

THE Councilor



Shawnee Mission Area Council
PTA

every child. one voice.

President's Message

December is already upon us and the school year almost half over. I know fall has been a busy time for all our PTAs. With winter break not far away, it is time to take a well deserved break and spend time with our families.

You should have all received information from the state PTA about the Legislative Conference to be held in Topeka on Feb 11. If you have not already registered, be sure to do so the first part of January. The financial

situation for Shawnee Mission and many other school districts across the state worsens with each passing year. It is important to have a large delegation from Shawnee Mission attend the conference, so that our voice is heard. The 2002 Legislative Platform adopted by the Board of Education is included in this newsletter.

It is not too early to begin thinking about the Kansas PTA

Convention to be held in Salina, April 12-14. Hopefully, you have received your convention packet from the state office. If you have not received a packet, contact me or the state office.

In closing, all your Shawnee Mission Area Council Officers and Chairs would like to wish you a happy and safe holiday season and our best wishes for the New Year!

Kim Pflaum,
SMAC President

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Shawnee Mission Area Council PTA cordially invites you to the

Annual Elementary Presidents' and Principals' Exchange

Wednesday, Jan. 23
9 a.m.

Indian Creek Technology Center
4401 West 103rd Street

Come prepared to share ideas, projects and programs from your building.



2001 Unit Highlights



Belinder Elementary

Service to the community is very important at Belinder Elementary. Each classroom participates in a Campfire Service Project. Parent volunteers assist students as they devise their own project, develop a plan and implement the plan. 5th and 6th graders participate in *Braves Helping Hands* which is a service organization directed by parent volunteers and staff members. These 5th and 6th grade groups perform several projects throughout the year. One annual project involves helping unload a mountain of pumpkins at the Crown Center pumpkin patch. Proceeds of this sale go to charity.

The entire school participated in the National PTAs "Day of Remembrance." Each Belinder Student traced his/her hand and cut it out. These hands were formed into a huge wreath that now hangs from a window at the school to show love and support, to honor, and to remember those who lost their lives in the Sept. 11 tragedy.

Corinth Elementary

Corinth Elementary earned top honors in the sixth annual "Best of the Best" national yearbook contest in the Best Cover Design category. This is a national award out of 17,000 yearbooks published by Lifetouch! The 2001 Yearbook Advisors were Susie Lawler and Darla Barnert. Thirty sixth graders participated in the Yearbook Club when this yearbook was created. These students are now seventh graders attending Mission Valley Middle School. The cover is a full color collage of dragons drawn by students.

Highlands Elementary

Highlands' Harvest of Reading Week started off with a "Ho, Ho, Ho"! Santa was the first to Rock 'n Read followed by several parents, staff, a Fire Chief, Fairway Chief of Police, and Clifford, the Big Red Dog. These readers modeled their love of reading by reading in a rocking chair in the main hall of the school. Throughout the week, local celebrities visited classrooms to read books. Wednesday night was "S'More Reading Under the Stars" with story teller Jack Haupt and S'more candy bars. The week ended with a big kiss! Highlands students read 1,000 books in one month, so Principal, Jennifer Spencer, would have to kiss a pig. The "kiss" assembly was enjoyed by all (except maybe the Principal who had to plant the kiss)!

Indian Woods Middle School

The PTA sponsored "A Taste of Culture," a melting pot luck dinner in which all families were invited to bring a dish of their own ethnicity. This was to celebrate different cultures and diversity. Entertainment was provided by the Mayor's Ethnic Enrichment Commission. It was a great success with a good turnout including families who don't normally attend programs.

PTA will sponsor the performance of "Bye Bye Birdie" on Feb. 28 and March 1. This will be the first musical ever at Indian Woods Middle School. Professionals, teachers and parents will work with the students.

2001 Unit Highlights (Continued)

Mill Creek Elementary

Family Reading Night is the highlight of a week-long celebration promoting recreational reading among Mill Creek students. On Reading Night, teachers and guest presenters lead students and parents in reading enrichment activities. Puppetry, science, Spanish, dramatics, art, storytelling and music are a few of the past activities. Participants can attend three different presentations over the course of the evening.

During the evening, the PTA sponsors a used book exchange, sometimes called Adopt-A-Book. Prior to the evening, used books are solicited from Mill Creek families and they are then made available for "adoption" on Reading Night. Free refreshments are provided throughout the evening and bookstore gift certificates are awarded as door prizes at the various reading activities.

Rosehill Elementary

Rosehill moms set a new record for sacking groceries with speed!! On Nov. 14, several women from Rosehill sacked over 400 bags of groceries to assist Hy-Vee with their "fill up a truck" promotion benefiting City Union Mission. The work was accomplished in just over one hour. The staff at Hy-Vee could not keep up with the fast moving hands of the Rosehill moms! It was a great and fulfilling afternoon of service.

Shawnee Mission South

The Shawnee Mission South PTA celebrated the season of giving and sharing by participating in their 3rd Annual SMS PTA Head Start/Holiday Gathering on Dec. 5. At this event, members of the SM South PTA filled decorated holiday gift sacks with donated personal hygiene, educational, or small toy items. The gift sacks will be given to 250 Head Start children (ages 4 and 5) by students at the SM South Student Council Head Start/ Holiday Party. The PTA tradition, started 3 years ago, is a terrific opportunity for the South PTA to support an organization at South (South Student Council), as well as, to help our community.

Somerset Elementary

Somerset held their annual Holiday Shoppe on Dec. 6. Crafts, baked items and giftable food items are made by parents, teachers, students and Scout Troops and sold at this all day event. This allows students to purchase items for family members at a low cost and still enjoy the shopping atmosphere. The shop reopens at night along with a family dinner. This year Mr. Goodcents partnered with Somerset to host a low cost family event. This is one of Somerset's largest fundraisers for the year and is a tradition that is enjoyed by all.

2001-2002 Clothing Center Schedule

	8:30-11 a.m.	8:30-11 a.m.	8:30-11 a.m.	4:30-7 p.m.
Jan. 7	Mill Creek, Rushton	R. Kobylinski	L. Franklin	
Jan. 14	Closed			
Jan. 21	Nieman, Oak Park	M. Ralstin	T. Crawford	
Jan. 28	Overland Park, Pawnee	N. Huckaba	L. Kaiser	
Feb. 4	Prairie, Ray Marsh	C. Lafferty	J. Martz	
Feb. 11				T. Wintering, D. Vestal
Feb. 18	Closed			
Feb. 19	HS Changeover	5 High Schools		
Feb. 25	R. Benninghoven, Rising Star	E. Hodgson	C. Boyer-Shesol	
Mar. 4	Roeland Park, Roesland	J. Etherington	S. Nowell	
Mar. 11				L. Bolter, S. Puskas
Mar. 18	Closed	Spring Break		
Mar. 25	Closed	Spring Break		
Apr. 1	Santa Fe Trail, Shawanoe	K. Conyers	J. Connell	
Apr. 8				V. Needham, P. Blake
Apr. 15	Somerset, South Park	M. Noll	E. Hodgson	
Apr. 22	Sunflower, Tomahawk	S. Beyer	D. Lawson	
Apr. 29	Trailwood, West Antioch	M. Breitmayer	J. Carper	
May. 6	Westwood View	M. Ralstin	J. Etherington	
May. 13				R. Kobylinski, C. Lafferty

The new location is at the Indian Creek Technology Center, 4401 W. 103rd Street. Take the western most driveway and go all the way around to the back of the building by the day care playground. Enter through the back door and the Clothing Center is located just down the ramp. Each school is to send three (3) workers to assist in the sorting room at the Clothing Center on its scheduled Monday date. Sorting hours are from 8:30 a.m. until 11 a.m. Area Council officers and chairs must trade or find substitutes if they are unable to work on their assigned date. If you miss, you will be rescheduled.

2002 Kansas PTA Annual Legislative Conference "Kids Matter - Write Now"

Monday, Feb. 11
Ramada Inn Downtown, 420 East 6th Street, Topeka.

Tentative program includes speakers:

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of Education
Val De Fever, Legislative Liaison, Kansas State Board of Education
Mark DeSetti, Governmental Relations Specialist - KNEA
Mark Tallman, President, Kansas Association of School Boards
Kansas Senator John Vratil.

The registration fee is \$25 and includes all conference materials, continental breakfast and lunch. The fee for the legislator's lunch is \$15. Unit Presidents and Legislative Chairs are encouraged to lead a unit delegation to the conference. For further information, contact the Kansas PTA state office at 785-234-5782 or ks.office@pta.org.

Cancun at Spring Break-Parents Point of View

High School Presidents, please pass this information along to your schools. As Spring Break approaches, remember that high school Spring Break trips are not sponsored by the school or by the district. SMAC would like to reprint the following information compiled by high school parents after a Spring Break in Cancun. This eye opening information reminds us of the importance of parents being involved in their children's lives to help them avoid risky situations. This information was gathered in a prior year by Char Charette, Editor NW News.

Several parents joined their students on their Spring Break trip to Cancun, Mexico. All were concerned for their teen's well being and decided their students could go only if they accompanied them. Here are some of their comments. You may find them helpful as you make the Cancun decision for your teen.

"This is a foreign country and the language barrier can be a serious problem."

"Cancun is a city built just for tourism and is basically a strip of hotels on a beach. Many people are there to take advantage of young Americans whom they presume to have a lot of money. For example, we rented a car for a certain amount of money and returned it with the same amount of gas with which we started. However, the rental company insisted that we owed them an additional \$50. It was unfair, but we were in a foreign country—so we paid it."

"Everything is expensive. The teens go to discos that have a \$15-\$40 admission charge which pays for free drinks for the entire evening. They have contests like the "biggest boobs contest" where the winner removes her bra in front of everyone and a "kissing contest" where kisses are placed all over the body, and a "chugging contest" to see how fast you can chug beer. There is a "Booze Cruise" where kids go out on a ship all night. It costs \$30 and you can drink all you want. They play a game where the winner ends up totally nude."

"There are no laws for underage drinking. Police beat up some kids who drink too much and who are sick and vomiting all over the place."

"There are lots of kids drinking at all times. They walk around the local malls with beer bottles in their hands. They are on the buses drinking. One morning when we went out to walk, we ran into a group that was weaving and stumbling home. From the time they get off the plane, they are offered liqueur."

"Girls are whistled at and grabbed. My daughter hit some guy who wouldn't let her friend go. They got tired of being harassed because they were women."

Here is a quote from an editorial a parent clipped from a Cancun newspaper. It was written by a local resident about Americans on vacation in Cancun for Spring Break. "The main problem was that most of the girls being harassed were far too drunk to do much more to ward off the guy's advances other than meekly shake their hands. From what I was observing, the guys didn't get their drift, or more likely, didn't want to, and kept on with their perverted behavior. . . Does drinking to oblivion give everybody permission to break all of the rules and regulations of society?"

"Don't be fooled that just because there are chaperones, your teen is being supervised. Chaperones on this trip could not be found when needed because they weren't listed anywhere on the hotel's registry. One boy had to go to the hospital for stitches because he walked through a glass window and the chaperone wasn't found until the next day."

"Every morning we would wake up and hear another horror story—a boy drowned, another one fell off a balcony at a local bar and was in critical condition, another teen was hit by a taxi. I cannot confirm any of these events, but I can tell you that there are lots of kids drinking at all times of the day and night."

"I will never let my other kids go to Cancun . . . not after what I have seen and experienced."

SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT

Legislative Platform - 2002

I. SCHOOL FINANCE

- Position:
1. Increase the per pupil base funding to keep pace with increased operating costs.
 2. Continue to allow districts to exceed the base funding per pupil allocation through the use of a local option budget.
 3. Should the legislature fail to increase the base aid per pupil significantly; additional correlation weighting should be provided to large school districts.
 4. Allow school districts to levy a local tax for budget items such as utilities and property, liability, and medical insurance.

Rationale: With the passage of a new finance law in 1992, the Kansas Legislature established the concept of a state-wide support level supplemented by the local option budget. Small districts were granted extra compensation in the form of low enrollment weighting. Since then, the legislature has amended the law to make local option budgets easier to increase; to provide increases in the base amount and allow local option budgets to reflect these new amounts; and to provide additional funds to medium and large districts through a correlation weighting formula. Despite these improvements, concerns remain regarding state support. There are still no provisions for providing an adequate base and many districts need increased correlation weighting to meet on-going expenses. Due to state restrictions placed upon local ability to increase the budget, Shawnee Mission is unable to keep pace with increased costs or meet the educational expectations of the community without using fund balances. These resources will not be available in future years.

II. DECLINING ENROLLMENT

Position: Allow a school district that loses enrollment to base its budget on the highest pupil count during the past three years.

Rationale: Current law provides some relief for declining enrollment, but this change would allow two years of planning to reduce resources.

III. TECHNOLOGY

Position: Provide the ability for the local school board to levy funds for district technology expenses in the operations and capital categories.

Rationale: Providing up-to-date equipment and instruction in technology is necessary to prepare our students for the future; current funds, which are committed to operations and other programs, are not sufficient to meet this need.

Legislative Platform - 2002 (Cont.)

IV. BUSINESS SERVICES

Position: Modify Kansas State Statute 72-8201 to specifically authorize the board to designate other employees, in addition to the superintendent, to execute purchase orders and other contracts.

Rationale: This section was recently amended to authorize the superintendent to sign contracts less than \$10,000. Current Shawnee Mission board policy allows others in the organization to sign purchase orders and contracts. Since purchase orders are contracts, the current law could be read to require the superintendent to sign all purchase orders for district and activity fund purchases. Such a restriction would impede the operation of a large district.

Position: Specifically authorize school districts to pay membership fees to organizations.

Rationale: There is current legislative authority to pay KSHSAA and KASB dues but historically school districts have paid dues to additional organizations such as chambers of commerce and professional associations which are not specifically authorized.

V. TUITION TAX CREDITS, VOUCHERS

Position: We vigorously oppose legislation that would provide tuition tax credits or vouchers to be used for private elementary or secondary schools.

Rationale: Although proponents of the voucher system believe that it will strengthen the public schools through competition, we believe that such a system will reduce needed resources while diminishing diversity in the public schools. We also believe that rather than costing less money, a fully implemented voucher system would cost the state more money. Public schools provide the common experience that helps ensure a democratic society.

VI. STATE MANDATES

Position: We oppose programs mandated by the state without appropriate funding.

Rationale: The school district budget is fully allocated for existing programs and cannot support additions without increased funding.

Dates To Remember

JANUARY

9	Wed.	Executive Committee Meeting	9:30 a.m.	McEachen
9	Wed.	Deadline for articles for <i>The Councilor</i>		
11	Fri.	Unit Deadline for Reflections Program		
23	Wed.	Elementary Presidents' & Principals' Exchange	9 a.m.	Indian Creek
28	Mon.	Citizenship Award Presentation	6:30 p.m.	S.M. West

FEBRUARY

6	Wed.	Executive Session	9:30 a.m.	McEachen
6	Wed.	Deadline for articles for <i>The Councilor</i>		
11	Mon.	KS PTA Legislative Conference		Topeka
13	Wed.	An Evening with Barbara Coloroso	7 p.m.	S.M. West
20	Wed.	General Meeting - Bullying Prevention Speaker	7 p.m.	McEachen



The Councilor
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2002 Legislative Platform