



USD 497 News Release

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Board Approves Classified Contract, Student Handbook & Begins Interim Supt. Interviews

Classified Negotiated Agreement

Following a ratification vote with the overwhelming support of PAL-CWA members, the Lawrence Board of Education approved a tentative classified negotiated agreement for the 2024-2025 school year. The agreement includes a 6.267% increase to the classified salary pool at a cost to the district of \$1,086,912. This amounts to a 99-cent increase to base hourly wages and horizontal movement for eligible staff with an additional year of service. Most classified staff will receive an 11- to 13-cent increase through horizontal movement; however, exact increases are dependent on salary schedule placement.

The agreement continues single board-paid medical, dental, and vision insurance coverage for classified full-time employees. With an increase in premiums of \$139.51 per month or \$1674.12 annually, the district's total cost for the annual premium is \$8,725.44 for each full-time employee.

Additional language updates to the agreement include changes to allow new classified employees to use sick leave beginning on their first day of employment, and all classified staff to use personal business leave on inclement weather days. Language updates to the classified agreement reflect gender-neutral pronouns.

The board and PAL-CWA negotiations teams shared this joint statement about reaching agreement, "The teams wish to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Superintendent Dr. Lewis, the Board of Education, negotiations teams, PAL-CWA members, and classified staff during this process. The teams are committed to continuing to address further goals and needs through biweekly labor-management meetings between PAL-CWA leadership and district staff, as well as support the Board in advocating for additional school funding at the state level."

2024-2025 Student Handbook

The board approved on second reading the 2024-2025 Student Handbook. It consolidates all school handbooks into one comprehensive document. One standardized handbook promotes continuity and clear communication across the district and provides students and school families an accurate and consistent overview of district policies, procedures, and general rules.

The handbook reflects no changes to current cell phone policies already in place at each school level. With a goal of ensuring productive, respectful, and safe learning environments, the Board Policy Committee is currently discussing policy and procedural changes regarding the appropriate use of cell phones by students during the school day. Board President Kelly Jones said that after school resumes, the board and administration will seek and consider additional input from staff, as well as feedback from students and school families about possible changes to cell phone policies.

Executive Sessions

The board is meeting in two executive sessions tonight to discuss non-elected personnel matters, including an interview with interim superintendent finalist Dr. Larry Englebrick, USD 497's deputy superintendent. Additional finalist interviews will be announced this week.