



Monday, January 27, 2025

Hello Members of the Board,

We have recently offered statements for both parents and community as well as for staff about our ongoing commitment to student safety, privacy, and following the law in light of Homeland Security's recent directive regarding Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Those statements are posted to USD497.org and are also attached to this Superintendent Update document.

Dr. Martin Luther King Observances

Billy Mills Middle School

I enjoyed attending Billy Mills Middle School's MLK assembly recently, featuring student choir and band performances and sage advice from Lawrence Police Department Lt. Myrone Grady, a former BMMS SRO, about the importance of commitment, courage, and kindness. It was an excellent program and I was impressed by the kindness and attention the middle school students gave their peers who were performing. Wonderful!

Jayhawk Breakfast Rotary MLK Breakfast

Last Monday's community MLK Breakfast hosted by the Jayhawk Breakfast Rotary featured a fabulous program.

Playwright and KU Professor Darren Canady's address, ***Rest for Your Revolution: How Martin and a Mystic Changed My Purpose*** was fascinating, and the incredible talent of Soprano/Mezzo Soprano Vanessa Thomas simply extraordinary.

Very much appreciated President Jones and Members Byers, Cadue-Blackwood, Franklin and Kimball joining to attend, as well as Dr. Englebrick, Ms. Ryan, and Mr. Harrell. A wonderful group and an inspiring program on a meaningful day.

ONE DREAM Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

My thanks to all of the staff, students, alumni, and community partners who contributed to the inspiring ONE DREAM Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration last Thursday evening.

It was a special treat to join in to honor 19 of our students and several staff members selected by their schools for recognition of their daily actions to demonstrate respect, courage, and responsibility in the spirit of Dr. King. The Lied Center graciously hosts this annual event for us at no charge.

Our ESC staff was treated to a performance Wednesday by the **Southwest Middle School Theatre** under the direction of Trish Neuteboom. They also visited their feeder elementary schools to share a short play and promote enrollment in theater.

Boundary Advisory Committee Update

Special thanks to Members Costello and Franklin for their leadership on the Boundary Advisory Committee. They convened their planned January meeting on Wednesday to discuss RSP and Associates' enrollment analysis and determine a recommendation to the board. We appreciate that Dr. Englebrick will provide an update during this evening's board meeting on this work.

Instructional Hours/Inclement Weather Update

As we know, we utilized our fifth inclement weather day Tuesday due to below zero wind chill temperatures; we continue to track instructional hours and state requirements. We will bring another update to the board in February.

Student Honors

Great news from Lawrence High's girls basketball team! Brynnae Johnson is among nine KC-area basketball players nominated for 2025 McDonald's All-American Games. Players were nominated by coaches, athletic directors, principals, or members of the selection committee based on criteria such as accomplishments on the court, fundamental skill level, and basketball IQ. The girls game will air at 5:30 p.m. April 1 on ESPN2 from the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York. Congratulations, Brynnae! The Lady Lions are coached by Jeff Dickson.

All-City Choir Concert

Our annual **All-City Choir Concert is 7:00 p.m. February 4 at the Lied Center**, featuring all our middle and high school choirs. Everyone is welcome and donations will be accepted.

Communications Outreach

I appreciate our staff and school families staying up-to-date with our district by reading our newsletters and listening to our podcast. Since October, our digital newsletters have been viewed about 165,000 times, including more than 2,000 clicks on links to videos and additional content. The first two episodes of our Lawrence Public Schools Podcast have 413 views and 39 downloads combined, and can be found anywhere you listen to podcasts.

CALENDAR ITEMS

The **Boys and Girls Club of Lawrence Youth of the Year ceremony** will be held at 7:00 p.m. **January 30** at the Lied Center with a reception at 6:00. These events are free.

Lawrence Schools Foundation's annual district talent show, Ovation!, is 7:00 p.m. February 2 at the Lied Center. Students audition to perform. Talents range from aerial silks to a barbershop quartet and from dance to original spoken poetry. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for children and available through the Lied Center Box Office and [website](#).

Lawrence Schools Foundation Community Campaign

The Foundation raised more than \$145,802 from 339 donors during its annual campaign. These funds will be invested in our schools to support student, staff, and classroom needs. The Foundation is celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2025!

KU's annual Engineering Expo is 12:00-3:00 p.m. Sunday, February 23, in the engineering complex, 15th and Naismith,. The event is free, but they appreciate attendees to [register here](#) for planning purposes.

Community News

Junior Achievement is seeking volunteers interested in sharing financial literacy lessons in our classrooms this spring. Individuals may contact Debbie Harman at debbie@kansasja.org or call 785-841-8245 to find out more information on this volunteer opportunity.

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Human Resources & Staff Updates

We want to give a shout out to our Human Resources team who worked diligently to make W-2 forms available to all employees online by January 9, in addition to mailing the forms.

Elementary principals attended the second-to-last LETRS for administrators training recently. The last training for full certification will be March 1.

Special Education

The special education team arranged for a recent January administrative staff meeting to feature Greenbush training for principals specific to specially designed instruction. Dr. Englebrick, Ms. Ryan and I were pleased to join in this quality training alongside our principals and leaders, as it lays the groundwork for full day offerings for our principals coming up this summer as well as for sessions for special education teachers.

Superintendent Statements

Superintendent statements from this past week also attached to this report agenda item include:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration - Welcome Remarks - 1/23/25
- Student Safety and Protection of Information Statement to Parents & Community - 1/24/25
- Student Safety and Protection of Information Statement to Staff - 1/24/25

Thank you for the opportunity to share this report, and for the honor of serving the Lawrence Public Schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanice Kerr Swift". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Jeanice Kerr Swift
Interim Superintendent
Lawrence Public Schools