Merriam Park Elementary

6100 Mastin
Merriam, KS 66203
913-993-3600

Principal: Amy Simeonov
Grades Served: PreK-6
KSDE Bldg #: 8815

Feeder Pattern: Hocker Grove MS & SM
North HS

Notable School Characteristics

- Title I
- Comprehensive school serving students in grades preK-6
- Challenge Award Recipient in 2021-22 (Academic growth on KS assessments)
- Focus on leadership and social-emotional learning through Leader in Me

KSDE Building Report Card
Merriam Park Elementary Building Report Card

Sec. 8. On and after July 1, 2021, K.S.A. 72-1163 is hereby amended to read as follows: 72-1163. (a) Each year the board of education of a school district shall conduct an assessment of the educational needs of each attendance center in the district. Information obtained from such needs-assessment shall be used by the board when preparing the budget of the school district to ensure improvement in student academic performance. The budget of the school district shall allocate sufficient moneys in a manner reasonably calculated such that all students may achieve the goal set forth in K.S.A. 72-3218(c), and amendments thereto. The board also shall prepare a summary of the budget for the school district. The budgets and summary shall be in the form prescribed by the director pursuant to K.S.A. 79-2926, and amendments thereto.
Needs Analysis

What barriers must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments?

Merriam Park has a number of key barriers that create challenges for ensuring proficiency on assessments. Some of those challenges are high levels of students facing trauma, limited student and family access to resources supporting the family beyond the school day, language barriers, transient population of students, and adequate special education funding. Merriam Park has approximately 50-60% of our students that live in poverty. This creates multiple challenges for families including health and nutrition vulnerability, lack of economic opportunities, and access to quality housing.

What budget actions should be taken to address and remove those barriers?

Our students and families face a growing number of barriers to success and at Merriam Park Elementary, we continually work to support them. A few of the current budget changes that impact our ability to successfully remove barriers for our students are the continued addition of support staff and additional support for implementing the professional learning community approach for teacher collaboration. The most significant action that has benefited our students academically is lower teacher to student ratio, which allows for greater individualized instruction.

How much time will it take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented?

At Merriam Park, we emphasize and measure student academic growth each year. Although we are proud of our progress, many factors make it impossible to estimate a time that every student will achieve grade level proficiency. Such factors include: transient student population, a high number of families in poverty, and adequate special education funding.

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Board Rationale/Comments

The Shawnee Mission School District faces challenging budget needs given the commitment to meeting aspirational state and district education goals for every student. The district continues to work to limit central administrative costs to less than 5% of the total budget. Following an analysis of student needs, the district has worked to maintain in the district budget a full-time social worker position in every school, a full-time instructional coach in every school, and Real World Learning counselors at each of the five comprehensive high schools.

The following positions have been added to support buildings to better meet the needs of our 26,440 students: two (2) assistant principal positions at our larger middle schools; three (3) intervention specialists; two (2) Special Education instructional coaches; two (2) ELL teachers; six (6) additional teaching positions and thirty (30) paraprofessional positions. The district will continue to analyze budget funds for the 2024-25 school year, in order to determine the ability to maintain the following positions that were added with ESSER funding: additional support for nursing services; additional secondary math teachers; building substitutes for every building; and class-size reduction at the elementary level.

In addition, the district has increased professional learning opportunities for all teachers, including hosting a major conference on Professional Learning Communities and sending large numbers of staff to a conference on Response to Intervention. We will continue to prioritize equitable allocation of resources to create a welcoming and engaging learning experience for every student — facilitating personalized learning plans, targeting career and college readiness, with the interpersonal skills for life success.

Merriam Park is working hard to address the needs inherent in being a Title I building, serving a large population of students living in poverty. Yet beating the odds, the percentage of Merriam Park students performing at or above grade level on the Math and ELA state assessments (Levels 2, 3 or 4) were above state averages in Spring 2022. Nonetheless, students have experienced significant learning disruptions over the past few years. A drop in Math assessment performance Spring 2021, triggered by the global pandemic, has returned to pre-pandemic performance levels by Spring 2022. ELA state assessment scores remained stable. Given the pandemic related trauma experienced by students over the past few years, Merriam Park is challenged to provide all students with the social-emotional support they need to facilitate learning growth.

Our routine use of multiple measures to assess student growth, school climate and equitable practices will serve to inform the best use of finite resources looking ahead.

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