

FW: Guest Post

David Smith <davidsmith@smsd.org>

Mon 4/24/2023 4:58 PM

To: Patrick Richardson <patrick.richardson@sentinelks.org>

Mr. Richardson,

It would not be appropriate for me to attempt to directly respond to an article written by one of our teachers during their non-work time. If that person or any other individual is interested in filing a formal complaint concerning something they have experienced here in the district, our complaint process is available to them. It is self-evident that her perspective does not reflect the experience of the vast majority of our staff. What I can do is to share with you what our actual work is around diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

The Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) has a clear objective: Each student will develop a personalized learning plan that will prepare them for college and career, with the interpersonal skills they need for life success. This objective is at the heart of the district's [strategic plan](#), which was developed by a diverse cross-section of the Shawnee Mission community. One of the primary strategies to meet this objective is "We will relentlessly create a fully unified, equitable and inclusive culture." The implementation of this strategy impacts the work of every district staff member, and every child. It began with contracted support from external trainers, and over the past four years has transitioned to on-going, internally-supported work.

All of this work takes place with the goal of creating environments in each school where every single student can achieve their full potential and feel a sense of belonging.

The 2021-22 school year marked the completion of a robust three-year professional development endeavor to bring Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) training to all district employees. The current focus relies on sustaining an internal model which includes administrators and building DEIB teams working collaboratively with certified Equity Practitioners and SMSD's DEI Coordinator in support of ongoing professional learning.

Equity Practitioners serve as "trainers of trainers," with 31 staff members trained and certified to deliver future content, guidance, and support. Dedicated professional development time is set for DEIB building teams each semester, where they are provided time to plan for and implement professional learning within their respective schools. Equity Practitioners regularly communicate and collaborate to support continued development and growth. The Equity Practitioner team led New Team Member DEIB training as part of the New Team Member Academy in August, 2022, and continues to provide professional growth opportunities throughout the year in partnership with the Directors of Human Resource and Professional Learning.

Youth Equity Stewardship (YES!) was introduced in the Spring of 2022 as an opt-in opportunity for students from all Shawnee Mission high schools. Adult sponsors from each school also participate. The focus of the YES! program is to provide opportunities for student leaders to develop and engage in building and district level leadership activities and include their voices in decision-making processes that directly impact students. YES! is a program focused on engaging youth and adults as advocates for building inspired and inclusive learning environments in every classroom in the SMSD.

To date, YES! students and staff have completed eight sessions of training. Currently 73 students across all high schools and 15 adult sponsors have experienced the training with more students joining in the future.

In addition to a focus on professional development for adults, the district strategic plan also prioritizes recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce. As a result, SMSD Recruit was launched to provide an internal stakeholder team of educators who plan for and support recruitment of diverse candidates as well as work to support retention of staff. Employee resource groups/affinity groups have also formed as a means to increase connections between diverse staff members and allow for additional support for employees.

Student affinity spaces have also grown in the district. In April, the district hosted the first Black Student Union Summit in collaboration with Kansas State University. This event provided connection and leadership support for more than 100 student leaders across Shawnee Mission middle and high schools.

As was mentioned above, the work of establishing schools where every student feels a sense of belonging and receives the support they need to achieve their personal best is never done. Every day, across the district, students and staff come together to create One Shawnee Mission.

David

David A. Smith | Chief Communications Officer
Shawnee Mission School District
Center for Academic Achievement
8200 W. 71st Street
Shawnee Mission, KS 66204
913.993.6448 (O)
913.744.5104 (C)
www.smsd.org



From: Patrick Richardson <patrick.richardson@sentinelks.org>

Date: April 24, 2023 at 10:20:28 AM CDT

To: Mary Sinclair <marysinclair@smsd.org>, Jessica Hembree <jessicahembree@smsd.org>, Jamie Borgman <jamieborgman@smsd.org>, April BoydNoronha <AprilBoydNoronha@smsd.org>, Sara Goodburn <saragoodburn@smsd.org>, Heather Ousley <heatherousley@smsd.org>, Brad Stratton <BradStratton@smsd.org>, Michelle Hubbard <MichelleHubbard@smsd.org>

Subject: Guest Post

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Board Members, Dr. Hubbard,

This guest post has recently come to our attention.

https://readlion.com/2023/04/21/kansas-public-school-teacher-yes-your-children-are-being-indoctrinated/?fbclid=IwAR28lxASdEae1SsKmK4gev8emcgSqrmeEQf4zjmdOjkkDbKmwQ8_we-

[IFHaE&mibextid=Zxz2cZ](#)

The accusations therein are quite concerning, particularly as regards instructors being called "a Nazi" and a "fascist," as well as all instruction being viewed through the lens of DEI.

Please respond to the concerns outlined within this article by end of business day today.

Thanks,
Patrick

Patrick Richardson
Correspondent
patrick.richardson@sentinelks.org
620.674.2258