



Arkansas City Public Schools

BOE BRIEFS

An informal report from the Board of Education Meeting

October 14, 2024

Kansas Star Recognition Awards

Arkansas City Public Schools received recognition through the Kansans Can Star Recognition Program. The district earned a **Copper Award for Social-Emotional Growth** and a **Bronze Award for Kindergarten Readiness**, acknowledging our district's progress toward the state's educational vision.

Top DAWGS Recognition

The Board recognized the September Top DAWGS! These outstanding professionals were nominated by their peers for their positive impact on students, colleagues, and the community:

- Marie Austin – Food Service, Adams
- Elizabeth Bedolla – ESOL SAT, ACMS
- Kasie Bogart – Agriculture Teacher, ACHS
- Rebekah Whitley – Counselor, Roosevelt

PERSONNEL UPDATE

New Staff:

- Kendall Biddle – Asst. Wrestling Coach at ACHS (Rule 10)
- Angela Brown – Bus Aide
- Madeline Cameron – School Nurse
- Peggy McAdam – SAT at Adams

Resignations/Retirements:

- C.J. Jennings – All Coaching Duties
- Harvey Mefford – Head Custodian at ACMS (Retirement, Dec. 1)
- Lori Roths – Secretary at ACMS (Retirement, Dec. 1)

OTHER BUSINESS

- The Board accepted gifts including markers for the district from GE Aerospace/Strother Women's Network and two Starter Bot Kits (\$1600-2400) for ACMS from Robot Zone.

- The Board authorized the disposal of surplus or out-of-date property.
- The Board recognized the following two Governor's Proclamations: Safe Schools Week (October 21-27) which encourages teachers, administrators, and other members of the community to work together, especially in a state of crisis; and School Transportation Appreciation Day (October 23) which recognizes the excellent work done by those who provide safe and efficient school transportation for our students.
- The Board tabled action updating of BOE Policy GAF regarding staff-student interactions. The proposed revision would allow building administrators, school security officers, and other designated personnel to investigate and question students regarding policy violations, student conduct, and legal matters without requiring parental notification beforehand. This policy aims to ensure a safe and effective educational environment by expanding the authority of staff involved in investigations.
- The Board directed the administration to vote in favor of KSHSAA rule changes that align with the district's goals and provide the best opportunities for improvement in our schools and community. These changes aim to support student success and enhance our district's competitive and educational environment.
- The Board authorized the business office to initiate the procurement process for replacing several aging fleet vehicles and a Head Start bus. These upgrades should improve transportation efficiency and ensure continued safety for students and staff.
- The Board tabled action regarding doors and locks at the middle school pending additional information.
- The Board authorized the administration to apply for the FCC's Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program. This initiative offers up to \$200 million in funding to help schools enhance their cybersecurity infrastructure to protect personal information, secure online accounts, and safeguard critical networks from cyber threats.
- Mr. Braden Smith reported the district is reviewing instructional materials to ensure they align with current educational standards and support student development. Priority areas include elementary health education and secondary elective courses, where updates may be necessary to provide students with up-to-date, high-quality resources. A detailed report with recommendations will be presented to the Board later this year.
- Dr. Ron Ballard gave an update on school finance and funding for FY 2026. While funding for general education is fully secured for the current year, special education funding remains a concern. The district may need to address the

ongoing gap in special education funding in future budgets. Updates will be provided as the state continues discussions on long-term funding solutions.

- Mr. Smith reported strong participation in recent parent-teacher conferences, particularly at the elementary level, with each elementary school achieving over 90% attendance. Arkansas City Middle School saw an 82% participation rate, while Arkansas City High School had a 60% turnout. The district will explore ways to increase engagement at the secondary level, especially in high school, where parent involvement tends to decline as students become more independent.
- Dr. Ballard highlighted the JAG-K program, which helps students overcome barriers to graduate and pursue successful careers. The program provides in-school instruction on employability and leadership skills, while Career Specialists offer ongoing support after graduation. Students also participate in community service, internships, and leadership activities.
- The Board went into Executive Session to discuss non-elected personnel. No action was taken following the session.