to be named after Dr. Howard D. McEachen, the acting superintendent.

McEachen, however, was adamant to brand "Shawnee Mission" as a



school district of excellence. He wanted colleges and universities to know students from Shawnee Mission were excellent, too, so the second high school and all high schools that opened in the district were

given the Shawnee Mission name.

At the time of unification, there were 48 elementary schools, 10 junior high schools and four high schools in operation. The Shawnee Mission School District includes the cities of Countryside, Fairway, Lenexa, Merriam, Mission Hills, Mission Woods, Overland Park, Roeland, Shawnee, Westwood, and Westwood Hills.

In September, the Shawnee Mission Education Foundation kicked off the year with their annual breakfast, where alumni shared stories about their learning and teaching in the school district over the past 50 years.

The culmination of the celebration was an event, "Friends & Food" held at the Center for Academic Achievement (CAA) in January. Students and their achievements were the focus of the event. Culinary Arts students prepared the food, and guests enjoyed six different decades of food at stations throughout the building.

Student artwork from kindergarten through 12th grade was on display from more than 20 Shawnee Mission schools.

High school junior and senior students gave guests tours of the Signature Programs housed in the CAA which included, Animation and Game Design, Biotechnology, Culinary Arts and Hospitality, Engineering, and Medical Health Science.

Student musicians and performers entertained guests, including the SM West Drumline, the Indian Woods Middle School Jazz Band, the SM North Crimson Tide Jazz Combo, the SM South String Quartet, and the SM South Improv Troupe. The SM West Jazz Lab Ensemble concluded the evening.

Throughout the year, district videographers from the communications department have been capturing stories, memories, and history for the SMSD Story Corps, YouTube page. Guests can view the different stories on the school district's website, smsd. org, under the "About" tab on the 50th Year page.





## Future Ready: Job Experiences Set Students Up For Success

ames "IT" Hawthorne is finishing this school year with a lengthy resume.

He will conclude his time in the district's post-high transition program this spring with experience in a restaurant, a retirement center, and a retail store. The Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) post-high program provides transition services for students who are ages 18-21 to help prepare them to live and work in the community.

Most recently, he's honed his custodial skills at the Shawnee Mission District Aquatic Center in Lenexa. Each job has helped him improve as an employee, Hawthorne noted. He's grown in his endurance, accuracy, and independence, making him a stronger job candidate.

"The years I've been in this program have been incredible," Hawthorne said. "It's helped me make my decisions more clear about what I want to do in the future."

Hawthorne is among a growing number of students in the SMSD who are exploring future possibilities through experiential learning. This year he is part of a select group of students who are learning through job opportunities coordinated through Shawnee Mission's Special Education Department. As he prepares for his future, Hawthorne says he hopes more employers in our community open up similar opportunities for students like him.

"People who have a disability are just as capable at getting and obtaining a job as a person without a disability," Hawthorne said. "I want other students to know there are people who will hire them regardless of their disability. They aren't dividing us into 'this team can do this' and 'this team cannot do this.' These opportunities make me feel like we are one whole team."

#### Opportunities for Every Student

Chances to explore college and career opportunities are provided to Shawnee Mission students throughout the school year in numerous ways. Whether through field trips, research, digital conversations, internships and externships, and job training, each provides students important insight into their potential paths. These experiences directly align with the district's objective that every student has a personalized learning plan that supports them in being college and career ready and having the interpersonal skills important to life success, according to Dr. Darren Dennis, director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

"We want to provide students with meaningful, real-world opportunities for learning," Dennis noted. "Experiential learning helps students gain a better understanding of their own strengths and what they might want to pursue in the future."

With support from the Special Education Department, students hold positions throughout the community at hotels, nursing homes, fitness centers, hospitals, schools, and retail stores. Students often hold multiple positions throughout the year to gain valuable, varied experience, according to Kelly Chapman, instructional specialist of secondary special education.

"We want students to build the work behaviors they need to be successful, with transferable and marketable skills that they can take across professions," Chapman said.

Job opportunities for high school students enrolled in special education help personalize the learning experience Sherry Dumolien, director of special education said. In authentic environments, students are able to strengthen their skills and work toward the goals specific and important to them.

"Sometimes these jobs allow students



an opportunity to explore specific careers where they have interest," Dumolien said. "Some community partners have said it has led to a more inclusive workplace as we dedicate time and work toward our desired outcomes together."

For some, the experiential learning leads to better understanding of what their next job opportunity could be or what skills to improve upon. In some cases, students have earned full or part-time employment, Chapman said.

"Those are huge successes," she noted. "It is always incredible to see where our students are at the beginning of the year versus the end of the year."

#### **Exploration Leads to** Success

Iames Hawthorne works with a team of peers at the District Aquatic Center. They are responsible for numerous custodial tasks, including sweeping steps, wiping down the bleachers, and cleaning frequently-touched surfaces like railings and locker room doors.

Working with paraprofessional Dele Popoola, the team of students learn their tasks and work throughout their job placement on improving their skills. Lately, Popoola and the students have been working on checking their work and making sure they've completed it to the best of their ability. The opportunity to do this in an actual work setting is invaluable, Popoola noted.

"A simulation only gets you part of the experience," he said. "Having them come to worksites where they work and interact with people is huge. Seeing how they grow is really amazing."

Hawthorne recognizes the ways he has improved through the real-world experience.

> "I've learned I'm able to work longer without wearing down, I've gotten better at accuracy, and I've learned to work more quickly than I did before," Hawthorne said. "The students I work with and I also look out for each other. If I don't understand something, I go to them. I help them to the best of my ability if they don't understand a certain task."

At JOANN Fabric and Craft Stores in Shawnee, Kaylee Mitts is working this semester on stocking

and organizing inventory. Helping customers find what they need is a beloved part of the day as she works on customer service skills.

"I'm friendly and I want to help them find things," Mitts said. "It's my favorite. I like the feeling of helping someone that needs it."

Mitts says her interpersonal skills have grown not only by working at the store, but also by practicing the application process. She's worked on writing a resume, filling out applications, proper handshakes and eye contact. More importantly, through practice she became more confident about the job interview

process by working with her job coach, Elaine Rhodes. They practiced questions and answers to prepare for the experience.

"I used to fidget and giggle in the beginning of the year during a job interview," Mitts said. "Now I am more calm and don't laugh as much. It feels good!"

#### A Stronger Future for All

Employers who provide job placements to Shawnee Mission students are essential to the success of this program, Chapman said. Each opportunity means more tasks and a wider variety of skills students can apply to strengthen their learning. Furthermore, employers often describe that the program strengthens our community in many ways.

"We are able to provide extra support to help places of business run more smoothly," Chapman said. "Working with our students is also a reminder that individuals who are enrolled in special education are a part of our community who have skills to offer. For our students it often helps them realize they can make a difference."

Aquatic Center Manager Marshall McKinney said working with Shawnee Mission Special Education staff, made the placement process easy. He noted that support from special education staff who coach and teach students throughout their job placement made the experience even more successful.

"The interaction with the students and level of care and pride in the work is something we are always seeking in employees," he said.

Hawthorne and the team of students at the Aquatic Center have provided such a positive experience, McKinney is encouraging neighboring businesses to provide similar opportunities.

"The benefits are truly amazing," McKinney said. "We lean on the district to educate and shape the future generations of our community. To partner and help opportunities to strengthen that education is a win-win for everybody."

Business and organizations interested in serving as a job placement site for Shawnee Mission students are encouraged to contact the Special Education Department at 913-993-8600. ●

## COVID-19 Update

n light of the closure of schools through the end of the 2019-2020 school year, our goal continues to be helping students, staff, and community members stay safe and protect their health. The statewide shut-down of school facilities is only effective if we all adhere to social distancing rules, regularly wash hands, and take other precautions as directed by health professionals. The district continues to work in close partnership with the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment to provide accurate information and resources to help keep the community informed.

#### **COVID-19 Hotline**

School nurses are now answering questions about COVID-19 at the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment.

- Call the Hotline at 913-715-2819
- The Hotline is available 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The following is additional information about the virus:

- Adhere to social distancing recommendations.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 are fever of 100.4 and above with a cough. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, stay home. If your symptoms are mild, manage them at home. You should isolate yourself from family members in a separate bedroom and use a separate bathroom. Your

family members should quarantine/stay home for 14 days.

• Being exposed to COVID-19 is not an emergency. If symptoms worsen and you are unable to manage them at home, contact your healthcare provider, urgent care, local hospital, or 911 for further instructions and/or recommendations. Be sure to call and make them aware of your symptoms prior to arrival.

The best way to prevent COVID-19 illness is to avoid being exposed. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

There are many ways to protect our immune systems including:

- Eat nutritious foods
- Get enough sleep
- Hydrate
- Decrease stress •

# SMSD Serves "Pickup and Go Meals" for Children

eginning March 24, 2020, free breakfast and lunch will be provided to all children ages 1 to 18 at four school sites in the Shawnee Mission School District. Students with an IEP enrolled in the SM South Post High Program are also eligible to receive meals. Children must be present to receive breakfast and lunch.

- No reservations are needed.
- Meals will be available for pick up outside the school front drive.
- Meals will be placed on a table for individual pick up.
- One breakfast and one lunch meal will be given for each child present.
- An adult accompanying children may pick up the meals for each child without all children needing to exit a vehicle.
- Students are allowed to walk to school to pick up a meal. Parents are not required to bring the students.
- Please follow social distancing and avoid crowding when coming to the table.

Meals are prepared by District Food Services staff and distributed following food safety and sanitary practices. These meals are funded entirely by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

#### Location(s):

- Comanche Elementary, 8200 Grant St., Overland Park
- Rosehill Elementary, 9801 Rosehill, Lenexa
- Shawanoe Elementary, 11230 W. 75th St., Shawnee
- Hocker Grove Middle School, 10400 Johnson Dr., Shawnee

Dates: Beginning March 24, 2020

Time: 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. on Monday through Friday.

Contact the Food Services Department with any questions at 913-993-9710 or foodservice@smsd.org.

Menus will be rotated and posted on the serving line the day of service. Menus are subject to change due to availability.

Each breakfast meal includes these components: fruit, grain, and milk. Each lunch meal includes these components: protein, fruit/vegetable, grain, and milk.



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# Safe beginnings

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