Tomahawk Elementary

6301 W. 78th Street
Overland Park, KS 66204
913-993-5500

Principal: Erin Aldrich
Grades Served: K-6
KSDE Bldg #: 8858

Feeder Pattern: Indian Hills MS & SM East HS

Notable School Characteristics

- Comprehensive school serving students in grades K-6
- Low-incidence centralized special education program
- National PTA School of Excellence
- New building opening 2025-2026 school year

KSDE Building Report Card

Tomahawk 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?

There are always a number of challenges that should be considered when evaluating student success in a district. Some of the key barriers that impact Tomahawk include, but are not limited to:

- Lack of special education funding
- High percentage of students with severe special needs
- Increased levels of students facing trauma
- Limited access to community health services and mental health services

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

Given an appropriate level of funding for both general education and special education, there are a number of budget actions we could take to remove some barriers. The following budget consideration could have the biggest impact on student achievement at Tomahawk:

- Increased salary to recruit and retain highly qualified certified and classified staff
- Additional social workers hired to meet the SEL needs of all students
- Increase paraeducator and teacher support in special education classrooms
- Increased instructional coaching
- Maintain low teacher ratio for great 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?

While our board of education, administration, teachers and classified staff work tirelessly to meet the academic and social emotional needs of all of our students, too many factors come into play that do not allow us to accurately assess when all students will be at a certain level. Some of those include:

- Ever-changing population of students bringing a varying degree of cognitive abilities and disabilities.
- Lack of constitutional funding of special education continues to impact our ability to fully meet the needs of all students.
- Increased level of social emotional challenges and needs of students due to the impact of COVID.

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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.

Tomahawk Elementary hosts a centralized special education low incidence program for the district, and is impacted by the failure of the state to fully fund special education. Yet the percentage of students performing at College and Career Ready on the state assessments (Levels 2, 3 or 4) has been above the state’s average the past four years, through 2022. Tomahawk students have experienced significant trauma over the past few years and have yet to fully recover from declines in ELA and Math assessments to pre-pandemic performance levels. School staff continue to focus on culture, creating meaningful relationships, and developing effective Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to increase student performance. Tomahawk staff are also committed to the challenge of providing 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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