

# Shawnee Mission South High School

5800 W. 107th Street  
Overland Park, KS 66207  
913-993-7500

Principal: Dr. Todd Dain

Grades Served: 9-12

KSDE Bldg #: 8892

Feeder Pattern:

- Brookridge Elementary School
- Brookwood Elementary School
- John Diemer Elementary School
- Oak Park-Carpenter Elementary School
- Rosehill Elementary School
- Trailwood Elementary School
- Indian Woods Middle School



## Notable School Characteristics

- Established 1966
- Comprehensive school serving students in grades 9-12
- AP Capstone School; AP scores consistently highest in the area; Overall AP Participation Rate 33% with 22% Free-Reduced AP enrollment; 94 AP Scholars in 2024.
- Diverse Population: Demographics - 34% Minority, 30% Economically Disadvantaged, 10% English Language Learners; 16% Students with Special needs
- U.S. News & World Report Silver Award School 2012-2024, Kansas Top 10 School.
- 61 KSHSAA State Championships
- Academic Decathlon State Champions 23 out of the last 27 years
- 92.2% Graduation Rate
- Host for District 9-12 Grade and Post-High School Special Education ALC Program
- Notable Alumni: Rob Riggle; David Dastmalchian; Rodney Peete; Tom Kane

## KSDE 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?

\*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 South teachers, students and families face a number of challenges in ensuring student proficiency on assessments. Some of those challenges for South High include:

- Increasing enrollment of transient students who attend “partial semester/years” has presented an increased need for ELL and intervention resources.
- Lack of specific programming and space for construction trades and advanced manufacturing.
- Students with chronic absenteeism continue to need additional support to attend school regularly. The root cause of the absences varies greatly, ranging from anxiety and mental health needs to maintaining a full time work schedule while attending school. Students in our ELL programs and students receiving free or reduced lunch support have the highest rates of chronic absenteeism reflected in our data.
- Students with specialized and individualized education needs, including serving as a center-based program for Social Emotional Resource for SMSD students with emotional and behavioral support needs.
- Students have a wide range of skills and continue to demonstrate gaps in learning that need to be addressed.
- Students learning English as a second language face a broader skill gap to attain grade level proficiency at the high school level. Grade level proficiency on the KAP for ELA requires they build eleven years of skills after as few as two years of education within our school. Many of our students in our ELL program are students with limited and interrupted formal education experiences. Some students have not been in school since early elementary grades. Our data reflects the challenges
- Students that have a prior history of trauma. Trauma impacts students from all socioeconomic and racial or ethnic backgrounds. Supporting students affected by trauma requires specialized training for staff and skilled support from social workers, counselors, and administrators.

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Progress is most effective when partnering with community organizations to provide a continuum of social-emotional support, yet those services are often understaffed or under-supported to meet all needs.

- Lack of or limited access to community health services and mental health services to provide necessary care for students to be ready to engage in academic studies.
- Difficulty in retaining and attracting highly qualified teachers and counselors. Due to the complex nature of educating the whole student, our teachers and counselors at the high school level provide challenging academic experiences while serving as trusted adults to support social and emotional needs. They serve many roles and meet the needs of so many diverse students, often at the expense of their own self-care and/or personal budget.
- Difficulty attracting staff in roles such as educational aides in our ELL program, who provide integral support in building students skills and confidence.
- Students may struggle to recognize the value of one assessment at a given moment in time rather than a comprehensive assessment plan.

### 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 Shawnee Mission South could take to remove some barriers. Some of them include:

- Rebuild of the Career & Technical Campus to allow for additional construction trades and advanced manufacturing coursework that cannot fit into our current spaces.
- Review and updates of high school CTE spaces to match labor market needs.
- Lower teacher-student ratio or increase the base at-risk weighting ratio to provide for highly effective intervention structures within our RTI programming. Allows for lower class sizes in courses where the intervention supports are provided. These intervention structures are essential for course programming to ensure success for our most at-risk learners and enrichment for our most advanced learners. Adjusting current staffing allocation allows us to provide these supports while maintaining reasonable class sizes across all courses and content.
- ELL Staffing - Increase ELL staff assigned across the high school level. Establish an ELL enrollment ratio similar to special education and general education. Staff are allocated based on the staffing ratio.
  - Annually review ELL enrollment numbers in the spring to add staffing allocations for the following school year. Increase needs to support ELL students in Level 1 and 2, including new enrollments.
  - Establish a plan to increase the number of staff earning an ELL endorsement.
- Alternate Programming Options including alternative school options for all at-risk-students.

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- Maintain math staff previously allocated from ESSER funds to continue to address learning loss among all students and opportunity gaps reflected in our data among identified student groups.
- Maintain competitive salaries of teachers and support staff to retain and attract high quality teachers.
- Funding to provide more intensive social emotional and programming supports for identified groups within school to reduce rates of chronic absenteeism.
- Maintain time for teacher teams to meet within our Professional Learning Communities to deeply explore student achievement data and determine appropriate, researched based interventions for students identified as below grade level proficiency.
- Maintain building substitutes to ensure quality instruction when staff need to be absent.
- Increase funding to support capital improvements to the building/campus that was established in 1966.

### 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.

The staff at Shawnee Mission South is committed to continuous professional growth and learning as we strive to improve how we serve our students and our community. 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:

- An increased level of social-emotional challenges and needs of students due to the impact of COVID.
- 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 proficiency.
- Lack of constitutional funding of special education continues to impact our ability to fully meet the needs of all students.
- While assessment scores are one measure, Shawnee Mission South 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.
- Similar to how other professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, etc. cannot ensure 100% success due to a variety of obstacles, we will likely be unable to achieve 100% proficiency.
- Given adequate resources with long-term funding to support our students, our goal would be to decrease the percent of students scoring at level one by 3% per year.

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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 and efficiently, limiting central administrative costs to less than 5% of the total budget. Over the past several years, the district has risen to external challenges that have impacted our students educational experiences, with an increased focus on learning recovery, chronic absenteeism, and an enhanced need for social and emotional support.

The district has used information from needs assessments conducted at each building to make targeted staff allocations at the building level. Specific needs identified by large numbers of schools, included additional teacher allocations to maintain lower class sizes at the elementary level, providing a building substitute at each building, taking extra measures to ensure paraprofessional/teacher support in special education classrooms, and higher salaries for both certified and classified staff to strengthen retention and recruitment of employees. In addition, following a comprehensive analysis of student needs, the district continues to budget for 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 (at about 1,700 students each).

With the incremental restoration of state general education funding, (an increase to the base, along with a corresponding increase in the Local Option Budget) we were able to add a few more positions identified in individual building needs assessments across our 48 attendance centers/specialized programs. These positions include the following:

- 10 special education teachers, a SPED instructional coach, 2 speech language pathologists, and 1 special education assistant director.
- 6 ELL teachers
- 2 Pre-K Teachers and 3.5 Pre-K Aides

Due to the uncertainty of the future of federal title dollars, however, the district decided to move 2.6 FTE administrative positions previously funded with title dollars to the general operating fund to allow for flexibility as future needs arise.

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

- Elementary class size will remain at 22 for Kindergarten through 2nd grade and 25 for 3rd through 6th grades.

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- 10 additional teachers at the secondary level to support learning recovery.
- 6 Attendance Specialists to continue our work towards curbing chronic absenteeism
- At least 1 building sub at each building in the district.

The district will continue to analyze budget funds for the 2025-26 school year, in order to determine the ability to maintain the positions listed above that were originally 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. Due to the shortfall in special education state aid, along with the uncertainty of federal funds, this recently restored capacity is tenuous.

Shawnee Mission South High School students are making meaningful academic progress, as noted by several lead indicators. South juniors and seniors earned \$1.2 billion in scholarship offers from colleges and universities from across the country as of September 2024. South students' average ACT composite score was 22.6 in 2024, with a district participation rate of 55% taking the exam at least once. This score exceeds the Kansas Board of Regents target admissions criteria of 21.0 and the state average composite score of 19.2. Market Value Assets (MVAs), a benchmark established by SMSD to assess Real World Learning progress, are specific work opportunities or accreditations that contribute to student success in work and learning beyond graduation: College Credits (9+ Credit Hours), Work Based Experience, Internships, Client Connected Projects, Entrepreneurial Experiences, and Industry Recognized Credentials. SMSD has seen significant growth since 2019 toward our 2030 goal for every USD 512 student to graduate with at least 1 MVA. Among our 2024 graduates, 73% earned at least 1 MVA with significant growth among our students with learning barriers associated with disability, poverty and language - where over 55% of each subgroup graduated with at least 1 MVA.

Lag indicators noted that the South four-year graduation rate held steady at 92%, as recovery takes hold following the multi-year disruptions to learning caused by the global pandemic. Further the performance of South 10th graders on the Kansas Assessments improved from 2023 to 2024 and English Language Arts surpassed 2019 COVID levels. However, the Math scores for this cohort of students had yet to recover to 2019 performance levels having experienced COVID in grades 6-8 and inadequate preGannon state funding grades K-3.

Note, South is also home to the SMSD Post-High program, which supports the transition services for students with disabilities throughout the district, beyond 12th grade and through 21 years of age. Full state funding for special education services would allow for an enhanced investment in programs like Post-High.

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In addition, the district will take steps to absorb cuts to state aid for professional development and teacher mentoring in order to continue support for the professional growth and retention of all teachers, with a focus on Professional Learning Communities and Response to Intervention. These types of budgetary needs to offset unfunded mandates erodes the inflationary adjustments to general education state aid. Additionally, resources will be allocated to the following items which also were identified through the needs assessment process:

- Expand implementation of iReady math resources and assessments from 6-8 to K-8.
- Continue expanding the number of LETRS trained staff (structured literacy)
- Adopt a new Learning Walkthrough platform for enhanced data collection and feedback.

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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