

Board Items

Personal Electronic Devices Superintendent Dr. Michael Schumacher provided a follow-up presentation to the Board of Education related to personal electronic devices in schools. The follow-up presentation covered a second read of his recommendation, a review of work that has taken place leading up to the recommendation, context of discussion that took place during the December 9, 2024 Board of Education meeting, and the work of the administrative team since Dec. 9. Dr. Schumacher reviewed the Strategic Plan Action Team's Elementary School, Middle School, and High School personal electronic device recommendations and a summary of the recommendations.

Dr. Schumacher shared the second read of [Policy JCDC](#), including minor changes made since the December 9 Board meeting. He shared a discipline legend and matrix. Brookridge Elementary Principal Stephanie Witt, Trailridge Middle School Principal Matt Engler, and Shawnee Mission East High School Principal Jason Peres shared details about how expectations will be reinforced and how teachers will be supported under the proposed changes.

Dr. Schumacher then reviewed proposed changes to the student handbooks as a result of the proposed policy and a plan for communications following the Board consideration and decision. He also talked about principals taking time to prepare their staff for full implementation, with full implementation scheduled for February 3, 2025.

[Click here to view the presentation.](#)

Later in the meeting, the Board of Education considered [Board Policy JCDC: Restrictions on Possession and Use of Personal Electronic Devices](#). The Board approved the policy, with a vote of 6-1.

The Board also considered [revisions to the student handbooks](#) to include possible disciplinary action related to the Board Policy JCDC. The Board approved the revisions, with a vote of 7-0.

Student and Family Services Report Dr. Christy Ziegler, chief of student services, Dr. John McKinney, director of family services, and Kaitlin Shulman, coordinator of diversity, equity, and inclusion, presented an update on student and family services. They were joined by Kathryn Harter, SM West social worker, Memo Rodriguez, SM South area attendance specialist, and Mya Williams, SM West senior and student leader.

The team spoke about how their work supports the objectives of the [Strategic Plan](#) through essential elements including student programs, family support and advocacy, belonging, and mental health. Rodriguez spoke about efforts to support student attendance and prevent chronic absenteeism. Shulman spoke about a variety of ways the district offers family support and advocacy and works to create inclusive opportunities to help families engage and thrive. This includes family engagement nights, the superintendent advisory group, professional development and resources, systems of support like belonging

groups, and opportunities for students to use their voice, such as Youth Equity Stewardship (YES). Williams spoke about her work as a student and intern to support these efforts and opportunities.

Dr. McKinney talked about the importance of a focus on mental health in a school district and ways it is being addressed, including Action Team work, the work of counselors and social workers, and the Character Strong educational resource implementation at the elementary level. Harter and Williams spoke about student engagement opportunities related to supporting Mental Health, including Sources of Strength and Zero Reasons Why. Rodriguez shared more information about the Youth Leadership Summit, an event that brings middle and high school students together to support healthy behavior.

[Click here to view the presentation.](#)

From The Superintendent Report



SMAC PTA Reflections



Reflections Just before the January 13, 2025 Board of Education meeting, the Shawnee Mission Board of Education congratulated incredible student artists in the Shawnee Mission Shawnee Mission

Area Council PTA Reflections Art Contest. This contest encourages artistic creativity. Students were encouraged to express themselves artistically with a focus on the theme “Accepting Imperfection.” They submitted work in the areas of dance choreography, film production, literature, music

composition, photography, and visual arts. Superintendent Dr. Michael Schumacher thanked all of these students for sharing their creativity with us along with their schools, teachers, and families! [Click here to see a list of honorees.](#)



R&D Forum Dr. Schumacher noted that after the weather we've endured, he was sure many in the SMSD are ready to look ahead to spring! He highlighted a few ways everyone can get ready for the Research and Development Forum coming in April.

First, Save the Date! The Student Showcase, featuring student projects from across the district, will be held April 22-24, 2025. The Next Great Idea Pitch Competition will be held the morning of April 26, with an awards ceremony in the afternoon.

Second- Students, teachers, and families are encouraged to think of projects for students to enter in the [Student Showcase](#). Every student in Shawnee Mission is invited to share experiments, inventions, and project displays at the R&D Forum. This event is a great chance for our whole community to see the innovation and creativity of our students.

Third, now is a great time for students to be thinking about [The Next Great Idea](#). Students are encouraged to think of a new product or solution to a problem they can share to a panel of judges this spring. There is a chance to win prize money to make the idea a reality.

[Click here for more information about how to get ready to be ALL IN at the R&D Forum.](#) We also thank the Regnier Family for their long-standing support of this Shawnee Mission event.



Read Across SMDS This January, Read Across SMDS features the theme “Find Your Way” with a little help from students and Principal David Ewers at Shawnee Mission North High School.

[Click here to see the January 2025 Read Across SMDS video.](#)

Thank you very much to Erika, Bella, Edgar, and Principal Ewers! We also thank NEA-Shawnee Mission for their ongoing partnership in support of Read Across SMDS and the [Shawnee Mission Education Foundation](#) for providing access to Read Across SMDS books to Shawnee Mission students.



Kindergarten and Pre-K We are excited to begin welcoming the next Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten classes to the Shawnee Mission School District. Enrollment for Pre-K and Kindergarten is now open for the 2025-2026 school year. We encourage all in our district to spread the word among parents of four and five year olds, to help them get ready and welcome them to our school district. [Click here for more information.](#)

We also want to provide a heads up that the In-district Transfer Window- which is the period of time a student can apply to

transfer from their home school to a different school, will open on February 1, 2025. (Students who are in good standing who are currently approved for transfer to another school location do not need to reapply.) We will be sending emails to all families and staff in the district soon and we will post more information under “Recent News” on the district website in preparation for February 1.

Dr. Schumacher added that at the last board meeting in December, the Board of Education passed policies [JBCD](#) and [JBCB](#), which relate directly to in-district and out-of-district (non-resident) transfers. The administration was tasked with making edits to the good standing language in each of those policies. Dr. Schumacher said the district team is working on those edits and he would anticipate bringing those policies back to the Board at the next meeting.



Polar Plunge Invite Everyone in the Shawnee Mission School District community is invited to join and support this year’s Shawnee Mission Polar Plunge team!

This brave group of individuals will take a jump into Lake Olathe on February 22, 2025, all to help raise money for the Special Olympics. Shawnee Mission’s Team is called “Shiver and Shine.” Shawnee Mission students, families, and staff benefit from opportunities created through Special Olympics. The SMSD has previously been recognized for having the most participants at the event, so there is hope to have a lot of individuals joining the festivities. [Click here for more information on how to support or join in the Polar Plunge.](#)



Seeking Strategic Plan Action Team

Volunteers As we begin the third and fourth quarter of this year, the Shawnee Mission Strategic Plan Action Teams will be hard at work implementing all elements of the plan. As this work continues, Shawnee Mission looks to individuals from across the

community – parents, educators, administrators, classified staff, and residents to serve on Action Teams. The collaboration, ideas, and perspectives Action Team members bring to this process is invaluable. [Click here for an application](#) – available for anyone interested in serving on an Action Team or anyone seeking to nominate an individual for an Action Team.

Thank You Board of Education! Dr. Schumacher highlighted that January is Board of Education Appreciation Month. “These individuals show us all in so many ways what it means to be ALL IN,” Dr. Schumacher expressed. “Board of Education members dedicate numerous hours on a volunteer basis, listening to our community and making challenging decisions – all while keeping what is best for students in mind.” Board members were presented with custom-made stationery, featuring the art of Shawnee Mission students. A special presentation was also shared, featuring music from The Madrigals from Shawnee Mission West High School under the direction of Shawnee Mission West Choir Teacher Jacob Sweatt.

This publication, provided after each Shawnee Mission Board of Education meeting, provides a recap of some actions taken by the Shawnee Mission Board of Education and information about activities in the school district. An archive video of the meeting can [be found by clicking here.](#) Links to board policies, agenda, and meeting minutes [can be found by clicking here.](#)