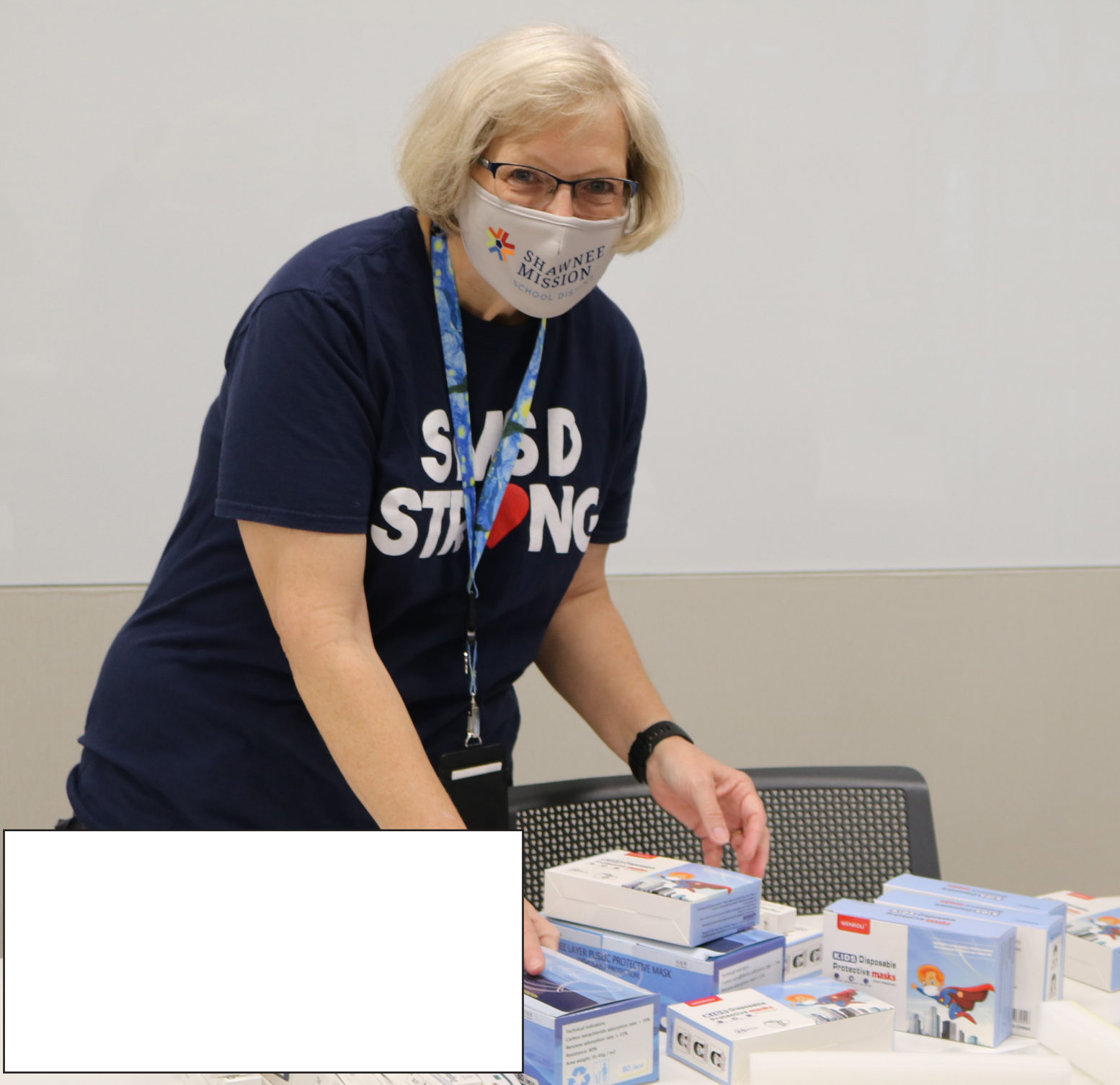


INSIDE



SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT

FALL 2020



> Engaged and Connected: Remote Learning in the SMSD

> SMSD Strong: Strong Schools, Strong Community

> Strength in Social Emotional Learning






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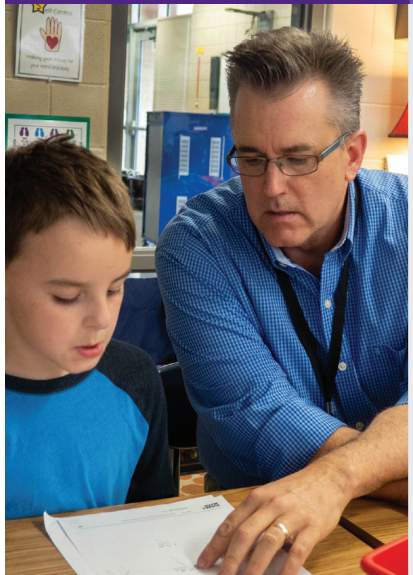
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ON THE COVER: Paula Bunde, Arrowhead Day School and SM West Area Health Services Support Nurse puts together Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

#SMSDstrong   

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

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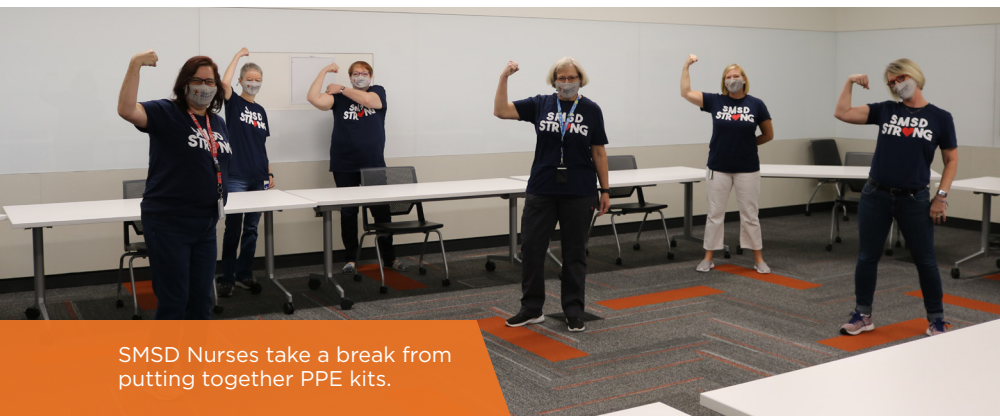
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SMSD Nurses are SMSD Strong



SMSD Nurses take a break from putting together PPE kits.

School nurses have been tireless in their work to keep SMSD students and staff healthy during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Even when buildings shut down in the spring, nurses continued to connect with families to ensure students' health care needs were being met, especially for students with chronic illnesses like asthma and diabetes. They also stepped up to support the health of citizens throughout our community.

Making a Difference During COVID in the Community

In the earliest days of the pandemic, a group of Shawnee Mission School District nurses performed integral roles assisting the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE) with the county COVID hotline. Their support started soon after buildings were closed in the spring and continued throughout the summer.

"The best thing about answering hotline calls was that every call was different and reminded me of school, in that you never know which student might come through the door next," noted Paula Bunde, Arrowhead Day School nurse.

The nurses worked with professionals across the county, creating hotline protocols and determining informed responses, which required updates as more was learned through the course of the pandemic.

"It was a powerful experience to pool our nursing strengths for the good of our community, our state, and country," Stefanie J. Kelley, Corinth Elementary School nurse expressed. "All the nurses, from JCDHE and area schools, practice from the heart, using science, for the safety of our community."

Every call provided an opportunity to provide a sense of familiarity, comfort, and a listening ear for those calling into the hotline, according to JoAnn Blevins, Westwood View Elementary School nurse.

"Every situation was an opportunity to make a connection, help someone cope with their health issues and ease fears and concerns," she added.

Contact Tracing

The nurses also began engaging in the essential role of contact tracing. This task, to help mitigate the spread of disease, involves hours of tracking and conversing with friends, families, and colleagues of community members who test positive or are ill.

These nurses gained experience and expertise over the summer, which helped to inform the planning process for reopening schools.

"With the background I gained volunteering at JCDHE this summer, I am effectively able to help my health services colleagues,

students, and district staff create and safely educate students and mitigate risks to our community," explained Kimberly Martin, Shawanoe Elementary School nurse.

Working Together

Preparing for students to return to buildings in October for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic shut schools down, nurses needed to create plans to safely isolate students who might exhibit coughs, fevers, runny noses, headaches or other symptoms. The nurses decide, based on symptoms, when a student has to be sent home for quarantine or if they may return to the classroom. Students or staff who test positive for the coronavirus must stay home for 10 days, and need to be fever-free before returning to school. Meanwhile, nurse's offices have been transformed to offer areas for triage, assessment, and isolation if needed.

In order to keep students and staff safe from COVID-19, students, staff and families will all need to be involved. The federal recommendations are for children to be screened at home by taking their temperature each morning before they leave for school.

"Curbing this virus requires all of us to work together and do the simplest of things to protect our loved ones," noted Cindy Alexander, Horizons High School nurse. "Wear a mask, watch our distance, wash our hands, watch for symptoms, and stay home if we are sick. If we apply these five principles to any situation it will help us make the best decisions we can." ◆

"When I present on COVID out in our community, people always mention the fact that SMSD has done such a great job staying grounded in the science, because our nurses were willing to serve on our COVID team after they worked the JCDHE Hotline and contact traced all summer. I am so appreciative of the willingness of these nurses to serve our district in this capacity."

-Shelby Rebeck, SMSD Director of Health Services

SMSD Strong: Strategic Plan Update

A Message From the Superintendent

Certainty is an important idea. Certainty provides predictability and comfort in our lives. By contrast, COVID-19 eschews certainty, depriving us of simple life pleasures we once took for granted. We long for a return to normal as it was, and one day we will return to normal. Until then, we have one another to lean on for help through life's daily struggles. That is what our school community is doing. Students, staff and parents are working together to navigate difficult currents of change. It is a difficult journey, with more miles to travel. The good news is that through the turbulent waters, we have not and will not lose sight of our destination.



Dr. Mike Fulton

What is SMSD's destination? It is laid out clearly in our Strategic Plan. Developed by our SMSD community during the 2018-2019 school year and adopted by the Board of Education in June 2019, the strategic plan provides a clear north star for our path ahead. The plan sets forth specific action steps whereby we can achieve our objectives of helping every child develop a personalized learning plan that prepares them to be college and career ready, and supports them in developing the interpersonal skills they need for life success. Adoption of the plan represented a long-term commitment to designing learning in ways that supported every child's success. It provided certainty of focus with the understanding that change in practice would be required to accomplish the objectives.

SMSD's strategic plan has very specific action steps to achieve these objectives. Most action steps center on bringing people together to strengthen relationships, improve instruction and create systems that better support student learning. You can find all of our action steps, along with a chart mapping our progress, on our website, www.smsd.org. The action steps are categorized under five strategies and serve as a road map for a thoughtful, methodical approach to improving learning in SMSD. There is security that comes with a road map, for even as one passes through new landscapes, you know where you are going.

Part of our strategic plan road map addresses facility needs. Another speaks to the need to provide our secondary teachers time to help students engage with personalized learning plans that support college/career readiness and the development of interpersonal skills needed for life success. Specific information about a bond proposal that supports these goals can be found in this magazine. The Board of Education has approved a bond proposal that will be placed on a mail-in ballot due on January 26, 2021. The bond issue is part of a twenty-year plan to help keep SMSD strong for years to come. The certainty of living in a great school district brings comfort, even during the trials and tribulations of a pandemic.

I know life is difficult right now. Nothing is quite as it used to be, and yet, we can find certainty and comfort in helping one another. Together we make SMSD STRONG. Together we make SMSD a great place to live. Together we make our community safe. So together, let's all find comfort in the certainty that we are taking care of one another by wearing a mask, maintaining a safe distance, and avoiding situations that lead to the transmission of COVID-19. Be safe and thank you for all you do. ◆

Engaged and Connected

Remote learning in the SMSD



Margot Tuttle, Shawnee Mission South student, Jalen Juan, Shawnee Mission North senior, and Shaun Brown, Shawnee Mission North senior join a virtual field trip hosted by SM North orchestra teacher Anna Cook.

Shaun Brown, a Shawnee Mission North High School senior, woke up every Friday this fall excited for something unexpected. He spent time each week guessing with friends where in the city their orchestra teacher, Anna Cook, would be teaching.

“It’s a nice surprise to wake up and think, ‘Boom, it’s Friday. What’s new?’” Brown shared.

“Every week we’re trying to guess where in Kansas City she might be.”

While teaching remotely, Cook turned the Kansas City metropolitan area into her classroom. Students found her at locations like KC Strings, where students learned about how their orchestra instruments were made. They learned about jazz history and musical styles when she visited the American Jazz Museum. They studied “Carnival of Animals” by Camille Saint-Saens as she taught from the Kansas City Zoo.

Fridays gave the students shared experiences they otherwise might not have had, Brown said.

“It’s not like only one person got to go to 18th and Vine,” he noted. “Everyone is in the same situation and we’re learning because Ms. Cook does a great job of teaching and making it fun.”

Inspired to use the new, remote learning opportunity in innovative ways, Cook arranged the trips she and her students otherwise might never have been able to make.

“I wanted to get us out of a bubble and realize how much Kansas City has to offer,” she said. “I’m bonding with the students as we learn and explore together. It’s been so fun to learn about these topics.”

Brown said he is taking away a lot more from the field trips beyond the surprise element.

Each lesson has helped him become a better musician and connect with his classmates, he said.

“We’re still having the same experiences together. Build-

ing relationships will help us when we are playing music together as a group,” Brown said.

Building Connection and Continuity

This school year, the majority of Shawnee Mission students and teachers will have engaged in remote learning at some point. While the settings are different, the district’s mission to provide robust learning opportunities remains the same.

All remote learners in the SMSD are connected with a certified Shawnee Mission educator who is committed to providing research-based instruction and building relationships with students, according to Dr. Laura Brogdon, principal of SMSD Connect, the district’s remote learning program.

Like Anna Cook’s orchestra class, some classes have held virtual field trips this fall and began to work on extended hands-on projects. Some have begun engineering Rube Goldberg machines with at-home materials for STEM lessons, or have been cooking in their home kitchen for Family and Consumer Science classes. While each classroom is different, students learning remotely follow a schedule, attend daily meetings with their teachers and classmates, and even work both in groups and independently.

“Our teachers are a huge asset to our students and their learning,” Brogdon said. “They are providing instruction and the best of what they delivered in the four walls of their classroom in the remote world.”

On a recent day in Ashley Brown’s remote kindergarten classroom, students engaged in a learning day focused on pumpkins. Students compared the weights of different pumpkins with their teacher, created a pumpkin drawing with a face, wrote a story, and conducted an experiment about whether pumpkins would float or sink. Each lesson drew upon the same materials and curriculum she would use in class

and connected to priority standards. The setting is different, but many learning experiences are the same, Brown explained.

“Every year, I have students that take longer to adjust to school,” Brown said. “It’s normal. I have heard from multiple families that things are going way better than they expected. Their child is loving school. I have a lot of student engagement during my live lessons. Students raise their hands to answer questions, get up and do the dances with me, are completing activities through Canvas (the district’s learning management software), and participate in the learning games we play.”

Stephanie Nielsen, SMSD parent



Anna Cook, SM North orchestra teacher talks to students during their virtual field trip.

said three of her children, ranging from elementary through high school, are engaged in remote learning this fall. She’s found classes to be engaging, and found it to be an improvement over Spring 2020, when school buildings closed quickly.

“You can tell teachers have found time to process and figure this out,” Nielson said.

Her son, Owen, is learning in Krissondra Rydzal’s remote learning fourth grade classroom.

Together, Rydzal’s fourth-graders are practicing sentence structure by writing silly sentences, journal writing, making predictions for story reading, using at-home materials to engineer apple trappers to pick apples, and engaging with one another in morning meetings. They have even come up with their own classroom name and mascot.

“Does it look different? Yes,” Rydzal said. “But, are we still learning? Absolutely.” ♦

SMSD STRONG

Strong Schools, Strong Community

This January, all Shawnee Mission School District residents will have the opportunity to make an important decision about Shawnee Mission School District facilities.

On October 26, 2020, the Shawnee Mission Board of Education unanimously voted to move forward with a bond referendum that will take place through a mail-in ballot election starting early January 2021.

Supporting Student Learning

In addition to facilities improvements, and with recommended guardrails in place, this allows a pathway to address hiring additional teachers. This pathway would allow additional secondary certified staff to support student learning and can be funded sustainably for the long term.

What does the bond include?

Elementary Schools

District Centers

Middle Schools

High Schools

Security and technology upgrades

Roof, asphalt, HVAC and lighting upgrades, and replacement

Proposed Bond Projects

- Rebuild 5 elementary schools
- Playground renovations
- Shawnee Mission Early Childhood Education Center Renovations
- Career and Tech Campus Remodel
- Renovations, furniture replacement, support, and maintenance

SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING

Operating

Capital

Bond

We are currently spending money out of the capital fund for new facilities. Under this plan, facilities will be covered in bond money. That allows the district to shift some custodial/maintenance salaries into the capital fund. This frees up money in the operating fund to hire additional teachers and better support student learning.

Pathway to Achieve Goals

\$750M in Bond Issue Projects in the next 18 years with a 2-3% assessed valuation (AV) annual increase.

2020 - 2021 \$264.2 M Tax rate increase to 8.142 mills (0.708 increase equals \$8 per \$100K home value)

2026 - 2027 \$242.9 M Tax rate increase to 10.232 mills (2.090 increase equals \$24 per \$100K home value)

2032 - 2033 \$242.9 M Tax rate increase to 11.208 mills (0.976 increase equals \$11 per \$100K home value)

The History: Strategic Plan Approved and Research Conducted

The Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) community developed and presented a Strategic Plan for 2019-2024.

- June 2019: The Board of Education members approved the plan in June 2019. The next step was to begin research and planning for a bond proposal to bring to the community in 2020.
- Summer 2019: The Shawnee Mission School District conducted a facilities evaluation on the 10 oldest elementary schools, along with all middle and high schools, as part of the Strategic Plan. The information was compiled by architects, engineers, and building administration to collectively define ongoing facility needs/issues for each school.
- October 2019: The district held informational forums on separate nights at each of the five high schools, and presented a preliminary list of

priorities for a potential bond issue. SMSD gathered feedback through surveys from attendees at the Facilities Forums.

- November 2019: The SMSD Board of Education approved the establishment for the standing district Finance and Facilities Committee. The primary purpose of the Finance and Facilities Committee is to review and advise the district and the Board of Education on finance and facilities issues, in alignment with the implementation of the SMSD Strategic Plan. Committee members are to review the operating, designated revenue, and capital budgets of the district, including the finances of the bond projects.
- March 2020: After the COVID-19 pandemic closed all school buildings, the district put the plans for a bond on hold.

Moving Forward

In July, a scientific survey was conducted by Patron Insight. The survey

included interviews with 500 individuals across all five district feeder patterns. The results of this survey were shared at an August Board of Education meeting. The bond scenario approved by the Board of Education was developed based on the feedback community members provided in the survey.

“The results are statistically in favor of supporting a bond and patrons are interested in what is best for the district and our students,” noted Ken DeSieghardt, president of Patron Insight.

Russell Knapp, SMSD Chief Financial Officer, shared budget and finance information at several board meetings. SMSD currently has the lowest mill levy of all school districts in Johnson County and, based on estimates through 2032-2033, would continue to have a comparatively low rate. This bond issue would result in a \$8 increase to an individual with a \$100,000 home.

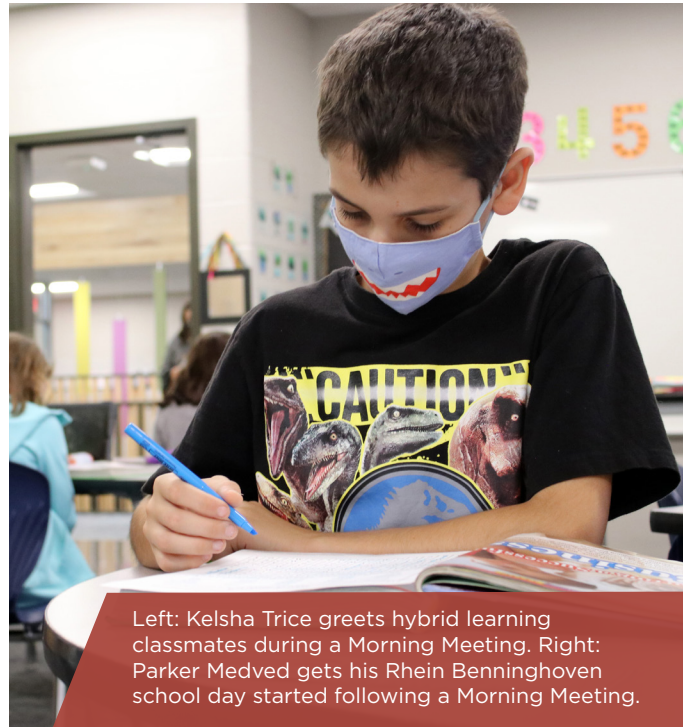
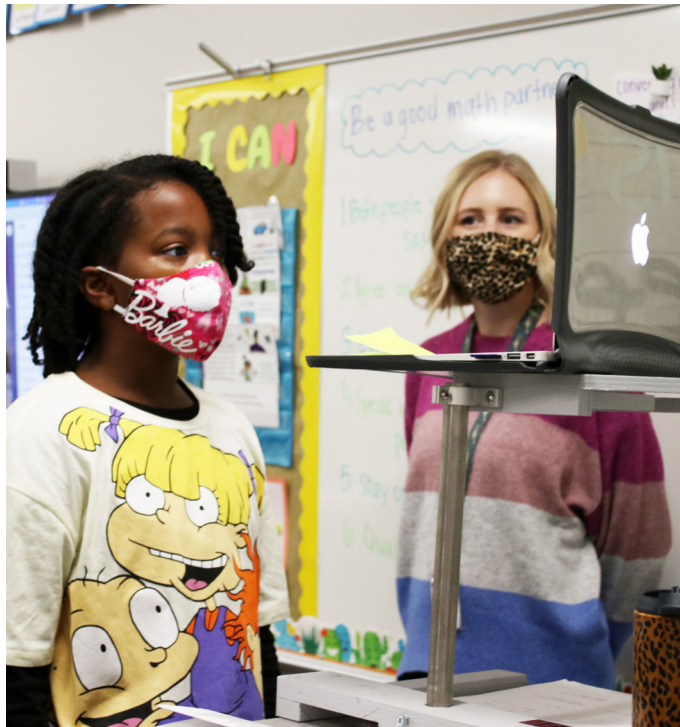
“Our hope is if the bond passes, we can have a couple of our elementary rebuilds coming up out of the ground in June 2021,” Dr. Rick Atha, Deputy Superintendent noted.

The bond referendum will be on January 26, 2021. To find out more visit <https://www.smsd.org/bond-2021>.

Johnson County School District Mill Levies			
Total estimated mill levy by 2032-2033			
	Current	Proposed	
Shawnee Mission	52.115	55.889	
Blue Valley	62.803		
DeSoto	63.479		
Gardner-Edgerton	65.569		
Spring Hill	67.937		
Olathe	69.851		

“This is important work and everything included on this ballot is based on input from students, families, staff and community members.”

- Dr. Mary Sinclair, Board Vice President and Finance and Facilities Vice Chair



Left: Kelsha Trice greets hybrid learning classmates during a Morning Meeting. Right: Parker Medved gets his Rhein Benninghoven school day started following a Morning Meeting.

Strength in Social Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning is a Priority in the SMSD

It is a part of the daily routine Parker Medved has come to appreciate.

“If we didn’t have Morning Meetings, the day probably wouldn’t get started as well,” Medved, a Rhein Benninghoven fourth grader said. “It tells me a lot about what we will do and what we need for the day.”

In any morning tour of an elementary school classroom across the SMSD, remote or in-person, students will be found in a similar activity: The Morning Meeting. One will likely find students and staff talking about their interests and feelings, playing games, reviewing their daily schedule, and building Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills.

In this unconventional school year, it’s one example of a way teachers and students are dedicating time to connecting, paying attention to mental health, and strengthening their Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills.

SEL was prominently featured in the district’s reopening plans for students in Pre-K through 12th grade and supports the district objective that students build interpersonal skills. Taking care of students’ basic needs, including mental health, is essential to helping them achieve academic success, Dr. John McKinney, director of student and family services said.

“The philosophy is really at the heart of this school year,” Dr. McKinney noted. “As a school district, we all must focus on

building connections with our students and families now and continue to build those relationships during the school year.”

Elementary SEL

In Morning Meetings, elementary students and staff participate in a range of activities and discussions to check in with one another.

On a recent weekday, ApacheIS third-grade teacher Angie Mitrisin and Jace Stephenson, student teacher, led students in remote learning chair yoga. Then they engaged in classroom conversation. At the beginning of the year,

What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

The Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning defines SEL as “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to:

- Understand and manage emotions
- Set and achieve positive goals
- Feel and show empathy for others
- Establish and maintain positive relationships
- Make responsible decisions

(Source: casel.org)

questions are simple, getting students comfortable with talking in front of their peers. With time, the relationships build, and students answer questions like what makes them scared or about their hopes and dreams. In addition to providing a predictable and consistent part of the day, the discussion with students makes it easier to identify when a students’ behavior changes or may need additional support, Mitrisin said. She often references what she hears during the Morning Meeting throughout the day with her students.

“My number one thing is connecting with my students,” Mitrisin said. “Making connections with them helps them feel valued.”

Rhein Benninghoven fourth grader Kelsha Trice said she likes that her class takes time to help her get to know her classmates and lets her practice the skill of getting to know people.

“When you ask people what they like, it helps you to get to know them,” Kelsha said. “Some of my classmates like cheese pizza. I like cheese pizza too, so it helps me know we have something in common.”

Morning Meetings and the way SEL is infused throughout the school day reinforce the concepts Paula Pyle, social worker, hopes students will learn. Pyle also meets with classrooms as well as students on an individual basis to further support their mental health.

“That continued learning builds community,” Pyle said. “When we feel safe and connected we gain a sense of community and a sense of social and self-awareness.”

Secondary SEL

Staff are working to incorporate SEL everywhere they can at the secondary level, social worker Emily Dorothy, Shawnee Mission North social worker noted. It can be seen in schoolwide programs to address topics from personal strengths to preventing suicide, in professional development opportunities for teachers, and in the way teachers dedicate time in the classroom, Dorothy noted. Students are also involved in mentoring programs and “Sources of Strength,” a program to prevent suicide.

“These student leaders will frequently let staff know of students that are struggling, so that we can connect them with additional support,” Dorothy said.

Especially this year, teachers are making time for interactive activities during class, offering breakout rooms for student groups, asking students for feedback about their experiences, and making time for students to meet one-on-one if they need to talk.

“Our teachers work hard to build relationships and, because of that, we hear from students, notice changes, and can become trusted adults students can depend upon,” Dorothy said.

“Staff are in position to teach skills such as persevering through a difficult assignment or test, managing anxieties when feeling overwhelmed, working with peers who have different perspectives, and expressing emotions in an appropriate manner. Mental health is the responsibility of all school staff as it impacts all areas of students’ lives.”

Students and teachers have worked hard to get students

involved and engaged in classes and extracurricular activities, and even hosted a virtual spirit week to connect as a community, shared Connor Bell, a Shawnee Mission North junior who serves as a freshmen mentor and on the school’s Student Council and pep club.

“I think everyone is understanding how tough our situation is on some people and have really offered their help to one

Mental Health is the responsibility of all staff, not just social workers and counselors, John McKinney, director of student and family services said. As a district we are committed to:

- Educating all school staff about trauma and mental health.
- Ensuring all staff know how to connect students to mental health services.
- Involving the school community in efforts to support students and staff.
- Paying attention to the mental health needs of school staff.
- Acknowledging not all communities have experienced the pandemic in the same way.
- “If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health concerns, know you are not alone,” McKinney added. “Please reach out to your building social worker or principal. They want to help.”



Kindergartners gather for a Morning Meeting at Rhein Benninghoven.

another, whether it is in regard to academics or mental health,” Bell shared. “Personally, there’s been so many people I’ve now become friends with over virtual learning that I don’t think would have happened had we not been in this situation because people are just so willing to be of aid in such an odd time.”

Leaders in the Freshman Mentor Program (FMP) have worked hard to find ways to authentically communicate and connect with younger students, Gabriella Lacey, Shawnee Mission North senior and FMP mentor said. It is also important that students continue to check in with their peers, even with a simple reach out saying “You good?”

“We are going through this together – all students,” Lacey noted. “We listen to each other and laugh and cry because no one is going to understand a student struggle better than another student. The relationships we build in this situation are going to make us feel better and stronger and have the support to get through it all.” ♦

Scholarship Shawnee Mission Serving Shawnee Mission Seniors



Above: Shawnee Mission Education Foundation Board of Directors display district-wide scholarship banner. Right: Maria Heath, SM South senior, receives scholarship offers from Kim Hinkle, Foundation executive director.



It was a week full of surprises, fist bumps and happy tears. The Shawnee Mission Education Foundation kicked off the annual Scholarship Shawnee Mission program by delivering offers to several Shawnee Mission seniors from each of the five high schools and Horizons High School.

The Shawnee Mission School District seniors collectively received more than \$1.7 billion in scholarship offers for the 2021-2022 school year.

This year's announcements were different than last year, when students gathered for assemblies in gymnasiums. A group of administrators, Foundation staff, and board members caravanned to homes of seniors in their area. They surprised these seniors with their scholarship offers, as representatives of their class. Letters with scholarship offers have since been mailed to all senior recipients.

Surprised Seniors

"I'm speechless and wasn't planning on crying this morning," exclaimed Bella Zipf, Shawnee Mission North senior, when representatives from the Foundation, SM North principals, and Mike Fulton, SMSD superintendent, knocked on her door.

"I've been so worried about the cost of college," Trinity Peterson, Shawnee Mission North senior shared. "This is amazing!"

The best part of the day was the student reactions, and their genuine shock and surprise, Dr. Jeremy Higgins, Shawnee Mission North principal, noted.

When representatives visited Maria Heath, SM South

senior, she shared she had made a college visit to Drake University and that was her top choice, although she was worried about the expense and her ACT score. "Drake has an excellent Public Relations program, which is what I want to major in, and it's close to home. Drake checked all the boxes for me," Heath said.

Kim Hinkle, Shawnee Mission Education Foundation executive director, pulled a letter out of Heath's envelope and shared that one of her more than 30 scholarship offers included an offer from Drake University.

An overwhelmed Heath thanked Foundation and South staff members at the presentation, exclaiming, "This offer will make it happen!"

Mikah Hottman, Horizons senior and scholarship recipient, shows up every day and gets her work done, according to Laura Raney, the school counselor at Horizons. Raney shared that Hottman is on the yearbook staff and works a

part-time job. She is interested in pursuing a career in the medical field which she is so well suited for, with her caring and dependable personality.

"Without these scholarships, college just wouldn't have been an option for me, I didn't know I had the grades or requirements, to even qualify. This is an opportunity I didn't know I had," Hottman shared.

Breaking Down Barriers and Opening Options

Hinkle explained that Scholarship Shawnee Mission is a program where SMSD parents can opt in to share their student's data with partner colleges and universities. "Much like athletes are recruited by colleges, we think our students who excel academically should be recruited, and through Scholarship SM they are," Hinkle noted.

Ed Márquez, Program Officer for Scholarship Shawnee Mission, shared that he got the idea watching college football. A huge fan of collegiate sports, it struck him that it must feel cool as a high school student to receive offers from colleges even before applying. What an advantage it provides to have colleges reach out to you first. "And I thought, what about students who don't play football?" said Márquez, "Shouldn't they have the same opportunities?"

The Scholarship Shawnee Mission model began. The first step was getting permission from parents to release student data. Parents with students in seventh through twelfth grade may "opt in" to Scholarship Shawnee Mission through Skyler, the messaging platform the district uses to communicate with parents.

Connecting with Colleges and Universities

Márquez forged partnerships with 27 colleges and universities in the first year of the program, and there are currently 42 college and university partners in the second year. "Our goal is to have a college in every state," Márquez shared.

William Jewell College, one of the first Scholarship Shawnee Mission partners, supports the program because it allows students to get a different perspective and exposure to schools they may not have considered. William Palmer, Director of Student Recruitment, believes that

the offer letters start a dialogue. This may lead to the school learning about other interests, and additional scholarship offers for prospective students.

"Right now, in the midst of a pandemic, our learning doesn't stop. There are still plenty of opportunities on our campus and since we are local, with small classes, William Jewell could be a good fit," Palmer noted.

"We appreciate the SMSD and this great initiative and appreciate your very qualified students."

As she works with students on their college and career readiness, Cindy Neely, SM West, counselor coordinator appreciates that Scholarship SM creates an atmosphere of college aspiration among so many students. "Scholarship SM opens doors and creates options for our seniors that they hadn't realized existed before they were presented with their scholarship letters," Neely noted.

Márquez explains the program as a way to help students get a grasp on the various options they might not have considered. There are so many institutions and he advises that students schedule college visits and think about several different factors, including finances, location, size, and, public versus private.

"One of the best things about Scholarship Shawnee Mission is that it can make students aware of colleges and universities they perhaps hadn't been considering, noted Brenda Tretbar, SM East counselor. "Some students tend to narrow their choices prematurely to colleges they're already familiar with, and may not know much about other schools. These offers really broaden possibilities for those students."

Varshini Murugesh, SM Northwest senior, expressed what many students are thinking when she sent this note to Dr. Lisa Gruman, principal.

"I am very grateful for the scholarships and recognition I received this morning. I honestly have to thank Shawnee Mission Northwest's teachers and staff for fostering such a welcoming community. I've had many positive learning experiences at this school. I was so shocked and nervous that I couldn't express my emotions very well in that moment. For that I apologize. Deep down, I was very happy about the visit. I want to say thanks to you and everyone else that was here today. It truly means a lot to me. Thank you so much for everything that you do for this school and community." ◆



Left: Foundation team displays SMNW scholarship banner with Varshini Murugesh, SM Northwest senior. Right: Heaven Getahun, SM North senior, receives scholarship offers from Kim Hinkle.

Join the SMSD Team

Would you or someone you know like to make an impact in your community? You can do so by joining our support team. Shawnee Mission School District is currently seeking team members for the following positions:

- Paraprofessionals
- Classroom Aides
- English Language Learner Aides
- Food Service Assistants
- Custodians
- Grounds and Maintenance Technicians
- Carpenter
- Small Engine Mechanic
- Building Service Technician
- Technology Support

Each position offers a competitive starting salary and benefits package for those working a minimum of 20 hrs/week. Benefits include: health insurance, paid leave, paid holidays and summers off with some positions.



We'd love to work with you!

Join the Shawnee Mission School District Team!

To learn more about these positions and how to join the SMSD team please visit: www.smsd.org/human-resources. ♦

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

The SMSD offers Pre-Kindergarten for 4-year-olds living within the Shawnee Mission School District boundaries. We continue to enroll students for the 2020-2021 school year at sites where space is available and in our remote learning model. There are no-fee options for qualifying families and a fee-based program option.

SMSD Pre-K students:

- must be 4 years old by August 31
- meet state immunization requirements
- be independent with toileting.



For more information about Pre-Kindergarten, please visit www.smsd.org/academics/early-childhood or call 913-993-6441 for more information.

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Shawnee Mission Parents as Teachers Earns Blue Ribbon Designation

The Shawnee Mission Parents as Teachers program has earned a Blue Ribbon Affiliate designation from the national Parents as Teachers (PAT) organization.

“Your designation is the result of dedicated teamwork, strategic planning, and passionate service by your organization,” a letter from the PAT national center staff stated. The designation came as a result of a yearlong process to demonstrate the organization meets quality standards. Shawnee Mission PAT was recognized for meeting 91 percent of the essential requirements.

Parents as Teachers Enrolling Now

Families from birth to age 3 who live in the SMSD are able to enroll in (PAT). The program connects families with trained educators and promotes early development, learning, and health of children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers.

Families enrolling their first child by the age of 9 months are eligible to participate in monthly home visits, now being



conducted virtually, in addition to all of the resources and events offered through the SM Parents as Teachers program. Families enrolling children ages 10 months to 36 months are invited to attend group meetings, participate in the play center, check out resources from our lending library, receive developmental assessments and hearing screenings, and join/take part in Parents as Teachers PTA events.

“Parents as Teachers helped from the first visit,” Aimee Hanan, parent said. “I had no idea to expect the absolute wealth of knowledge. They fully support parents. It has helped us build our confidence as parents and has given us so many ideas.” ♦

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- Shortness of breath without chest discomfort
- Pain in arms, upper back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Fainting
- Cold sweats
- Dizziness
- Pressure in center of chest
- Insomnia
- Unusual fatigue

When you learn more about your health, you're learning how to take better care of your incredible self. Take the AdventHealth Heart Risk Assessment today to find out more about your heart and how to keep it healthy at every stage of life.