

# Westridge Middle School

9300 Nieman Road  
Overland Park, KS 66214  
913-993-1200

Principal: Martha Mendoza  
Grades Served: 7 & 8  
KSDE Bldg #: 8868

Feeder Pattern: West



## Notable School Characteristics

- Comprehensive school serving students in grades 7 & 8
- Meets the needs of a diverse body of students
- Works collaboratively with a variety of community partners
- Title 1 School
- Flexible learning spaces have been developed to meet the needs of all learners
- Implementation of student leadership programs including Jag K, Sources of Strength and Student Council
- One-to-one technology
- Students scheduled by interdisciplinary team for student success & support
- PLC's in place with trained PLC Leads: to support high quality Tier 1 instruction, data analysis, & intervention

ELL population

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# KSDE Building Report Card

## [Westridge Middle School Building Report Card](#)

### Needs Analysis

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

Several barriers must be addressed to ensure all students at Westridge Middle School achieve grade-level proficiency on state and district assessments. These barriers include:

- **Lack of access to targeted Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions**, due to staffing, scheduling, and resource constraints.
- **Lack of adequate social-emotional and mental health supports**, which affects student engagement, behavior, and readiness to learn.
- **Lack of adequate applicants**, shortage in special education certified and classified positions.
- **Lack of consistent student attendance**, though it is better, chronic absenteeism and frequent tardies, which results in lost instructional time and interrupted learning.
- **Lack of English language proficiency for an increasing number of students**, particularly those scoring Level 1 or 2 on the KELPA, combined with a lack of staff training on effective English Language Learner instruction, including biography-driven, asset-based practices that leverage students' linguistic, cultural, and experiential strengths, which limits access to academic content across all subject areas.
- **Lack of family engagement accessibility**, including language barriers, work schedules, and limited familiarity with middle school academic expectations.
- **Lack of foundational numeracy and problem-solving skills**, impacting students' ability to engage with grade-level mathematics.
- **Lack of progression in Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels**, with instruction often remaining at the skill/concept level and needing to move toward higher-level strategic thinking and extended reasoning.

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- **Lack of sufficient counseling and social work support**, with only two counselors and one social worker serving a large at-risk student population.
- **Lack of sufficient and ongoing LETRS and Science of Reading, aligned professional learning for all teachers**, as initial training for some staff has not been enough to ensure consistent, research-based literacy instruction across all content areas.

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

The Shawnee Mission School District including Westridge Middle School has taken several measures to remove barriers to student growth. Increased salary to recruit and retain highly qualified certified and classified staff. Maintain additional staff members hired to meet the individual learning and SEL needs of all students (including a social worker, Recovery Room aide, and an instructional coach). Maintain funding and time for PLCs to meet, and additional substitute teachers including building substitutes.

Further needs:

- **(NEW) Provide additional FTE for a Reading Specialist to support RTI in the middle schools who need more support** - To address persistent literacy gaps and support Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions aligned with Science of Reading practices, a Reading Specialist is needed to lead and support middle school teachers to provide targeted, data-driven instruction and progress monitoring.
- **(NEW) Increasing instructional minutes for reading and math** - It will allow teachers to provide targeted, small-group instruction embedded within core content. This approach supports students requiring Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions without removing them from grade-level instruction and allows for more responsive, data-driven support.
- **(CURRENT - Expand) Increase professional learning budget for Science of Reading and literacy instruction across all content areas** - While some staff have begun LETRS training, additional and ongoing professional learning is needed for all teachers to ensure consistent, research-based literacy instruction across content areas.
- **(CURRENT- Maintain & Expand) Fully fund special education staffing (certified and classified)** To address staffing shortages, compliance requirements, and increased student needs, full funding is necessary to recruit and retain special education teachers and paraprofessionals. Creation of an additional district supplemental contract for a Middle School special education lead teacher in each building. This lead teacher would mentor new special education teachers, create the paraprofessional schedule, collaborate with student services on the master schedule

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to ensure that services are appropriately met, attend additional professional development, and present/facilitate district and building professional development for certified and classified staff.

- **(NEW) Provide additional FTE for counselor and/or social worker support** - Westridge currently operates below the recommended 250 to 1 student-to-counselor ratio (ASCA). Student mental health needs continue to increase and feel uncontrollable at times. Additional staffing would help provide adequate social-emotional and behavioral supports.
- **(CURRENT and Maintain) Staff supporting SEL and intervention needs** - This includes maintaining funding for positions such as a social worker, Recovery Room aide, and instructional coach, which directly support academic engagement, behavior, and student well-being.
- **(CURRENT and Maintain) Continue to retain a building substitute** - It is essential to keep a building substitute due to ongoing substitute shortages and the need to continue grade level instruction.

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?

- Westridge Middle School recognizes that students will reach grade-level proficiency at different rates based on individual learning needs, language acquisition, attendance, prior educational experiences, and access to consistent academic and social-emotional supports. While state assessments provide one indicator of student proficiency, they must be considered alongside multiple measures of student growth and progress.
- If the proposed budget actions are implemented, Westridge anticipates improved access to instruction, intervention, and student supports within the first academic year, resulting in measurable growth for the majority of students. Students receiving Tier 2 supports are expected to show accelerated growth within one year, while students requiring intensive Tier 3 interventions including: students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students experiencing interrupted schooling, will likely require multiple years of sustained, well-resourced support to reach grade-level proficiency.
- Due to factors such as chronic absenteeism, language acquisition needs, social-emotional challenges, and limitations in special education and support program funding, it is not realistic to predict a uniform timeline for all students. However, with the implementation of the proposed budget actions, Westridge expects consistent year-over-year improvement in student achievement, including increased movement on KAP and improved performance across district formatives.

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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).

Even 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 **not** able to add any new positions identified in individual building needs assessments across our 48 attendance centers/specialized programs (in fact we cut 19.2 FTE). Our budget situation for this year was challenging given the ongoing shortfall in Special Education funding from the State and a decline in student enrollment. Through our individual building needs assessment, our leaders identified a need for an additional 79.3 FTE that the district was unable to fund. Some positions that were unable to be funded were:

- 34 elementary counselors
- 10 Classified Special Education positions
- 5.25 Certified Special Education positions
- 5 high school instructional coaches
- 5 Interventionists
- 3 ELL Teachers

The district is maintaining the following positions in the operating funds for at least 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.
- 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 2027-28 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.

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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