



## USD 497 News Release

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**February 10, 2025**

### **Board Discusses Equity Reporting**

Interim Superintendent Dr. Jeanice Swift shared with the board Monday a proposed adjustment in our district's approach to equity reporting – a process of continuous improvement. With a goal of establishing a predictable cycle of reporting based on key student performance measures and achievement outcomes, including leading and lagging indicators, Dr. Swift said that she wants progress reported consistently in each area of our equity work across the PreK-12 experience and our organization.

"I really appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Equity Advisory Council last week," Swift said. "We discussed a deeper dive into individual topics, placing those topics along a 12- or 10-month continuum."

She said that reporting along a consistent cycle provides an opportunity to understand, with greater specificity, the quality and the progress of the equity work as revealed in measuring both implementation and the quantitative outcomes of the work.

"Continuing this throughline across many areas of our district will benefit our understanding within each area of progress as well as from a systematic, holistic approach," she said of using a systematic, detailed data analysis to guide and inform the work and provide insight into the progress Lawrence Public Schools is making to narrow disparities in outcomes among students.

The proposed plan is to explore our district's equity work within the following areas:

- Enrollment and Class Size
- Graduation Rates and CTE/College Preparedness
- State Assessment and ACT Achievement
- Attendance and Absenteeism
- Student Behavior, Restorative Processes, and Suspensions
- Partnerships: Higher Education, Business, Community, and Volunteerism
- Human Resources: Recruitment, Retention, and Representation Annual Report
- Specialized Program Data: NASS, CTE, Community Connections, Montessori, STEAM, LVS, Early Childhood, and College and Career Academy.

The next equity report, anticipated later this month, will examine district enrollment and class size. "There are hundreds of hours behind really understanding where we are at every grade level throughout the district and using that information to shine the light on whether our 'equity talk' and 'equity walk' match," Swift said.

Board member Bob Byers, who also serves on the Equity Advisory Council, said, "From my view, this approach will give us the answers so we can really start addressing the issues our data show."

**MORE**

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Swift mentioned sending a letter Monday afternoon to all staff and school families about a Lawrence Police Department investigation of allegations about a Prairie Park Elementary support staff member's conduct toward students. **Police have designated a phone number, 785-830-7430, for Prairie Park families to report any concerns regarding their students' interaction with this staff member.** [Read Dr. Swift's full report](#), including our district's focus on safety, recent student/staff honors, and community support, online.

### **Board President's Report**

President Kelly Jones called a special meeting of the board tomorrow at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of meeting in executive session with Kansas Association of School Boards representatives about the superintendent search. Special meetings generally do not include public comment. There will be no public comment tomorrow.

Jones also shared that she submitted testimony in opposition to SB 76. It enacts the given name act to require school district and postsecondary institution employees to use the name and pronouns consistent with a student's biological sex and birth certificate, authorizing a cause of action for violations.

### **Public Education Legislative Update**

Past President Shannon Kimball gave a legislative update, sharing among other news that the Kansas State Board of Education meets this week. She said that the Kansas House K-12 Education Budget Committee passed a bill with unanimous support of additional funding to support special education services, teacher mentorship, and student transportation for CTE programming, but a split vote on the Governor's proposal to pay reduced meal fees for qualifying students.

"We apparently can afford to spend \$125 million on vouchers, but we can't afford to spend \$2 million on feeding hungry kids," Kimball said, noting that hearings were being held for several voucher bills. She encouraged Kansans to keep talking to others and legislators about public education priorities and how voucher bills negatively affect public schools.

### **Consent Agenda**

As part of its consent agenda, the board approved:

- Renewal of contracts with Beautiful Music (\$20,000), Wind Instrument Connections (\$37,400), and Meyer Music (\$49,300) for band and orchestra instrument maintenance and repair from May 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026, for a total amount of \$106,700.
- The purchase of 15 snow blowers from Heinen Outdoor Power Equipment in the amount of \$26,760 from the Capital Outlay budget.

### **Recognition**

Principal Becky Reaver shared how Cordley marked its third Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action. They used the essential question – How does celebrating the bravery of Black and African American changemakers inspire us to courageously speak up for ourselves and our community? Staff and students read "Brave" by Stacy McAnulty, and students each made their own capes. On Friday, they heard from Marlon Wesley, a Cordley parent and civil rights advocate, and participated in an indoor march with students carrying handmade signs.

### **Executive Session**

The board met twice in executive session to discuss non-elected personnel matters, taking no action.