

Sunflower Elementary

8955 Loiret Blvd.
Lenexa, KS 66219
913-993-5400

Principal: Ryan Kalis
Grades Served: K-6
KSDE Bldg #: 8857

Feeder Pattern: Westridge MS & SM West HS



Notable School Characteristics

- Sunflower is a neighborhood school and has a strong PTA that supports staff, students and families.
- Sunflower is a comprehensive elementary school that serves students in grades K-6th.
- Sunflower has a center-based SLC program that serves students with special needs.
- Sunflower has continued to have assessment scores that are consistently above state levels and either at or above district levels.
- Sunflower has a high rate of teacher retention.
- Sunflower's attendance rates have consistently been above state averages.
- Sunflower's Vision:
 - Sunflower Elementary is a collaborative community where all students learn and grow.
- Sunflower's Values:
 - Collaborative culture
 - Data-driven learning
 - Research-based effective practices
 - Establishing relationships through grace and accountability
 - Create an environment where all students learn and grow
- Sunflower's Mission:

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.

- Establishing relationships to know our students
- Use data to analyze learning and drive instruction
- Design effective lessons using research-based instructional practices
- Provide caring attention to support student's social emotional competency
- Create a positive building culture

KSDE Building Report Card

[Sunflower Elementary Building Report Card](#)

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.

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 Sunflower Elementary include, but are not limited to:

- lack of support staff to help with tiered instruction
- students with severe special needs
- lack of special education funding which includes a lack of special education staff including paraprofessional support for SPED resource, SLC and IR.
- increasing levels of students facing trauma and/or mental health challenges
- Consistent instructional support for students identified as ELL
- When substitutes are not available to fill certified classroom positions, it requires us to use our instructional coach, interventionist, social worker, and principal which then takes away from intervention groups and additional support for students in need.

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

Our students face a growing number of barriers to success and Sunflower Elementary continually works to support them. Current budget constraints that impact our ability to successfully remove barriers for our students include:

- Continue providing a full-time instructional coach to support staff. This individual is instrumental in helping to develop and implement learning systems and teacher's capacity to respond to student need, providing professional learning opportunities that concentrate on curricular needs and understanding of priority standards, and supporting and retaining both new and veteran staff members.
- an additional administrative intern/administrator to assist with and support our specialized SLC program
- additional substitute teachers including building substitutes
- decrease the teacher to student ratio in our SLC specialized program
- Maintain a full-time social worker for the building
- increase paraeducator and teacher support in special education classrooms
- maintain low teacher ratio for better individualized instruction
- additional staff members hired to meet the individual learning and SEL needs of all students
- increased salary to recruit and retain highly qualified certified and classified staff
- creating a consistent PLC structure at the elementary level which may include increased funding
- increased funding to expand extended school year and summer school programming for students

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.

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 which preclude us from being able to guarantee a date when all students will meet a singular level of proficient
- Lack of constitutional funding of special education continues to impact our ability to fully meet the needs of all students

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- While assessment scores are one measure, Sunflower Elementary does not believe that students assessment scores should be the sole measure of student proficiency, especially when the assessment has zero impact on their future
 - 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:

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- 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.

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.

Sunflower hosts a center-based SLC program that serves district students with special needs, and is impacted by the failure of the state to fully fund special education. Yet the percentage of Sunflower Elementary students 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, Math state assessment scores improved in Spring 2023. School staff continue to focus on culture, creating meaningful relationships, and developing effective Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to increase student performance. Sunflower staff is also committed to the challenges 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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