



# SMAC PTA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

September 1, 2021

As the school year begins and we wait for the legislature to start back up in January, here are some important things to be aware of:

- Local Elections
- Legislation Relating to Mask Issues
- Kansas Can Success Tour

## LOCAL ELECTIONS

Make a plan to vote in the November 2 election. These elections often have a bigger impact on our community and our everyday lives than elections at the state and federal level.

### What's on the ballot?

School board, mayor, city council, water board, and JCCC Board of Trustees will be on most ballots.

- Local elections are non-partisan.
- Your sample ballot can be found at [voter.jocoelection.org](http://voter.jocoelection.org) starting on October 13.
- In SMSD, we all vote for the at-large school board position, while voters in SME & SMW will also vote for school board representatives for their respective areas.

### Be An Informed Voter

There are a lot of great resources to learn about candidates.

- Candidate websites or Facebook pages
- League of Women Voters' voter guide website: [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org)
- Candidate Questionnaires – see Shawnee Mission Post closer to the election
- Candidate Forums
  - [Calendar of Shawnee Mission Post Forums](#)  
10/7 (7pm at SMS) [Shawnee Mission Board of Education Candidate Forum](#)
  - [Calendar of League of Women Voters' Candidate Forums](#)  
9/12 (6pm Zoom) [Shawnee Mission Board of Education Candidate Forum](#)
- Follow SMAC PTA on Facebook for notifications about upcoming school board forums

## MAKE A PLAN TO VOTE & BE AN INFORMED VOTER

**LOCAL ELECTION ★ NOVEMBER 2**  
**VOTING INFORMATION**

★ **Use Ksvotes.org to:** ★

- Register to vote (deadline 10/12)
- Apply for an advance (mail-in) ballot

**ADVANCED IN-PERSON VOTING**  
**STARTS OCT 23**

**SMSD AREA LOCATIONS**

**Arts & Heritage Center\*** JoCo Northeast Offices  
8788 Metcalf, Overland Park 6000 Lamar Ave, Mission

**Voting Hours**  
M-F, 10am to 7pm Sat, 9am to 3pm  
\*Open 8am-noon on Aug 2  
Other locations closed on Aug 2

## LEGISLATION RELATING TO MASK ISSUES

As we consider mask requirements in schools, many people may not be aware that a provision was inserted into the major education bill (HB 2134) that severely impacted school districts' ability to do virtual school.

- Districts are prohibited from providing more than 40 hours of remote learning to any student.
- A few exemptions can be given to specific students due to illness, medical condition, etc.
- There is some flexibility due to disaster, but that appears to be directed at situations like tornadoes, rather than a shutdown due to COVID.
- Students exceeding 40 hours without an exemption are funded as a virtual student, much less than an in-person student, yet districts still have physical buildings to maintain.

### Why is this important?

Without mitigation (e.g., masks) the number of kids who would get COVID would likely be higher than it would be otherwise, and the number of kids in quarantine would be significantly higher.

- Could lead to a situation where schools have to shut down for a period of time. (Happening in multiple districts in the South and just last week in Wellington, KS.)
- SMSD would not be able to do virtual learning during a shut down, instead learning would be disrupted and **those days would be made up at the end of the year.**
- If the district did go ahead with remote learning, the law would dictate that our district would receive less than half the funding amount for students who were in virtual learning.

When considering sentiments about mask requirements, it's important for everyone to be aware of this restriction on remote learning and how it could negatively impact this school year.

## KANSAS CAN SUCCESS TOUR

Kansas Education Commissioner Randy Watson is conducting a tour of Kansas meeting with interested community members regarding the Kansas Can initiative and what people want our schools to provide our students.

You can find more information about the Kansas Can Success Tour and the dates/times/locations of all of the sessions on the [Kansas State Department of Education website](#).

There is no meeting specific to SMSD, rather ALL parents and community members are welcome and encouraged to attend ANY of the meetings. The meetings closest to the SMSD area are:

- **Blue Valley:** Thursday, September 2, 11:30am-1:00pm, Hilltop Conference Center
- **Olathe:** Friday, September 3, 9-10:30am, Instructional Resource Center
- **KCK:** Tuesday, September 7, 11:30am-1:00pm, KCKPS Central Office

**Thank you for staying informed on matters impacting SMSD students, the district as a whole, and our local communities!**