

Horizons

5900 Lamar
Mission, KS 66202
913-993-9500

Principal: Eddie LyDay
Grades Served: 9-12

Feeder Pattern: Districtwide



Notable School Characteristics

- Alternative high school, serving at-risk students in grades 9-12
- Offers smaller class sizes and greater flexibility in scheduling and support for students to be able to meet graduation requirements

SM Horizons follows district curriculum while employing creative and alternative methods that are provided with clear and consistent expectations. Staff will work with students to strive for academic and personal successes, address individual needs and develop productive attitudes and habits.

KSDE Building Report Card

N/A - Student accountability records are assigned to each student's home high school

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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 face a number of challenges in ensuring student proficiency on assessments. Some of those challenges for include:
 - Adequate funding of special education
 - Adequate funding of ELL
 - Adequate community resources such as support for mental health needs, affordable healthcare, and affordable housing and transportation.
 - Large class sizes in the home schools, impacting the ability to provide individualized instruction

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

- Full funding of special education at the state level would allow for increased support of students with disabilities accessing specialized career & technical education coursework giving relevance to their core academic coursework and leading to increased student achievement.
- Increased funding to offer specialized coursework that has lower enrollment than typical class sections, with sufficient time for staff to receive the training needed for supporting at-risk youth.
- Full funding of ELL at the state and district level would allow for increased support of students that are English Language Learners.

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.

- It is not possible to predict the amount of time needed for all students to reach proficiency due to the number of variables in play.

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- State assessment scores are just one measure of student proficiency. We do not believe that state assessment scores should be the sole measure of student proficiency or success.
 - We recommend an increased focus on student growth measures and workplace skill assessments.
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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.

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- 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.

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.

Full funding of special education would be a substantial support to a school like Horizons. Adequately serving students with alternative learning and social-emotional needs requires a significant investment in professional staffing and appropriate curriculum.

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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