



## USD 497 News Release

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### **Board Elects Officers, Recognizes Students, Approves Consent Agenda Items**

In the spirit of continuity during district searches for interim and permanent superintendents, Board President Kelly Jones accepted a second consecutive term as president. She also previously served as the board's president during the 2020-2021 school year. Board member Carole Cadue-Blackwood was nominated for president but declined the nomination to pursue the vice presidency.

"I had not intended to seek the presidency; it has to do with the changing landscape," said Jones, who indicated she has the skill set and the time to assist with the superintendent searches, as well as experience with the search that brought Superintendent Dr. Anthony Lewis to Lawrence. District voters first elected Jones to the board during the 2018-2019 school year.

The board nominated Cadue-Blackwood and GR Gordon-Ross as vice president and elected Gordon-Ross. "I am interested in doing the work to serve the district and for no other reason than that," said Gordon-Ross. District voters elected him twice to four-year terms from 2019-2022 and 2024-2027. The board also appointed Gordon-Ross to fill the unexpired term (2022-2024) of a board member who left Lawrence.

Following district tradition, Dr. Lewis presented to Jones, in appreciation of her 2023-2024 leadership, a piece of student artwork – a ceramic vase created by Natalie Riley, a Free State High alumna of the Class of '24.

### **Special Recognition**

The board recognized the Lawrence Virtual School's eCybermission Team, the eighth-grade national champions! The team of Lawrence Dao, Daniel Dao, and Eian Pratch worked with adviser Nancy Jackson, LVS gifted education teacher, to study the interest and potential for AI educational initiatives in schools and assess the accuracy of ChatGPT's mathematical reasonings. "When they announced our team name, it was probably one of the best moments of my life," said Daniel Dao. After hearing the team's research, Jones formed an ad hoc committee to discuss policy, guidelines, and procedures around appropriate district use of AI.

### **The board approved its Consent Agenda, removing these items for discussion:**

- **Enrollment/Boundary Analysis & Facilitation** - The board discussed and deferred approval of a contract with RSP & Associates not to exceed \$100,000. It directed staff to work with RSP to focus its contract on balancing high school boundaries. The district has worked with RSP for several years to forecast/analyze enrollment for staffing/budget planning and to assist the board's Boundary Advisory Committee.
- **Annual Renewal of Gaggle Safety Management Software** - The board discussed and approved renewal of Gaggle safety management software at a cost of \$53,411.25. The technology scans students' district accounts for harmful content and alerts school administrators, so they may respond to signs of self-harm, depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, cyberbullying, threats of violence, or other potential harm.
- **School Meal Prices** - The board discussed and approved as recommended a 10-cent increase in school meal prices. Reduced-price (40 cents lunch/30 cents breakfast) and adult meal (\$5 lunch/\$3 breakfast) prices remain unchanged. All students receive a full reimbursable meal regardless of lunch account balance. Our district does not meet federal eligibility requirements to provide free student meals.

### **Executive Session**

The board met in executive session to discuss non-elected personnel.