



## USD 497 News Release

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### Board of Education Approves Business Items; Superintendent Recognizes Board President

#### Recognition

Monday's Lawrence Board of Education meeting marked the final scheduled meeting of the fiscal year. Superintendent Dr. Jeanice Kerr Swift recognized Board President Kelly Jones, who is completing her eighth year on the school board and her third as president. Dr. Swift recounted Jones' journey from an active Cordley Elementary parent, volunteer, and site council chair to her service on districtwide committees, advocacy for state funding and bond elections supporting school improvements, and to her board service and leadership. Jones served as president during the COVID-19 global pandemic, state public education financial challenges, and this school year's superintendent search, among other challenges.

"The three years that I have been president have been particularly challenging years for the school district. I've learned that every year for the school district is challenging, and filled with great successes," said Jones. "When I needed support and reminders around how to connect with the community, tackle technology, and stay on top of committee notes, I've turned to each of you (board members) individually... Thank you for the opportunity to do this and for supporting me in this work."

As is the district's tradition, Dr. Swift presented a piece of student artwork to Jones in appreciation of her leadership. Emma Newell, a Sunset Hill Elementary School fifth grader this year, created the painting that includes the words "Peace" and "Love" in Michelle Salmans' art class. Emma is the daughter of Katie and James Newell.

#### Consent Agenda

The board approved several business items listed on its consent agenda, including an updated Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Kansas guiding the Jayhawk Blueprint program. Through this partnership, high school students may take college courses for dual credit at about one-third the cost of tuition. The Lawrence Schools Foundation and community partners like Truist Credit Union provide scholarships to ensure these opportunities are accessible to all students.

"We are excited about the enhancement of our KU Jayhawk Blueprint partnership. The significant adjustment is the compensation that is included for teachers in the program," said Dr. Jeanice Kerr Swift, noting a \$1,000 stipend paid by KU to our educators per section per semester taught. "We will continue to strengthen our partnership, building on a strong foundation, and to grow the program to meet the needs of our high school students who are ready for the challenge of college courses and who benefit tremendously from achieving credit for college coursework while still working toward high school graduation."

"The research is clear that students who experience even one college course while in high school increase their likelihood of attending, persisting, and graduating from a four-year college or university. The savings in tuition make this an even more exciting opportunity for our students and their families," she said.

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The board approved a ten-cent increase in paid school meal prices in keeping with federal requirements and to adjust to increases in the cost of food, supplies, and labor. The following are school meal prices for the 2025-2026 school year.

<b>2025-2026</b>	<b>LUNCH PRICES</b>	<b>BREAKFAST PRICES</b>
<b>Elementary</b>	\$3.10	\$2.10
<b>Middle School</b>	\$3.30	\$2.20
<b>High School</b>	\$3.35	\$2.25
<b>Reduced Price</b>	\$0.40	\$0.30
<b>Adult</b>	\$5.10	\$3.10

*Note: Families may qualify for free school meals and student fee waivers. Lawrence Public Schools provides a meal to all students who want a meal regardless of account balance.*

**Lawrence Education Association (LEA)**

LEA President Emerson Hoffzales was among a large group of teachers and staff attending the meeting. Hoffzales shared in a news release, “On June 10, 2025, the Educational Support Professionals (ESPs or classified staff) of Lawrence Public Schools overwhelmingly voted to unionize, choosing the LEA as their exclusive bargaining representative, with a resounding majority of 95%. This historic win unites all Lawrence Public School employees into one local union and brings ESPs into the broader ranks of the Kansas NEA and the National Education Association, the largest union in the country.

“Bringing us to this moment—a moment of unification—marks more than a local victory; it signals the beginning of a powerful movement across Kansas. Classified staff in districts statewide are beginning to organize, standing up for a living wage, respect, and a voice on the job. Our success in Lawrence is a testament to the strength of solidarity and the unwavering commitment of public school workers to improve our working conditions and fight for the schools our students deserve,” wrote Hoffzales.

**Executive Session**

The board met in three executive sessions to discuss matters of non-elected personnel and to evaluate the superintendent.

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