SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT



SPRING 2022



> NOW ENROLLING PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN > REAL WORLD LEARNING

> ESSENTIAL SUBJECT: SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING



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Features



- **4** > The Hub: Updates from Superintendent Dr. Michelle Hubbard
- 6 > Now Enrolling Pre-K and Kindergarten
 - Summer Opportunities in the SMSD
- **8** > Bond Construction Underway
- > Real World Learning
- **10 >** Essential Subject: Social Emotional Learning
- 12 > You're Invited to the SMSD R&D Forum
- **13** > Shawnee Mission Education Foundation: Keeping SMSD Strong

ON THE COVER: Westridge Middle School students paint on a school wall during mural club with InterUrban ArtHouse.

#KeepingSMSDStrong ft

Help us share great news from our district on social media at @thesmsd.

INSIDE

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

Inside Shawnee Mission School District is published by the Communications Team in the Shawnee Mission School District. Board of Education Mary Sinclair, President Sara Goodburn, Vice President Jamie Borgman April Boyd-Noronha Jessica Hembree Heather Ousley Brad Stratton





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The Hub

Updates from Superintendent Dr. Michelle Hubbard

s this issue reaches you, spring is here and we are in the final weeks of the 2021-22 school year. It has been another semester of challenging decisions due to the pandemic. I am so proud of our focus on keeping our schools and students safe, healthy, and learning.

Our students and programs have made tremendous progress this year. As graduations and end-of-the year celebrations approach, the coming days promise to be filled with even more amazing achievements.



Dr. Michelle Hubbard

Students in the Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) continue to excel academically by multiple measures. The following are just some of the many distinctions the SMSD and our students have recently earned:

- The SMSD's ACT composite average for 2021 graduates was 21.5. The state average was 19.9 and the national average was 20.3.
- 13 Shawnee Mission seniors were named National Merit semifinalists by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.
- Students in the SMSD have earned the highest number of Seal of Biliteracy Certificates in the state. The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) recognizes 116 SMSD students for earning the Kansas Seal of Biliteracy, based on 2020-2021 results. A certificate recognizes any student who has attained proficiency in English and one or more other world languages. This achievement is placed on students' high school transcripts and recognizes their readiness for career, college, and engagement as a global citizen, according to KSDE.
- Briarwood, Broken Arrow, and Trailwood elementary schools have all been recognized as Apple Distinguished Schools. This recognition is given to schools who are centers of innovation, leadership, and educational excellence, especially in their use of technology to support education. This is the third time all three of these schools have received this honor.
- More than 1900 seniors received scholarship offers totaling over \$2.1 billion through the Shawnee Mission Education Foundation's Scholarship Shawnee Mission program.

Unified Sports

Another achievement that I am particularly proud of is the fact we now have Unified Sports competitors in every Shawnee Mission high school.

Unified Sports puts student athletes of all abilities on the same team, celebrating inclusion and friendly sports competition. This has been accomplished in partnership with the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) and Special Olympics Kansas.



This fall, the Unified Bowling Teams from every comprehensive SM high school participated in the regional Unified Bowling Tournament. SM South and SM East advanced to participate in the inaugural Unified Bowling state tournament. SM South has received national attention for their efforts to enhance Unified Sports in the SMSD. They were recognized and placed on the Special Olympics' ESPN 2021 Honor Roll alongside 24 other high schools nationwide as a Special Olympics National Banner School.

To show my support for this wonderful program and its athletes, I joined the SM West Vikings team in taking a Polar Plunge to support Special Olympics and Unified Sports. This very cold event is held to support Special Olympics Kansas and their work to support individuals with intellectual disabilities through competition. I appreciated the invitation from the Shawnee Mission West team to celebrate a cause that is going to help students across our district.

PTA National Awards



The National PTA recognized two Shawnee Mission schools for strong family-school relationships. Broken Arrow Elementary PTA, and Shawnee Mission North High School Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) earned the National PTA School of Excellence designation for 2020-2022.

The two Shawnee Mission schools are the only schools in the state to earn this national recognition. National PTA presents this in honor of the schools' commitments to building an "inclusive and welcoming school community where all families contribute to enriching the educational experience and overall well-being for all students." School community members work together to complete a survey as

School community members work together to complete a survey as part of applying for this designation. Through the community survey, an objective and goal must be identified meeting the National PTA standards for family and school partnerships. I was honored to attend a Kansas State Board of Education meeting in Topeka where the schools' PTA leadership and administration were recognized.

Read Across SMSD

I wanted to provide an update on Read Across SMSD. This initiative, hosted in partnership with NEA Shawnee Mission, continues to promote reading throughout our community. As I visit schools across the district, it has been exciting to see students and teachers engaging with the books and hearing the excellent conversations the books have inspired.

Each month of Read Across SMSD brings a new theme. In February, the theme was "Explore Families and History." Dr. Jarius Jones, director of classified human resources, Jennifer Maleta, music teacher, and students from Rising Star elementary introduced "The Electric Slide and Kai" by Kelly J. Baptist. Then they

showed us how to dance the electric slide, just like the main character in the book.

The March theme is "Play With Stories." Dr. Leigh Anne Neal, chief of early childhood/sustainability, along with Pre-K students from Brookridge and Shawanoe elementary schools, introduced us to "Jump at the Sun: The True Life Tale of Unstoppable Storycatcher Zora Neale Hurston" by Alicia D. Williams. They showed us how reading together, telling stories out loud, acting out stories and writing stories helps us all learn and grow.

I encourage everyone to join us as we Read Across SMSD. You can find the monthly theme, video, and additional resources on the Read Across SMSD webpage: https://www.smsd.org/about/read-across-smsd. •



Enrolling Now for SMSD **Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten**



he Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) is now enrolling Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students for the 2022-2023 school year! Pre-K and Kindergarten students in the SMSD explore, imagine, and discover unlimited possibilities for their future.

Online enrollment is open now! Visit www.smsd.org or scan the OR code for enrollment links.

Enrollment must be completed on a desktop, laptop, or tablet. It will not work on a mobile phone. For help with Kindergarten enrollment, please contact your area school. For help with Pre-K enrollment, please contact the Early Childhood office at 913-993-6441.

Pre-Kindergarten

Pre-K is offered at specified locations and is open to all SMSD children who are 4-years-old on or before August 31, 2022. (Students who are five years old on or before August 31 are not eligible for Pre-K.) Fee and no-fee options for Pre-Kindergarten are offered in the 2022-2023 school year across the district. Pre-K is a half-day program and wraparound care is available through Johnson County Park and Recreation and YMCA.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a full-day program offered in every SMSD elementary school.

A child must be 5-years-old on or before August 31, 2022 to enroll in Kindergarten, by state law.

Kindergarten Kickoff events will be held in the evenings at every SMSD elementary school from April 7 to April 22, 2022. At these events, students and families are able to spend time in the school and learn more about the kindergarten experience. For more information about Kindergarten and the enrollment process, scan the QR Code or call 913-993-6464.



Scan here to

learn more about

Kindergarten.





for enrollment information.

Pre-K in SMSD

- » Play-Based Learning
- » Qualified Educators
- » Locations across the district
- » Interactive and Collaborative Lessons
- » Developmentally and Educationally Appropriate Education

Kindergarten in the SMSD

- » Personalized learning experiences
- » Qualified educators
- » Hands-on and project-based learning
- » Individual, small group, and whole group

SMSD Summer Enrichment and Satellite Program Classes 2022!

ummer Enrichment gives students a chance to explore classes like art, music, technology, science, sports, and more!

The program is open to students in Pre-K (age 4 by June 1) through seventh grade. Summer Enrichment will be held at Trailridge Middle School, 7500 Ouivira Road.

Signature Program satellite classes are held at the Center for Academic Achievement, 8200 W. 71st St. for students in sixth and seventh grade in the 2021-2022 school year. This gives students a chance to explore unique Signature Program classes like Camp Care (focused on medical health), culinary arts, and Summer Farm Enrichment (learning how food is grown and harvested).

Summer Enrichment and Satellite Program classes will be held June 12 through July 1 and July 11-22. No classes will be held on June 20 and the week of July 4. Morning and afternoon sessions are available.



Scan here for more info or visit www.smsd.org/academics/ summer-programs

Summer Meals in the SMSD

eals for children will be offered in the Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) over the summer. More information is coming soon!

Watch www.smsd.org and SMSD Twitter and Facebook (@thesmsd) for times and locations. To find Food Services resources click the button on the front page of www.smsd.org. For more information on food resources nearby, contact the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Hunger Hotline to find meal sites, food banks, and other services at 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE. Text USDA for more info at 914-342-7744.







This page will also provide helpful resources like menus:





Bond Construction Underway

he Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) is thankful for the community's vote in favor of a \$264 million bond in 2021. Over the past year, this bond has supported facilities updates across the district. It also allows the district to shift funding structures to hire additional secondary educators to better support student learning.

These projects advance the district's goal to continue to be ranked among the finest school districts in the nation, employing exceptional educators who work in state-of-theart facilities where learners achieve their full potential.

Elementary Rebuilds

As a result of the bond, five elementary schools are being rebuilt. In 2021, construction started on Westwood View and John Diemer elementary schools. Looking ahead, the rebuilding process will begin on Rushton Elementary and Tomahawk Elementary in 2023.

Pawnee Construction Begins

This spring, SMSD breaks ground on a new Pawnee Elementary school.

Design planning for the new Pawnee Elementary building started with visioning sessions with families, staff, and community members. The ideas, suggestions, and recommendations were a valuable part of designing a new Pawnee Elementary that will meet the needs of students and families today and into the future.

SMSD's district-wide objective is that each student will have a personalized learning plan that will prepare them for college and careers, with the interpersonal skills they need for life success. The new Pawnee will support this objective by featuring flexible learning spaces throughout the school for increased collaboration, an outdoor learning space, and a walking path. In addition, the building will be filled with natural light and contemporary design elements.

Facilities Improvements Across the District

Over the course of the 2021-2022 school year, upgrades also began on Shawnee Mission North and Shawnee Mission Northwest high schools, and Indian Woods middle school. Restrooms are being updated in each of these buildings. Shawnee Mission North is gaining a new weight room. Upgrades are being made to the Shawnee Mission Northwest commons area. Indian Woods is gaining an addition to the south part of its building to increase the amount of learning space.

In 2022, learning space upgrades are planned for Westridge Middle School, Horizons, Shawnee Mission East, and the Shawnee Mission Early Childhood Education Center.

To keep up to date with the bond construction work visit: www.smsd.org/bond-2021.



he Real World Learning virtual storefront created by Shawnee Mission West students is officially open for browsing and shopping. On Thursday, January 27, the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, Shawnee Mission Education Foundation, and Oak Park Mall hosted a ribbon cutting to celebrate the innovative space, which features student-owned businesses.

Digital marketing and entrepreneurship students at Shawnee Mission West have been developing real products and brands in class. Through a creative partnership with Oak Park Mall, samples of the products are on display in the Real World Learning virtual storefront at Oak Park Mall. Shoppers can purchase the student-made goods through a QR code that redirects to an online store.

This opportunity connects directly to a focus on Real World Learning for students across the SMSD. Speaking at the ribbon cutting, Superintendent Dr. Michelle Hubbard reflected on the groundbreaking learning experience the

storefront provides. years to pull this off."

> "I can't think of a better example of Real World Learning than what we see here," shared Hubbard. "I'm exceptionally proud of our students and educators who have taken this opportunity and run with it."

Shawnee Mission West Teacher Tiffany Dixon explained that the support of the community has been fundamental. As the students have learned how to create real businesses, the community has supported their entrepreneurial pursuits by providing novel opportunities. "They are trusting us to show them what to do, to make this a real business," said Dixon. "We are all being entrepreneurial with them in education, and in real-time. That's so exciting." Becoming a business owner in high school is a unique opportunity, shared Jayla Powell, who graduated from SM West in December. "There's not a lot of schools out there that will push you out there and get you to start something," Powell explained.



Real World Learning

Ribbon Cutting Opens Student-Owned Store

"It took a lot of guts in the last two



"Now, I have a small business."

SM West senior Aidan Hall thinks Shawnee Mission's focus on Real World Learning can help better prepare students for the future.

"I think Real World Learning is a great approach for letting students find their passion. Maybe they don't know what they want to do yet, but with Real World Learning they can test a few niches and see what they like the most," commented Hall.

The Real World Learning virtual storefront is located on the lower level of Oak Park Mall near JC Penney. To check out and support the student businesses, visit www.smwvikingdesigns.com.

Essential Subject: Social Emotional Learning

How SEL supports the district's objective to develop interpersonal skills

or about two minutes during the school day, Eman Raza and her fifth grade classmates take time to create a calm classroom. With their teacher's help, everyone pauses, breathes, and refocuses. Raza likes how it can turn the entire day around.

"Whenever I'm troubled or worried these breaks help my mindset," Raza expressed. "It helps me focus in class."



It's a skill she uses sometimes even if the teacher isn't guiding the activity.

"I can always do the exercises when I need it," Raza shared. "I don't have to worry about what troubles me."

It's a technique students turn to regularly at Christa McAuliffe Elementary. Maddie Shay, first grade teacher, uses it often after lunch or recess.

"It's very helpful and effective," Shay shared. "They are learning about how to calm down when feeling big emotions, which is a necessary life skill."

It's also one of

many Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills social worker Caren Howes has helped students and staff implement. This exercise can help students overcome a high-stress moment and practice to help with future challenges, Howes explains. She and her colleagues compare it to a fire drill.

"You have to practice it before you need it," Howes added. "If you have a 'fire' of emotions or feelings, you have a strategy you can use. If you practice techniques, it is easier to access them."

At Christa McAuliffe, sometimes students will sit for a time in a designated calm space in their classroom. Or, they will visit a reset station located near Howes's office, where they can find resources like crayons and fidget tools to gain a sense of calm. Educators also use SEL activities in classroom routines and lessons in a variety of ways.

"When a student is having challenges, the answer isn't always to pop out of class and come meet with your social worker, though there are lots of students who benefit from that," Howes shared. "Having it be a part of the daily educational process is what makes it so successful."

Supporting Interpersonal Skills and Academic Goals

During the pandemic, Howes has seen more traffic in her office. Students are dealing with stress and anxiety and seek support. But, the SEL techniques she and educators throughout the building are proactively teaching have even broader goals.

The Kansas State Board of Education was one of the first to adopt social-emotional and character development standards in 2012. Social-Emotional Growth is one of five measured outcomes set by the State Board as part of the Kansas Can Vision for Education. One of the three main objectives in the Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) strategic plan is that "every student will develop interpersonal skills to be an engaged, empathetic member of the local and global community."

Gone are attitudes that students can and should leave their feelings at the classroom door, explained Dr. John McKinney, director of student and family services. These commitments acknowledge students must have basic needs like safety and belonging met before they can achieve academically. They also acknowledge students need to build skills like grit, resilience, and empathy for future success.

"Research, along with personal experience of educators and mental health professionals across the country, taught us that working through social and emotional issues productively and proactively has positive short-and long-term outcomes for students and staff," McKinney expressed. "I'm thankful boards are acknowledging the value of integrating these standards as part of a comprehensive public education."

To measure outcomes, as required by the state, one resource the SMSD uses is Panorama. This is a confidential



survey for students in third through 12th grade that provides data. It covers a variety of skill sets such as growth mindset, grit, self-management, and social awareness.

"The survey responses students provide gives us invaluable insights into our students' experiences and help us all see where more support is needed," McKinney noted.

SEL Teamwork

This year, with the help of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding, the SMSD has a full-time social worker in every elementary and middle school building and two full-time social workers in high schools. This has allowed more opportunities for social workers like Howes to work with students and staff on implementing strategies to better support everyone. Howes also meets with families to help them learn strategies and techniques to apply together.

"We're a team," Howes shared. "My approach is 'How can we partner together to help your child be successful?"

With a full-time social worker on staff at Corinth, parent Sarah Mackay said she has seen a noticeable shift for the better. She notes with much of her child's socialization happening at school, it makes sense to have an expert support in that environment.

"Having a social worker provide ongoing lessons in the classrooms seems to be accomplishing a few things – it provides a shared language for kids and teachers, helps to build skills, and creates an existing relationship between students and social workers in case a hard time arrives," Mackay expressed.

A team approach to addressing SEL is just as important in middle and high schools. For example, Melissa Osborn and Tina Clark, social workers at Shawnee Mission Northwest, work to address a variety of critical SEL topics throughout the year. Students and staff join them in hosting assemblies and campaigns to address topics like suicide awareness and prevention, managing stress, breaking down mental healthcare stigma, and raising awareness about mental health resources. Osborn and Clark meet with individual students, but having peers and teachers reinforce SEL topics is powerful, Clark shared. "When it's a part of the everyday experience and we have it peer-led, that makes it much more comfortable for many students," Clark said.

SEL Helping Students Achieve their Personal Best

SEL efforts in SMSD schools also provide students ways to apply what they are learning. One key strategy that supports SEL is to provide opportunities for involvement.

"If students are involved in the community their mental health is often better because they are connected," Osborn, emphasized.

Amy Nine, Westridge Middle School social worker, noted a mural club created this year as one example at her school. The opportunity gave students a chance to work with artists from InterUrban Art House, interact with each other, and create art on the school walls.

Seventh-grader Tinuviel Harshbarger jumped at the chance to join. The club has provided a stress relief and a way to contribute something lasting, Harshbarger explained

"I was like 'Oh, I can leave my mark on this school," Harshbarger shared. "It's a unique feeling to know I did this with people who have the same interest as me."

The opportunity for students to learn and practice socialemotional skills is the biggest and most important gift that can be given to students, Carron Montgomery, a Corinth parent and local mental health therapist and author expressed.

"We don't come out knowing how to understand and respond to our feelings and it can be very overwhelming, especially for children," Montgomery expressed. "Not understanding the purpose of feelings can be terrifying, especially as it relates to anxiety and depression. Early education and prevention normalizes this and helps kids make sense of these feelings before they get too big and are so overwhelmed that they aren't in a place to learn about them."

All of these skills will be useful to students for college and career, Clark noted.

"We are driven toward not just creating scholars, but citizens in the world," she expressed. "We're promoting active involvement in the community and empathy. If we're teaching those skills we are helping to meet that long-term goal."

You're Invited to the SMSD R&D Forum!

Research & **Development** Forum

his year marks the 60th anniversary of the Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) Research and Development Forum! This district-wide event showcases student projects in science, art, and career and technical education. It's a wonderful way for our community to see the talent and accomplishments of SMSD students and staff.

The R&D Forum is open to our community:

Middle and High School Art Showcase

- » Open House at the Center for Academic Achievement (CAA), 8200 W, 71st St.
- » 3 to 5 p.m. on April 18-21, 2022
- » 4 to 7 p.m. on April 21, 2022 (includes reception for students)

All Grades Science Showcase

- » Open House at the Center for Academic Achievement (CAA), 8200 W. 71st St.
- » 3 to 5 p.m. on April 18-21, 2022
- » 4 to 7 p.m. on April 21, 2022 (includes reception for students)

Elementary Art Showcase

- » Open House at the Center for Academic Achievement (CAA), 8200 W. 71st St.
- » 3 to 5 p.m. on April 25-28, 2022
- » 4 to 7 p.m. on April 28, 2022 (includes reception for students)

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Showcase

- » Open House at the Center for Academic Achievement (CAA), 8200 W. 71st St.
- » 3 to 5 p.m. on April 25-28, 2022
- » 4 to 7 p.m. on April 28, 2022 (includes reception for students)

Watch Live and Vote in the Next Great Idea Pitch Competition on April 30

The Next Great Idea gives student innovators an opportunity to pitch an idea to judges for a chance to win cash prizes and money to advance their entry.

The competition will be live-streamed so friends and family can participate. Visit www.smsd.org from 9 to 11:30 a.m. on April 30, 2022, for a link to watch the event and to cast your live vote.



A People's Choice category, determined by public voters, will be awarded a \$500 prize. Online voting will occur following the final pitch.

Checking in with 2021 Winners

Students named winners in the inaugural Next Great Idea pitch competition are turning their ideas into a reality.

Alex Blickhan. Shawnee Mission East Senior



Blickhan was named a winner with a \$2,500 prize for his "Desalination Operation" pitch. His idea helps address water shortages with an invention to purify ocean water with zero energy input. He has created several design iterations. "So many students have great ideas,

but can't fund them because they are in school and don't have jobs," Blickhan

shared. "This gives them a chance."

Nathan Mestel, Westridge Middle School **Eighth-grader**



Mestel won with his "Milk of Human Kindness" pitch to address food waste. Since winning a \$2,500 prize he developed a Limited Liability Company (LLC). He will share his work at the Lenexa Farmers Market this spring. "I wasn't expecting to win anything when I first entered," Mestel shared. "Knowing I had the ability to gain funding and build my

idea was a shock. It's been a wonderful opportunity." We extend sincere appreciation to the Regnier Family for

60 years of generous support for the SMSD R&D Forum.

Shawnee Mission **Education Foundation**

Keeping Shawnee Mission Strong



hough she had been aware of the Scholarship and Leadership Shawnee Mission programs by seeing friends and an older sister participate, Immaculee Muragizi did not know much about the Shawnee Mission Education Foundation.

Then in the summer of '21, the SM Northwest senior was accepted into the class of Leadership Shawnee Mission.

"The Foundation has opened a lot of doors for me and I genuinely feel like I'm a new person," she expressed. "I can honestly say Leadership Shawnee Mission is the best thing that's happened in my entire high school career. We learned so many skills that can be applied in the real world. It helped build us into better students and prepare us for our futures."

In the fall, Muragizi was asked to co-host the Foundation's annual fall breakfast, which further opened her eyes to the important role of the Foundation and its impact.

"The Foundation is doing amazing things for students every day, and giving so many opportunities to all students, some who are less fortunate," said Muragizi. "I would encourage everyone to get involved with the Foundation. I'm very proud of working with the Foundation who are doing something to better our community."

The mission of the Shawnee Mission Education Foundation is to advance scholarship and leadership, to ensure all students have a remarkable education.

This work is achieved by securing and managing donations from individuals in the community, foundations, businesses, and organizations who share in the belief in the transformational power of education.

Funds raised by the Foundation go to support teacher grants, scholarships, programs, and opportunities for students and teachers in the Shawnee Mission School District. maximizing positive outcomes for all.

"I'm so proud of the role the Foundation plays in





supporting teachers and students in Shawnee Mission," expressed Foundation Executive Director Kim Hinkle.

Kev Programs and Areas of Support

Leadership Shawnee Mission- This is an invitation-only summer leadership development program for incoming Shawnee Mission juniors and seniors.

Scholarship Shawnee Mission- The Scholarship Shawnee Mission program connects Shawnee Mission students to scholarship opportunities with participating colleges and universities. Since its inception in 2019, Shawnee Mission students have received over \$4.5 billion in scholarship offers through the program.

Real World Learning- The Foundation works to connect students with Real World Learning opportunities that prepare them for college and career. For example, mentors and coaches from local businesses may work with students on an industry-specific project.

Shawnee Mission Cares Fund- During times of financial hardship, the Cares Fund is available to provide immediate temporary assistance to students and their families.

Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM)- The Foundation provides targeted support of STEM activities and projects, such as Project Lead the Way which introduces students to the scope and discipline of engineering.

Early Childhood Education- The Foundation supports a variety of learning experiences for children prior to entering kindergarten, including the Jump Start program, which helps build a strong foundation for young learners.

The Arts- Through the It Starts with the Arts fund, the Foundation works to fund arts experiences to economically disadvantaged students throughout Shawnee Mission schools.

To learn more about the Shawnee Mission Education Foundation visit their website at www.smef.org.

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- B.S. ELEMENTARY ED UNIFIED (WITH LICENSURE)
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> 14 Inside SMSD / Spring 2022



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AdventHealth South **Overland Park** 7820 West 165th Street

AdventHealth Shawnee Mission 9100 West 74th Street *A part of AdventHealth Shawnee Mission

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