SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

Winter 2023
Executive Summary

The Shawnee Mission School District continues to move forward with the work of the strategic plan, making progress across all five strategy areas. Many dedicated team members and community volunteers put forth time and effort to advance the strategic initiatives and to ensure that the mission, beliefs, and objectives established by the original collective community vision continue to drive the work.

This report contains progress completed through the first semester of the 2022-2023 school year, as well as a look ahead to next steps and what is coming up.

The strategic plan, adopted in 2019, is focused on ensuring that every student will:

- achieve academic success through a challenging, personalized learning plan
- develop and utilize personal resilience while mastering essential competencies that lead to college and career readiness.
- develop interpersonal skills to be an engaged, empathetic member of the local and global community.

These objectives are being accomplished through the work of five strategies. An updated Gantt chart featuring progress on all initiatives of the strategic plan can be found here.
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Teaching & Learning

Strategy Summary | Teaching & Learning

Strategy 1: We will reimagine teaching and learning to guarantee relevant opportunities for personalized learning experiences.

The focus of this strategy is on teaching and learning. In the area of relevant, engaging, and applied learning, strategic action team 1:3:4-5 has continued to meet to work on developing feedback structures and aligning grading practices. The team created and administered a survey of staff regarding their understanding and preferences related to feedback systems and how the district might move forward with an evidence-based grading system. Additionally, the team conducted research by interviewing regional schools/districts regarding their grading practices.

Looking ahead to second semester, this action team will review the staff survey data along with the parent survey data that was collected last spring. Additionally, they will review their research and notes from other districts to develop a process for evidence-based grading in SMSD.

To support professional development around personalization of learning, the district has continued to provide professional learning opportunities throughout the school year from the summer PLC institute to pre-service to the Instructional Fair in January.
Strategy Summary | Culture

Strategy 2: We will relentlessly create a fully unified, equitable, and inclusive culture.

This strategy, focused on developing a unified, equitable, and inclusive culture districtwide, continued to progress with a number of celebrations to be noted.

Regarding recruitment and hiring practices and procedures, the district’s human resources team along with SMSD Recruit continued to develop relationships with colleges and universities to recruit and attract a diverse and inclusive pool of candidates to join the SMSD team. Additionally, SMSD Recruit is also working to develop a plan for retention of staff to be shared with schools across the district.

As part of the “Grow your Own” program, the district is building on the success of its Fort Hays State University/Special Education program kicking off cohort 2, with 15 participants enrolled. This continues the district’s commitment and investment in developing special educators within the Shawnee Mission School District. This partnership supports developing highly qualified staff members to serve our students with special needs, which often are areas that we are challenged to find a robust pool of candidates. In exchange for 90 percent tuition coverage, these team members who complete the program agree to teach for a minimum of five years in special education in Shawnee Mission.

Intentional efforts have been made to regularly bring together teacher education program instructors in the district to strengthen opportunities for this grow your own/real world learning program. In January 2023, the district is hosting a teacher education college fair at the Center for Academic Achievement which will include representatives from 8-10 regional colleges/universities. The fair will be open to all students enrolled in the teacher education program, as well as paraprofessionals who may have an interest in pursuing a degree in teacher education.

A framework is in place for a Shawnee Mission School District - Johnson County
Community College - K-State teacher residency program. This program would allow students graduating from Shawnee Mission who want to study education to attend JCCC and then K-State through online curriculum and SMSD will provide the practical settings/experiences throughout their program.

The district’s diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) work continues with the leadership/facilitation of the work transitioning to Shawnee Mission team members trained as Equity Practitioners. The equity practitioners will continue to ensure that DEIB is a focus in onboarding of staff, building plans, and professional learning opportunities. A hub of resources is being developed to be available to staff to support this work. A superintendent’s advisory on DEIB that includes high school students, teachers, parents, and community/organization members, continues to meet to provide feedback and discussion on DEIB-related issues.

The district continued implementation of Panorama to survey students in grades 3-12 related to social emotional learning. Increased communication about and engagement in the Panorama survey by students and families across the district is a focus to ensure families understand the survey and can give informed consent for their student to participate.
Quality Educators

Strategy Summary  |  Quality Educators

Strategy 3: We will create the climate to cultivate quality educators so they flourish in pursuit of our mission.

This strategy is focused on recruiting and developing quality educators. In relation to work environment, with the passage of the bond initiative, the district was able to successfully implement the second phase of moving secondary teachers to teaching five out of seven classes. A subcommittee continues to meet and discuss options for creating specific, guarded collaboration time for elementary and middle school teachers. The district “noticed” as part of negotiations elementary/middle school PLC time. Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, middle school late starts began allowing for dedicated PLC time. Also beginning this school year, the elementary level, PLC groups have been selecting from specified options to meet for PLC sessions. Through ESSER funds, elementary class sizes will continue to be reduced from 24 to 22 in grades K-2 and from 27 to 25 in grades 3-6.

In summer 2022, the district partnered with Solution Tree to bring the Professional Learning Community (PLC) Institute to Shawnee Mission. More than 1,100 staff participated in the training, which focused on professional learning communities and how to effectively utilize these structures and frameworks to improve and strengthen professional practices and ultimately student growth across the district. The district has continued to focus on PLCs as the vehicle through which to build teacher professional practice and improve student learning.

In 2021-2022, a strategic action team focused on lab classrooms and peer-to-peer modeling met to study and discuss these components. For the 2022-2023 school year, the decision was made to pause the lab classroom/peer-to-peer modeling discussion to allow focus and growth related to professional learning communities. This area will be reviewed to determine how to move forward in the future.
Strategy 4: We will design systems that support our mission and beliefs.

The primary focus in the area of developing systems within the district to support the achievement of the strategic plan mission and objectives, is related to furthering the work around Response to Intervention (RTI). The action team, convened to work on moving forward the goal of implementing a districtwide Response to Intervention system to ensure social-emotional and academic growth for all students to achieve personal excellence, completed their work to develop competencies for every staff member to know, understand, and be able to do related to RTI. The next steps in the work to support this action step are implementation and systematic professional learning for staff. It is essential that there is a common understanding of the tiers and consistency districtwide.

To accomplish this, a timeline has been developed to build consensus and commitment across all district departments. The process we’re following mirrors the Strategic Plan process. It involves building shared understanding of the guidelines we established in the Guidebook for Student Success and ensuring collective commitment from everyone. Once we have all departments with a shared understanding, the plan is to begin taking the work to administrators and then to all staff. This will allow us to accomplish the final action step: “Develop a building structure that ensures implementation of all tiers.”
Facilities

Strategy 5: We will strategically focus resources to support state-of-the-art facilities to accomplish our beliefs, mission, and objectives.

Much of the work of this strategy is directly connected to the bond referendum approved by the community in January 2021. At the start of the 2022-2023 school year, the new Westwood View Elementary School opened. The commons area and restroom remodel at Shawnee Mission Northwest High School were completed. Shawnee Mission North's weight room addition and restroom renovations were completed. In January 2023, the new John Diemer Elementary School opened. Also upon returning from winter break in January 2023, students and staff from Rushton Elementary School began learning in the former Westwood View site as a temporary location while Rushton is being rebuilt. The following projects were complete and ready to open in January 2023: the renovation of the commons, classrooms, and restrooms at Horizons High School; the addition and newly remodeled collaboration classroom areas at Westridge Middle School; and the addition of a multi-purpose large classroom, courtyard/outdoor classroom, elevator, and restroom renovations at Shawnee Mission East High School.

Looking ahead, students and staff at Pawnee Elementary School will relocate temporarily for the fourth quarter of the 2022-2023 school year to the Indian Creek Technology Center site in order for work on the grounds to be complete for the new Pawnee Elementary to open in August 2023. Design work will begin for the new Tomahawk Elementary School. During the summer of 2023, the following buildings will undergo renovations and upgrades: the Shawnee Mission Early Childhood Education Center, Hocker Grove Middle School, Trailridge Middle School, and Shawnee Mission South High School. Additionally, across the district, HVAC system replacements, playground renovations, and furniture replacement projects will continue. A complete listing of bond projects with timelines can be found here.