

Rising Star Elementary

8600 Candlelight Lane
Lenexa, KS 66215
913-993-4500

Principal: Jessica Risinger
Grades Served: preK-6
KSDE Bldg #: 8836

Feeder Pattern: Westridge MS & SM West HS



Notable School Characteristics

- Comprehensive school serving students in grades preK-6
- Transient Population
- Growing ELL Population
- Diverse Demographic
- Pre-K Grant-Funded Program
- Involved PTA

KSDE Building Report Card

[Rising Star Elementary Building Report Card](#)

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Needs Analysis

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

*Grade level proficiency is defined by state law as scoring “above level 2” on state assessments, yet actual grade level performance is most closely related to state assessment scores above level 1.

Our teachers, students, and families of Rising Star face a number of challenges in ensuring student proficiency on assessments. Some of these challenges for Rising Star include:

- Transient population of students
- Insufficient special education funding
- High percent of students facing trauma and behavioral health
- High or increased levels of homeless students and families in foster care
- Limited access to community health services and mental health services
- Decreased fill rate of substitutes since COVID
- Open Concept Building (increase in elopement over the past 5 years)

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

Our students face a growing number of barriers to success, and Rising Star continually works to support ALL students. Current budget constraints that impact our ability to successfully remove barriers for our students include:

- Funding for Full-Time Building Sub
 - Without a building sub, we cannot effectively cover SIT meetings, IEP meetings, classrooms or the many unfilled jobs that occur weekly, not having a building sub and having minimal aide support will significantly impact our day to day and ability to have team meetings.
 - Additionally, our interventionists, ELL teacher, and other key personnel have had to be pulled from their duties to sub and cover classrooms, which significantly impacts our Tier 2 and 3 student achievement.
- Additional staff members hired to meet the individual learning and SEL needs of all students
 - **Administrative Intern (full time)**
 - Having a part time admin intern this school year has allowed us to meet the needs of students, respond to behavior more effectively and timely, and attend to nearly 26 staff members on evaluation, having a full time intern would allow for consistency in day to day follow-up and communication.
 - If full time is not feasible, we ask to MAINTAIN the part time position
 - Additional Educational Aides
 - This would provide additional support for Tier 2
 - ELL Aide(s)
 - Full-Time Behavior Specialist OR additional Social Worker support

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- Additional Innovation Specialist or Interventionist (Ideally, we would be able to support K-2, 3-4, 5-6 with one interventionist per band)
- **Recovery Room Aide**
 - Since losing title status this past year, this role was ESSENTIAL to the day to day SEL support of our students and increased instructional time (data can be provided to show use and impact) especially since we do not have a full time intern. We have data that can be shared to show the impact of our proactive use of the recovery room.
 - Increased salary to recruit and retain highly qualified certified and classified staff
 - Increased paraeducator and teacher support in special education classrooms
 - Maintain low teacher ratio for increased individualized instruction
 - Maintain ELL funding and support

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?

*Again, state law defines grade level proficiency as scoring “above level 2” while actual grade level performance is most closely related to scores above level 1 on state assessments.

We measure growth each year and document in our KESA plans our success on a variety of student success factors. We emphasize growth for all students. Although we do this and are proud of the work we do, many factors make it impossible to estimate a time that every student will achieve grade level proficiency. First and foremost, while state assessment scores are one measure, Rising Star does not believe that students' state assessment scores should be the sole measure of student proficiency, especially when the assessment has zero impact on their future. Additionally, there has been an 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 maintains focus on its commitment to meeting aspirational state and district education goals for every student. The district continues to budget conservatively, working to limit central administrative costs to less than 5% of the total budget. Over the past several years, the district has focused on responding to challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, including learning recovery, an increase in chronic absenteeism, and an enhanced need for social and emotional support for students.

The district has used information from needs assessments conducted at each building to make focused staff allocations at the building level. These include specific needs identified by large numbers of schools, including additional teacher allocations to maintain lower class sizes at the elementary level, providing a building substitute at each building, increased paraprofessional/teacher support in special education classrooms, and higher salaries for both certified and classified staff. In addition, following a comprehensive analysis of student needs, the district continues 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 district was able to use additional state funding, (including an increase in the at-risk weighting and an increase to the base, along with a corresponding increase in the Local Option Budget) to add positions identified in individual building needs assessments across our 48 attendance centers/specialized programs.

These positions include the following:

- 10 special education teachers, 5.25 para-educators, an autism coach, 2 speech language pathologists, an occupational therapist, 2 school psychologists, and 2 special education coordinators.
- 5 elementary interventionists
- An additional instructional coach for Horizons and for Early childhood
- 4 ELL teachers
- A teacher on assignment
- 3 floating nurses and
- 2 administrative interns

The district is also maintaining the following positions in the operating funds at least for one more year:

- Elementary class size will remain at 22 for Kindergarten through 2nd grade and 25 for 3rd through 6th grades.
- Ten additional teachers at the secondary level to support learning recovery.
- At least one building sub at each building in the district.

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The district will continue to analyze budget funds for the 2024-25 school year, in order to determine the ability to maintain the positions listed above 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.

The percentage of Rising Elementary students, including at-risk youth, performing at or above grade level on the Math and ELA state assessments (Levels 2, 3 or 4) has remained above state averages. While students experienced significant learning disruptions over the past few years, state assessment Math scores improved in Spring 2023, for the at-risk students as well. Rising Star is working hard to address the student needs with about half of students living in poverty, with a high number of transient students. The building focus remains on culture, creating meaningful relationships, and developing effective Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to increase student performance. While Rising Star students have experienced significant trauma over the past few years, school staff are committed to the challenge of providing all students with the social-emotional support they need to facilitate learning growth

In addition, the district will continue to support increased professional learning opportunities for all teachers, with a focus on Professional Learning Communities and 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.

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