



Monday, March 24, 2025

Superintendent Report to the Board of Education

Hello Members of the Board, Staff and Community,

We welcome everyone back from spring break week; we are grateful to our students, teachers and school teams, our parents, families, and community for all the hard work and support of our partnership in support of students. As we enter this post spring break chapter of this 2024-25 school year, we are laser focused on the priorities of ensuring a strong finish to this current school year while also planning and preparing for the upcoming 2025-26 school year.

Inclement Weather Make-up Plan

To ensure a successful 4th quarter, our Inclement Weather Make-Up Plan is now in effect due to the use of inclement weather days this winter.

In addition to going to school on our designated make-up day, April 21, we have added 15 minutes to the end of every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday school day, and 25 minutes to the end of every Wednesday school day for the remainder of the school year.

We also expanded Thursday, May 22, from a half-day to a full day of school for all students and added a midday early-dismissal day on Friday, May 23. Our schools have notified their staff and families of their individual schedules, including arrival and departure times.

Thanks to all for your flexibility and support in navigating the challenges of this historic winter.

Student Honors

We have many student honors to celebrate!

Our young adults at Community Connections at Pinckney took first place at the **Johnson County Community College Job Olympics!** Many of our students brought home individual medals from competing in career readiness and workplace

skill events. Job Olympics brings together over 500 students with special needs from 40 schools.

Our high school student journalists continue to shine! Free State and LHS competed in **Kansas Scholastic Press Association regional contests**, featuring the best in student journalism from nearly 1,800 entries from across the state. Students demonstrated their writing, design, illustration, photography, video, and reporting skills.

At 11 regional competitions, 82 schools competed in 26 categories. Lawrence High earned first place in the Ad Astra Region with 208 points and 49 individual placements. Free State placed second in the Pioneer Region with 175 points and 44 individual student placements. Congratulations also to Barbara Tholen and Jared Shuff who advise our outstanding journalism programs at Lawrence High School and Free State.

A Free State team placed third in **The Stock Market Game** sponsored by The Kansas Council for Economic Education. Kimberly Hawks is their business teacher, and the students' names are listed on this slide.

LHS senior Xayden Cromedy presented her independent study results at the **59th Annual Geological Society of America's South-Central Section meeting** in Conway, Arkansas. She was the only high school student to present. The conference brings together scientists from academia, industry, and government who study the rocks from, or reside in, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and Mexico's gulf coast states. Xayden was one of over 400 contributing authors and presented research with Dr. Diana Ortega-Ariza from the Kansas Geological Survey. Justin Fairchild is Xayden's science teacher at LHS.

The Southwest Middle School Math Team received 8th place at the **State Mathcounts Competition**. The students' names are listed here. In addition to winning the Chapter Competition two years in a row, Ruby Jiang received 4th place at the Kansas State Competition and will now compete at nationals, representing Kansas on the state team in May. Deb Husted is the team's math teacher.

Arabella Gipp proudly represented the Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence at the **Kansas Youth of the Year competition** March 11 in Topeka, where she finished as the state runner up. A fixture at the Club since kindergarten, Arabella shared her profound connection and transformative experiences with the Club through what is now her senior year at Lawrence High School.

Lawrence High won the **6A Kansas State Scholastic Chess Association Tournament** March 15 at Emporia State University. Dwight Souders led the LHS

team with a 10th place individual finish. Congratulations to all of our elementary, middle, and high school chess players who earned medals.

Thank You, Retired School Staff!

I appreciated the opportunity just prior to spring break to meet with members of the ***Douglas County Association of Retired School Personnel***. I updated the members about current district initiatives and invited their suggestions and involvement. We are especially grateful that several of these retired staff members continue to substitute teach and volunteer in our schools.

Upcoming Events

Congratulations to the **Lawrence Schools Foundation**, which is celebrating the 40th Anniversary of its mission to provide resources that inspire learning, enrich teaching, and enhance opportunities for all students, educators, and staff in Lawrence Public Schools. We appreciate the generous support of our community and the Foundation's excellent work.

Kennedy Early Childhood Center will host an **Early Childhood Family Resource Fair from 10 a.m.-Noon April 19**. This event is open to all families of young children and will feature activities, resources, food, and drink. Kennedy and New York Montessori will also share enrollment information during the resource fair.

Community Outreach

Here are updated analytics for two of the ways we strive to keep our community informed and engaged -- our digital newsletters and podcasts.

Finally, we are enjoying student work in our art gallery here in the boardroom tonight from all four middle schools in recognition of Youth Art Month. Many thanks to our middle school art teachers for their work to showcase student artwork.

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

Sincerely,



Jeanice Kerr Swift
Superintendent of Schools
Lawrence Public Schools